

Case No: 0803579FUL (FULL PLANNING APPLICATION)

Proposal: DEMOLITION OF OFFICE BUILDING AND ERECTION OF 8 DWELLINGS WITH REFUSE AND CYCLE STORE AND PARKING

Location: GROOMS COTTAGE, COPPINGFORD ROAD

Applicant: RADLEY HOMES LTD

Grid Ref: 517647 281746

Date of Registration: 12.01.2009

Parish: SAWTRY

RECOMMENDATION- REFUSE

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The site relates to an existing grouping of buildings to the south east of Coppingford Road. The site has one access point off Coppingford Road and this is adjacent to the offices across the road. The site boundary to Coppingford Road is well screened, the boundary to the west is less sparsely planted and views of the site can be gained. To the rear of the site lies open countryside. The existing Grooms Cottage building adjoins an existing residential building (known as Lowen Chy) adjacent to the site. To the north east of the site lies a pond. The site on the whole is level however Coppingford Road is on slightly higher ground.
- 1.2 The existing buildings on the site are single storey buildings with an agricultural appearance. These once formed part of a farmyard with the buildings to the east of the site. Some of the buildings have been converted to other uses with others being abandoned. The Coach House building is a single barn with lean-to elements.
- 1.3 The proposed development seeks to demolish the existing stables and coach house buildings and to develop on their basic footprint, four new dwellings. The stable buildings are to be replaced by 3 one and a half storey, terraced dwellings that utilise the roof space for the first floor. The fourth dwelling proposed on this part of the site is a detached unit in the location of the original coach house.
- 1.4 The proposed development seeks to demolish the existing stables and coach house buildings and to develop on their basic footprint, four new dwellings. The stable buildings are to be replaced by 3 one and a half storey, terraced dwellings that utilise the roof space for the first floor. This L shaped building, approximately 26.9 metres in length

by 16.2 metre in width, at the furthest points, shall adjoin part of the existing residential dwelling to the east (Lowen Chy). The fourth dwelling proposed on this part of the site is a detached unit in the location of the original coach house, approximately 12.3 metres in depth by 10 metres in width. Within the central area a car parking court is proposed. This building will comprise 1 two bed dwelling, 2 three bed dwellings and a four bed dwelling.

- 1.5 An additional four dwellings are proposed within the existing 'builders yard'. These are partially submerged dwellings within the landscape, and are arranged as 2 pairs of semi-circular buildings. The buildings are approximately 25.6m in length and 18.2m in width and are all proposed to comprise of three bedrooms.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS1: "Delivering Sustainable Development" (2005)** contains advice on the operation of the plan-led system.
- 2.2 **Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 (2007)** sets out how planning, in providing for the new homes, jobs and infrastructure needed by communities, should help shape places with lower carbon emissions and resilient to the climate change now accepted as inevitable.
- 2.3 **PPS3: "Housing" (2006)** sets out how the planning system supports the growth in housing completions needed in England.
- 2.4 **PPS7: "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" (2004)** sets out the Government's planning policies for rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas.
- 2.5 **PPS9: "Biological and Geological Conservation" (2005)** sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.
- 2.6 **PPG13: "Transport" (2001)** provides guidance in relation to transport and particularly the integration of planning and transport.
- 2.7 **PPG16: "Archaeology and Planning" (1990)** sets out the Secretary of State's policy on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside.
- 2.8 **PPS23: "Planning and Pollution Control" (2004)** is intended to complement the new pollution control framework under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 and the PPC Regulations 2000.
- 2.9 **PPG24: "Planning & Noise" (1994)** guides planning authorities on the use of planning powers to minimise the adverse impact of noise.
- 2.10 **PPS25: "Development and Flood Risk" (2006)** sets out Government policy on development and flood risk. Its aims are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk

of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk. Where new development is, exceptionally, necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, reducing flood risk overall.

For full details visit the government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> and follow the links to planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Policy.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

Further information on the role of planning policies in deciding planning applications can also be found at the following website:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk> then follow links Planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Information and Guidance, Planning Guidance and Advice and then Creating and Better Place to Live

3.1 East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008)

Policies viewable at <http://www.go-east.gov.uk> then follow links to Planning, Regional Planning then Related Documents

- **SS1:** “Achieving Sustainable Development” – the strategy seeks to bring about sustainable development by applying: the guiding principles of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005 and the elements contributing to the creation of sustainable communities described in Sustainable Communities: Homes for All.
- **H1:** “Regional Housing Provision 2001 to 2021” – Local Planning Authorities should facilitate the delivery of district housing allocations – 11,200 for Huntingdonshire.
- **H2:** “Affordable Housing” – Development Plan Documents should set appropriate targets. At the regional level, delivery should be monitored against a target for some 35% of housing coming forward through planning permissions granted after the publication of the RSS.
- **T14:** “Parking” – controls to manage transport demand and influencing travel change alongside measures to improve public transport accessibility, walking and cycling should be encouraged. Maximum parking standards should be applied to new residential development.
- **ENV3:** “Biodiversity and Earth Heritage” it should be ensured that the region’s wider biodiversity, earth heritage and natural resources are protected and enriched through conservation, restoration and re-establishment of key resources.
- **ENV7:** “Quality in the Built Environment” - requires new development to be of high quality which complements the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area and promotes urban renaissance and regeneration.

- **WAT4:** “Flood Risk Management” – River flooding is a significant risk in parts. The priorities are to defend existing properties from flooding and locate new development where there is little or no flooding.

3.2 **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)**

Saved policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> follow the links to environment, planning, planning policy and Structure Plan 2003.

- **P6/1** – Development Related Provision – development will only be permitted where the additional infrastructure and community requirements generated by the proposal can be secured.

3.3 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995)**

Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95

- **H23:** “Outside Settlements” – general presumption against housing development outside environmental limits with the exception of specific dwellings required for the efficient management of agriculture, forestry and horticulture.
- **H31:** “Residential privacy and amenity standards” – Indicates that new dwellings will only be permitted where appropriate standards of privacy can be maintained and adequate parking provided.
- **H38:** “Noise Pollution” – development sites adjoining main highways, railways, industrial operations and other potentially damaging noise pollution sources will be required to adopt adequate design solutions to create acceptable ambient noise levels within the dwellings and their curtilage.
- **T18:** “Access requirements for new development” states development should be accessed by a highway of acceptable design and appropriate construction.
- **R1:** “Recreation and Leisure Provision” – will directly promote district wide recreation and leisure projects and generally support leisure and recreation facilities commensurate with population levels, housing developments and identified need.
- **En13:** “Archaeological Implications” – in areas of archaeological potential, planning applications may be required to be accompanied by the results of an archaeological field evaluation or desk-based assessment.
- **En17:** “Development in the Countryside” - development in the countryside is restricted to that which is essential to the effective operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, permitted mineral extraction, outdoor recreation or public utility services.

- **En18:** “Protection of countryside features” – Offers protection for important site features including trees, woodlands, hedges and meadowland.
- **En20:** Landscaping Scheme. - Wherever appropriate a development will be subject to the conditions requiring the execution of a landscaping scheme.
- **En22:** “Conservation” – wherever relevant, the determination of applications will take appropriate consideration of nature and wildlife conservation.
- **En25:** "General Design Criteria" - indicates that the District Council will expect new development to respect the scale, form, materials and design of established buildings in the locality and make adequate provision for landscaping and amenity areas.
- **CS8:** “Water” – satisfactory arrangements for the availability of water supply, sewerage and sewage disposal facilities, surface water run-off facilities and provision for land drainage will be required.

3.4 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002)**

Saved policies from the Huntingdon Local Plan Alterations 2002 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002)

- **STR1** – District Hierarchy - Outlines the settlement hierarchy. Group villages are those where housing groups and infilling will be allowed and infill villages where only infilling will be allowed.
- **STR5** – Group Villages – includes Sawtry
- **HL5** – Quality and Density of Development - sets out the criteria to take into account in assessing whether a proposal represents a good design and layout.
- **HL6** – Housing Density - indicates that housing development shall be at a density of 30-50 dwellings per hectare
- **HL7** – Reusing Brownfield Land and Buildings - indicates that the District Council will seek to maximise the re-use of previously developed land.
- **HL10** – Housing Provision – in the district should reflect the full range of the local community’s needs by ensuring a choice in new housing.
- **AH5** – Rural Exceptions – normal restrictive open countryside policies may be relaxed to permit affordable within, adjoining or well related to settlements of less than 3000 population, subject to environmental impact and availability of necessary infrastructure. A local need must be proven and long term availability ensured.

- **OB1** – Nature and Scale of Obligations – will relate to the size of development and the impact on physical infrastructure, social and community facilities and services.

3.5 **Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning, then Planning then Planning+Policy then Informal policy statements where there is a link to Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007

- **P8** – Development in the Countryside – Outside the defines limits of the Key Centres (limited or potential growth) development will be restricted to: that which is essential to the efficient operation of agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or required for the purposes of outdoor recreation; the alteration, replacement or change of use of existing buildings in accordance with other policies; limited and specific forms of housing, business and tourism development, as provided for within the Local Development Framework; or land allocated for particular purposes.
- **P10** – Flood Risk – development should: not take place in areas at risk from flooding, unless suitable mitigation/flood protection measures are agreed; not increase the risk of flooding to properties elsewhere; make use of sustainable drainage systems where feasible; be informed by a flood risk assessment where appropriate.
- **G2** – Landscape Character - development proposals should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape
- **G3** – Trees, hedgerows and Other Environmental Features - development proposals should minimise risk of harm to trees, hedgerows or other environmental features of visual, historic or nature conservation value.
- **G4** – Protected Habitats and Species – development proposals should not harm sites of national or international importance for biodiversity or geology. Proposals will not be permitted if they potentially damage County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodland, Important Species or Protected Roadside Verges, unless they significantly outweigh the harm.
- **G7** – Biodiversity – proposals that could affect biodiversity should: be accompanied by a suitable assessment of habitats and species; maintain and enhance biodiversity; provide appropriate mitigation measures; seek to achieve positive gain in biodiversity.
- **B1** – Design Quality - developments should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of layout, form and contribution to the character of the area.

- **B4** – Amenity - developments should not have an unacceptable impact upon amenity of existing or future occupiers.
- **B5** – Energy and Water use – developments should aim to maximise the level of energy efficiency through sustainable design and construction.
- **B9** – Sites of Archaeological Interest – a proposal that could affect a site or area of archaeological interest should; be accompanied by a suitable assessment of the nature and significance of any remains; not cause harm to remains or their setting which are recognised or identified as being of national importance and allow for their preservation in situ; or make satisfactory arrangements for the physical preservation recording or removal of other remains, as appropriate.
- **H3** – Mix of Dwelling Sizes – minor housing development or residential infilling should provide for a mix of household sizes and types appropriate to the needs of the local area.
- **T1** – Transport Impacts - development proposals should be capable of being served by safe convenient access to the transport network and should not give rise to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the local transport network.
- **T2** – Car and Cycle Parking - development proposals should limit car parking and provide cycle parking facilities to the levels set out in the Council’s parking standards.

3.6 **Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework submission Core Strategy 2008**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework submission Core Strategy 2008 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning then click on Planning and then click on Planning Policy where there is a link to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

- **CS1:** “Sustainable development in Huntingdonshire” – all developments will contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development, having regard to social, environmental and economic issues. All aspects will be considered including design, implementation and function of development.
- **CS3:** “The Settlement Hierarchy” – Identifies Sawtry as a ‘Key Service Centre’ in which development schemes of moderate and minor scale and infilling may be appropriate within the built up area. This policy states that any area not specifically identified are classed as part of the countryside, where development will be strictly limited to that which has essential need to be located in the countryside.
- **CS5:** “Rural Exceptions Housing” – in exceptional circumstances, affordable housing will be considered acceptable within or adjacent to the built up area of a Key Service Centre subject to set criteria.

- **CS8:** “Water” – satisfactory arrangements for the availability of water supply, sewerage and sewage disposal facilities, surface water run-off facilities and provision for land drainage will be required.
- **CS10:** “Contributions to Infrastructure Requirements” – proposals will be expected to provide or contribute towards the cost of providing infrastructure and of meeting social and environmental requirements, where these are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

3.7 **Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents**

- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007)
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2007)
- Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing (SPD – Nov 2007)
- ‘Growing Awareness – A Plan for Our Environment’ – was formally adopted by the Council in April 2008 and provides a framework for action over five years for tackling the three main environmental challenges of tackling climate change, using resources efficiently and protecting and improving the environment. Progress against targets will be reported and published annually and will be used to inform the development of the following years action plan.

4. **PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 0500898FUL – change of use and alteration to office building to form dwelling – permission granted expires 12.12.10 (not implemented)
- 4.2 0401693FUL - residential use (Grooms cottage) – permission granted, expires 1.09.09 (not implemented)
- 4.3 0002117FUL – change of use to a B1a or B1b office –permission granted – part implemented – extension not completed to the north east side elevation
- 4.4 0001697FUL - Alterations to form offices – expired 29.11.05
- 4.5 0000059FUL - Alterations to stables, cottage, coach house and barns to form four dwellings – permission granted – expired 24.5.05
- 4.6 9300351FUL – Change of use to storage of materials– permission granted
- 4.7 9100897FUL - Partial change of use of orchard, change of use of stores into office – permission granted
- 4.8 8101781FUL – Change of use to builder’s office and yard – permission granted.

4.9 Please see **attached** sketch map detailing site extant planning history for clarification.

5. **CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 **Sawtry Parish Council - REFUSE (copy attached)**

- 8 more dwellings would increase the number to 13 which is too many for the plot;
- it would become a sprawling settlement ribbon development;
- most access to the site would have to be vehicle;
- a local sewerage plant would be essential rather than a septic tank;
- should social housing be included in a development of this size?
- Requests £2000 if the application were approved for the Parish Council to put towards local sports/play facilities as there is not adequate provision for the current population and no on-site leisure provision is proposed.

5.2 **CCC Highways – NO OBJECTION** to the proposal subject to the imposition of an appropriately worded condition pertaining to an ungated access and an informative relating to works within the highway.

5.3 **CCC Archaeology** – Recommend the site is subject to an archaeological evaluation prior to the granting of planning permission as the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential.

5.4 **CCC Local Education Authority** - The development is expected to generate 1.6 Secondary school children. The County Council cost a secondary place at £12,500, therefore a contribution of £20,000 is requested towards secondary education.

5.5 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** – S106 agreement or planning condition required to make adequate provision for fire hydrants.

5.6 **HDC – Environmental Health (Noise) – NO OBJECTIONS**

5.7 **HDC – Environmental Health (Contamination) – NO OBJECTIONS**

5.8 **HDC – Housing – NO OBJECTIONS** subject to provision of affordable housing

5.9 **HDC - Operations Division** – No play requirements for this site. Refuse storage of an appropriate size should be provided on site in a suitable location.

5.10 **Middle Level Commissioners – OBJECT** to the application. A Flood Risk Assessment is required for this development as there are concerns regarding the capacity of existing surface water system, the local land drainage system, the potential detrimental affects of any ground re-shaping.

- 5.11 **Natural England – OBJECTS** to the proposed development in relation to the potential for impacts to legally protected/Biodiversity Action Plan species. Insufficient survey information has been provided to demonstrate whether or not the development would have an adverse effect on Great Crested Newt or Bat species.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **TWO** representations have been received raising the following concerns:

- The existing buildings should not be demolished;
- No information relating to bats;
- Increase in height of buildings from single storey to two storeys;
- Proposal makes the buildings wider;
- Impact on residential amenity ;
- New two storey house with windows that would overlook property;
- Sewerage, drainage and services provision;
- Increase in traffic on this rural road;
- Impact on badgers; and,
- Fails to consider what is in keeping with the local area and consider the range of local wildlife

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 7.1 The main issues to consider are the principle of the development; potential for an exception site; design and impact on character of area; sustainability; the impact on residential amenity; highways; refuse; the impact on biodiversity; trees and landscape; archaeology; noise; flood risk; response to representations and planning obligations.

- 7.2 The current 'Coach House' is used as office space and permission for a change of use to residential accommodation has not been implemented and does not expire until 12 December 2010. Notwithstanding the current and extant planning permissions for the site, all the buildings relating to this application are currently used as office buildings and not residential properties.

Principle

- 7.3 The site lies within the open countryside and is not considered to be within the built form of the Key Service Centre of Sawtry which is some distance away (approximately 1km). Whilst the site is considered to be 'previously developed land' as defined within PPS3, it makes clear that there is no presumption that this type of land is necessarily suitable for residential development. The sustainability of each site needs to be carefully considered in accordance with Government policy to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.

- 7.4 Notwithstanding the planning history of the site, the current permitted use of the site is for the use as an office and as a builder's yard. This application must be determined on its own merits.

- 7.5 There is a lack of services available in the immediate locality. The site is set away from the existing settlement and as such amounts to new residential development in the countryside. PPS7 indicates that sustainable patterns of development should be sought with development being focused in, or next to, existing towns and villages and clearly indicates that 'New building development in the open countryside away from existing settlements, or outside areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled'. There is no reasoned justification for the development of eight new dwellings on this countryside site; the proposal does not accord with national guidance or local planning policy. The principle of residential development on this site is not considered to be acceptable.
- 7.6 The application is considered to be contrary to planning policy in this regard.

Exception site

- 7.7 It is noted that PPS7 does have regard to isolated new houses in the countryside that may be 'exceptions' to the usual restrictions by virtue of its exceptional quality and innovative design. Such design should be truly outstanding and ground-breaking and reflect the highest standards in contemporary architecture to significantly enhance the surrounding area. Submission Core Strategy policy CS5 also refers to circumstances where affordable housing may be considered to be acceptable where sites are adjacent to Key Service Centres.
- 7.8 Whilst the four units on the western part of the site are interesting, the proposed development does not provide any justification or meet the specified triggers as an 'exception' and is therefore contrary to planning policy in both these regards.

Sustainability of Construction

- 7.9 This proposal seeks to achieve a mix of Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 and 5. The supporting Environmental Statement details methods that could be used within the construction and operation of the dwellings to achieve these levels.
- 7.10 The application is compliant with National and Local Planning Policy to improve the environmental performance of new homes but the proposed measures are not reason to set aside the presumption against new residential development in the countryside. A condition could require submission of details of how the proposed development would meet these levels.

Design and Impact on Character of the Area

- 7.11 The proposed development of eight dwellings on this site of just under 0.5 hectares represents a density level of 16 dwellings per hectare. This is significantly below the requirement for new housing development to be at a density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare encouraged by Policy HL6. However, given the in principle objections to the proposal, a higher density would be even more objectionable in this instance.

Four dwellings to replace buildings on the site

- 7.12 The replacement buildings on the site that would provide four of the dwellings, have a similar footprint to the existing buildings. These have very small sized rear gardens, ranging from approximately 46 square metres up to 80 square metres. The partitioning of the rear gardens breaks up the current element of space within the site and is considered to erode the current character.
- 7.13 The new larger building providing the three dwellings where the existing buildings are to the east of the site are significantly larger than the existing buildings on the site. Such an increase in size, scale and mass will erode the simplicity of this part of the site. These three dwellings fail to embrace the architectural style of the existing buildings. The high number of openings in the walls and roof create a cluttered appearance which is uncharacteristic of rural barn farm style developments.
- 7.14 The design and access statement refers to the existing buildings to the east of the site. Whilst there are some larger residential buildings to the east that were formally agricultural. The further introduction of larger buildings on the application site will fundamentally change the character of this group of buildings as a whole. The development of the site should be considered with regard to the wider overall impact.
- 7.15 The context behind the design of the Coach House dwelling is unclear. The building is proposed on a northwest – southeast axis; where the existing building on the site is built on a northeast-southwest axis with lean-to elements. This re-orientation and significant bulk, mass, scale and size of the building fundamentally alters the character of the development on the site. The design is not in keeping with a barn style dwelling.
- 7.16 The significant sized, clipped gable buildings proposed for the site will erode the simple character of the existing development which has simple gables.
- 7.17 The use of timber cladding is considered acceptable for the Coach House, however the other 3 units propose a mixture of timber clad and brick, when the existing buildings they propose to replace are brick. This may create an unusual appearance as any new building should also be of brick, retaining the character of the site.

Four dwellings on former builder's yard

- 7.18 The four dwellings on the former builder's yard have been designed with a shape of a quarter segment of a circle. They are partly sunken in the ground with the bedrooms within the ground. The dwellings are proposed to have a banked green roof covering the curved section of the roof on the north eastern and north western elevations. The southern elevation is proposed to be mainly glazed. This elevation forms the principal source of light into each of the dwellings. A sunken garden is proposed to allow access from the basement level and allow light into this level. It is unclear how much direct sunlight and solar gain will be received in the basement level especially given that a balcony lies above the windows and there are existing large mature

conifer trees on part of the southern boundary which may overshadow part of the site. The orientations of the principal openings are slightly due south east. Solar gain could be increased significantly if the dwellings were orientated facing south west.

- 7.19 Whilst the design of these dwellings alone may be considered to be acceptable, the introduction of these structures on the site is not in keeping with the character of the site and surrounding area. The surrounding character consists of predominantly low level land that is traditionally flat leading towards the Fen Margin. At approximately 3.5 metres in height the proposal would form an incongruous element in the landscape which is predominantly open in this area. It is acknowledged that additional screening is shown on the submitted plans. However, no landscaping scheme has been submitted to assist in consideration of this.

Ancillary buildings

- 7.20 The proposed bin and bicycle store to serve the new development are highly visible and do not relate well to the site. These are considered to form intrusive features into the open area to the front of the site.
- 7.21 The application is considered to be contrary to planning policy in this regard.

Residential amenity

- 7.22 The neighbouring property of Lowen Chy Whitehall Farm is the only dwelling considered to be affected by the proposal. This dwelling abuts the eastern boundary of the site and would adjoin the proposed development. Its rear amenity space is to the south.
- 7.23 The proposed development utilises the roof space as the first floor accommodation. There are rooflights proposed on the east facing roof slope of the building but these will not afford any views into the neighbouring site or property. The part of the development adjoining the neighbour has no rooflights or other windows at first floor level therefore protecting the privacy of the neighbouring property.
- 7.24 Notwithstanding the design comments raised previously in the report, the increase in size of the adjoining buildings proposed is not considered to cause an overbearing impact on the neighbouring property as there is adequate separation distances from the respective boundaries.
- 7.25 The application is considered to be compliant with planning policy in this regard.

Highways

- 7.26 The site has planning permission and is being used as B1 office accommodation and therefore the site has the possibility of more vehicle movements being attributed to it than the proposals for eight dwellings. As such there are no objections in principle.
- 7.27 There are twelve car parking spaces proposed for the 8 dwellings. This is in accordance with the standards set out in the

Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 which states maximum parking standards of 2 car parking spaces per dwelling.

7.28 The proposed cycle store measures 2.1 metres by 4.7 metres. It appears to be of sufficient size to accommodate space for stands for 8 bicycles.

7.29 The application is considered to be compliant with planning policy in this regard.

Refuse

7.30 The Council's Operations Division have advised that properties would be provided with 3 x 240lt bins each (measuring W584mm x D737mm). Storage needs to be provided for these. The bin store proposed measures 2.1 metres by 4.7 metres which appears inadequate to store the bins for the 8 dwellings served.

7.31 With either a grasscrete or gravel road surface, the Council's refuse vehicles will not enter the site. It is possible with a disclaimer against damage caused, that vehicles may reverse on gravel to the bin store. Without this, the road would either have to be built to adoptable standard, to take a 26 tonne refuse vehicle or all properties would be required to put their bins out adjacent to the public highway for collection.

7.32 It is not clear whether the bin store is a storage area for the bins of other dwellings or a collection point for all dwellings. It would be preferable if it were a collection point only bearing in mind there will be a minimum of 24 bins on the site.

Biodiversity

7.33 Natural England has raised an objection to the proposed development in relation to the potential for impacts to legally protected species. Great Crested Newts and Bats are recorded in the area and these could potentially be affected by the proposal. This application does not acknowledge this fact and the application contains insufficient survey information to demonstrate whether or not the development would adversely affect these species. Appropriate surveys should be undertaken to allow the impact on the protected species to be accurately assessed prior to planning permission being granted to ensure no harm to the site's biodiversity value.

7.34 The application is considered to be contrary to planning policy in this regard.

Trees and landscape

7.35 There are trees on the site with their location being shown on the drawings. However, a tree survey has not been submitted to support the application and as such insufficient information has been provided with regards to the trees. A pre-development tree and hedgerow survey is required which would show the Arboricultural Constraints on site and enable consideration of whether the proposed locations of the buildings are acceptable. The application is considered to be contrary to planning policy in this regard.

- 7.36 Details on proposed landscaping and planting as part of the development are unclear. However, this matter could be subject to pre-commencement conditions securing submission and approval of details.

Archaeology

- 7.37 County Council records indicate that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential. It is considered likely that important archaeological remains survive on the site and that these would be severely damaged or destroyed by the proposed development. It is recommended that the site is subject to an archaeological evaluation prior to the granting of planning permission. The results of such an evaluation should allow for fuller consideration of the presence/absence, nature, extent, quality and survival of archaeological remains within the development area.
- 7.38 As no such evaluation has been submitted in support of this application, it is considered that the proposed development is considered to be contrary to planning policy in this regard.

Noise

- 7.39 The site is in close proximity (approximately 170m) to the A1(M) trunk road. This is an eight lane section of the A1. There is some bunding alongside the road itself which appears to be at a lower level. Environmental Health has raised no objection to the proposed residential development.

Floodrisk

- 7.40 In accordance with Annexes C and E of PPS25, a flood risk assessment is required to be submitted for this proposal due to the existing local drainage concerns in the area raised by the Middle Level Commissioner and the nature of the proposal through potential detrimental affects of any ground re-shaping through the proposed four dwellings on the former 'builders yard'. As no such assessment has been submitted the proposed development is considered to be contrary to planning policy in this regard.

Response to Representations

- 7.41 The concerns raised within the representations received have been addressed in this report apart from those regarding sewerage and drainage provision. The services required to serve such a development would need to be provided with the necessary consents from the service providers (e.g. Anglian Water). There have been no objections raised from the Middle Level Commissioners or the Environment Agency that would trigger the requirement of a condition.

Planning Obligations

- 7.42 This development would require planning obligations to make the development acceptable, in the form of a contribution towards secondary education.

- 7.43 The County Council as Education Authority have requested a contribution towards secondary education in Sawtry. Whilst the need generated by the proposal is low, there remains an onus on the County Council to justify how such a need can be met. As the current secondary school has reached capacity, there would be a need to extend the school in order to meet any further demands. As the Local Planning Authority has been unable to ascertain how the school could be reasonably extended without prejudicing either car parking or playing fields, the County Council have been asked to provide reasoned justification as to how S106 contributions would be spent to mitigate against the generated need in the locality. Any responses to this request will be reported to Members as soon as it becomes available.
- 7.44 Whilst this obligation has not been addressed by the applicant in the submissions, it is considered that the provision could be achieved by entering into a Section 106 Agreement. This matter has not been explored further with the applicant due to the number of in principle objections to the scheme. The applicant shall be informed of the necessary requirements should Members be minded to support the recommendation by virtue of a covering letter with any Decision Notice.

Conclusion

- 7.45 The proposed development is considered to be contrary to both Government and Local Planning Policy by virtue of:
- The unacceptable location for new residential development;
 - The unacceptable design and impact on the character of the Area;
 - The absence of surveys for protected species;
 - Inadequate arboricultural information;
 - The absence of an archaeological evaluation of the site; and,
 - The absence of a flood risk assessment

As such the Officer recommendation is one of refusal.

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8. RECOMMENDATION – REFUSE, for the following reasons:

- 8.1 The proposed residential development, by reason of its location outside the built-up area of Sawtry and in the countryside, would cause harm through its introduction of built form and unsustainable development without justification of a rural need. As such the proposal would be contrary to PPS7, Policies En17 and H23 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995, Policy P8 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 and Policy CS3 of the Huntingdonshire Submission Core Strategy 2008.
- 8.2 The proposed development would, by virtue of its layout, size, scale and massing create a poor design of development that is incongruous with its surroundings. This would result in a significant detrimental

impact on the existing character of the area. As such the proposal would be contrary to PPS1, PPS3, Policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008, Policy En25 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995, Policy HL5 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations 2002, Policy B1 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007, Policy CS1 of the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2007 and the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment 2007.

- 8.3 The application fails to demonstrate that protected species of Great Crested Newts and Bats will not be adversely affected by the development. As such, the proposal is contrary to PPS9, Policy ENV3 of the East of England Plan 2008, Policy En22 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and Policies G4 and G7 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007.
- 8.4 The application fails to demonstrate that there will not be an unacceptable loss of trees and detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the site and surroundings. As such the proposal is contrary to PPS9, Policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan 2008, Policy En18 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and Policy G3 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007.
- 8.5 The application fails to demonstrate that there will not be any damage or destruction to potential archaeological remains. As such the proposal is contrary to PPG16, Policy ENV6 of the East of England Plan 2008, Policy En13 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and Policy B9 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007.
- 8.6 The application fails to demonstrate by lack of submission of a flood risk assessment that there will not be any increase in flood risk to properties or land elsewhere. As such the proposal is contrary to PPS25, Policy WAT4 of the East of England Plan 2008, Policy CS8 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and Policy P10 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007.

Background Papers:

Planning Application File Reference: 0803579FUL
East of England Plan – Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy May 2008
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003
Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration, 2002
Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007
Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008

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