

Date: 14th March 2019
Reference: 019-26

By email: planningpolicy@scambs.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

LAND TO R/O LOWER FARM, 117 HIGH STREET, BALSHAM: REPRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF [REDACTED]

Introduction

This Statement has been prepared by Cheffins on behalf of [REDACTED] to promote land to the rear of Lower Farm, 117 High Street, Balsham in the Council's Call for Sites consultation. This is with a view to gaining an allocation for residential use in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The location of the site is shown on the site location plan, which accompanies this representation.

Existing planning status

The site comprises open countryside and lies within the Balsham Conservation Area immediately adjacent to, but outside of, the Balsham Development Framework on two sides. The site also lies adjacent to a Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA) which is wholly within the village Conservation Area. The PVAA includes a number of private residential properties and their gardens.

In our opinion, it is unusual for two unremarkable grass fields to be designated as part of the Balsham Conservation Area and it is unclear what contribution this site makes to the Conservation Area.

Section C: Land ownership

The site is owned freehold by [REDACTED]

Section D: Site details

The site is located to the rear of Lower Farm which is the owner's residence. A part of the land also lies to the south of Lower Farm Barns which was formerly the farmyard associated with Lower Farm and which was converted to residential use some years ago. The location of the site is shown on the site location plan, which accompanies this representation. The post code of the nearest residential property (Lower Farm) is CB21 4EP.

The site comprises 0.9 hectares of agricultural land which is currently low-key grazing land associated with Lower Farm farmhouse.

To the west of the site lies residential development on Queens Close a small cul-de-sac development of about 22 dwellings served from the east side of Linton Road. Importantly, Queens Close also provides an agricultural access into the site. To the north, the site is bordered by residential properties as described above – Lower Farm (a single detached dwelling) 117 High Street and the farmyard conversions immediately to the east of Lower Farm referred to as Lower Farm Barns (109, 111, 113 & 113a High Street).

To the east of the site lies a further area of grass fields. These fields lie immediately south of a residential development of 15 units which is currently under construction under Planning Permission S/0460/17/FL.

Partners:

M W Hamilton Ltd, E W Lee Ltd, J G L Law Ltd, M Walsh Ltd, P G M Claydon Ltd, N R Harris Ltd, W King Ltd, S J Lewis Ltd, C M B Ashton Ltd,
W E Pepper Ltd, P M Woolner Ltd, M O Peak Ltd, J A Stiff Ltd, M B Jones Ltd, R W Freshwater Ltd, S P C Gooderham Ltd, B Goodsell-King Ltd.

It is understood that the owner of those two fields is also promoting their future development via this Call for Sites exercise and it is considered that the two adjacent sites are complementary in this regard.

To the south of the promotion site, and separated by a mature hedgerow, lies open arable land comprising large cropped fields and this, in our view, represents true 'open countryside'.

Section E: Recent and current land uses

The site comprises existing agricultural land in grazing use.

Section F: Proposed future uses

The site is being promoted for residential use which would include land for access/roads, landscaping, open space and an element of affordable housing.

The benefits of the proposed development are wide-ranging and will promote the economic objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework. The site is located in a sustainable location, adjacent to the existing village boundary and can provide a modest suitably designed residential development.

Site capacity

We consider that the site has capacity for approximately 20–25 dwellings assuming a fairly low density to reflect the character of surrounding houses and the edge of village location. The precise capacity will need to be subject to a master planning exercise encompassing issues of access, open space, landscaping and the relationship with existing development and possible development of the adjacent land to the east.

Section G: Suitability – Site features and constraints

There are no significant constraints at the site, which could prevent residential development at the site being delivered in a timely manner. We have outlined other constraints which may need to be considered when developing the site.

Access

Vehicular access to/from the site could be taken via two options (or potentially both). Firstly, there is an existing agricultural access serving the site from Queens Close to the west. Secondly, it is understood that the owner of the adjacent land [REDACTED] has also submitted a response to the Call for Sites promoting that land. That land can be served by the existing residential development that is currently under construction adjacent to No. 105 High Street. If such an access served further land to the south of No. 105 then that access could also serve the Kiddy land subject to this promotion, possibly in conjunction with a Queens Close access.

Biodiversity

The site comprises a grass field and in itself, does not appear to have any high biodiversity value. This would be subject to an assessment as part of any planning application, particularly the boundary trees/hedgerows, and any development at the site would have the potential to incorporate any appropriate mitigation, should that be necessary or indeed to bring about an enhancement of local biodiversity.

Contaminated land

Partners:

M W Hamilton Ltd, E W Lee Ltd, J G L Law Ltd, M Walshe Ltd, P G M Claydon Ltd, N R Harris Ltd, W King Ltd, S J Lewis Ltd, C M B Ashton Ltd, W E Pepper Ltd, P M Woolner Ltd, M O Peck Ltd, J A Stiff Ltd, M B Jones Ltd, R W Freshwater Ltd, S P C Gooderham Ltd, B Goodsell-King Ltd.

The undeveloped site comprises greenfield land and, as such, is very unlikely to be contaminated.

Flood risk and drainage

The site is in Flood Zone 1, which is at the lowest risk of flooding. As such, housing development is appropriate in this location in principle. Any planning application would be accompanied by a Surface Water Drainage Strategy which would outline how surface and foul water would be managed.

Heritage

The falls within the Balsham Conservation Area but we are unclear as to what contribution it makes to the character of the Conservation Area given it is a fairly unremarkable grassed field. We do not consider that the Conservation Area designation restricts the principle of development on this site but it will influence detailed design in respect of the form of housing, density, architectural detailing and materials palette for new buildings.

Lower Farm farmhouse is a listed building although its setting is already protected by a large domestic garden to its south. Subject to detailed design (i.e. form, layout and heights of buildings) we do not see this as any particular constraint to development of the site.

Landscape impact

The site is well-defined on its northern and eastern boundaries by existing mature hedgerows with trees and by existing development including domestic curtilages.

There are a number of mature hedgerow boundaries forming the south and eastern boundaries of the site and these will assist in integrating new development into this site without adverse impacts on the wider landscape or on adjacent residential areas. It is clearly already well 'contained' on three sides.

Services and utilities

The site is located close to existing roads serving Balsham (Linton Road and High Street) and it is considered that connections can be made to existing services – including electricity, gas, telecommunications and water as required.

Public rights of way

There are no public rights of way at or close to the site which could be affected by its development.

Topography

The site is generally flat with no significant changes in levels. It slopes marginally down from north towards the south i.e. away from Lower Farm. This means that development would not be prevented in whole or part.

Section H: Availability

The site is within the ownership of Mr & Mrs Kiddy who are actively promoting it for residential development use. Therefore, it is available for development now.

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We consider that Balsham is an attractive housing market location with strong demand. As such, we consider that there would be healthy occupier demand for new dwellings at this site.

We are not aware of any legal constraints which could delay or prohibit development.

Section I: Deliverability

The site is within the ownership of the promoter and it is considered that development at the site could easily be delivered within five years. The site is greenfield land and there are no constraints at the site which could prohibit delivery within this time period.

Section J: Viability

Given the character and nature of the site, we do not consider that there would be any issues associated with viability or deliverability of the site. The owners are fully aware of the requirements for affordable housing on residential sites such as this.

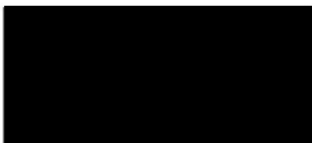
Section K: Supporting evidence

We have attached a Site Location Plan to this representation which we trust will inform the assessment of the site's suitability for development.

Conclusion

We consider that the site is highly suitable for a modest residential development, that can be delivered promptly and is well related to the built fabric of the existing village. The site is a logical extension to the existing village and is a largely unconstrained site. We therefore commend this representation to the Council.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or would like to discuss this representation further.



Director of Planning



Partners:

M W Hamilton Ltd, E W Lee Ltd, J G L Law Ltd, M Walshe Ltd, P G M Claydon Ltd, N R Harris Ltd, W King Ltd, S J Lewis Ltd, C M B Ashton Ltd, W E Pepper Ltd, P M Woolner Ltd, M O Peck Ltd, J A Stiff Ltd, M B Jones Ltd, R W Freshwater Ltd, S P C Gooderham Ltd, B Goodsell-King Ltd.