

Your ref: Call for sites
Our ref: 45337
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Date: 22/03/2019

South Cambridgeshire District Council
Call for Sites Consultation
Planning Policy Team
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
CB23 6EA

By email: planningpolicy@southcambs.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

CALL FOR SITES SUBMISSION – HEATH ROAD, GAMLINGAY

Please find enclosed a call for sites submission relating to land north of Heath Road, Gamlingay.
Enclosed with this letter are:

- Site Proforma
- Site Location Plan
- Indicative Masterplan demonstrating how the site could be developed
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site is the single ownership of Kach Capital Estates Ltd ('Kach'), who have recently purchased the site with the intention of promoting it for development. Kach have also made contact with the Parish Council, who are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the village, to make them aware that the site is available for development.

Kach are aware of the planning history of the site which includes a refused application in 2012 and an unsuccessful attempt by the Parish Council to get the site designated as a Local Green Space in the recently adopted Local Plan, where the final assessment made it clear the site did not meet the criteria for designation.

The reasons for refusal of the 2012 application, which was for an affordable housing scheme, can be summarised as:

- The location outside the village boundary and impact on the character of the area, specifically the gap to Dennis Green
- The detail of the housing mix (which related specifically to the rural exception site policy in force at the time)
- The lack of consideration of biodiversity
- The unacceptable impact on highway safety

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These matters have been addressed as appropriate on the site proforma, the Indicative Masterplan and below.

The location of the site outside the village boundary and the impact on character of the area

The site adjoins the existing Gamlingay village boundary to the east. Therefore, in principle, the site well related to the existing settlement. Of note is the fact that the site is already connected to the village by a public footpath and lies within the existing 30mph zone, which defines the entrance to the village.

The village is characterised by 'ends' in most direction. Dennis Green lies some 200m to the west of the current village boundary. This 'end', which contains a mix of residential dwellings and agricultural bungalows, has no conservation status and does not contain any listed buildings. The only listed building in the area lies to the south, accessed off West Road.

Dennis Green has been subject to numerous applications in recent years including new dwellings approved under applications S/0078/16/FL, S/0502/17/FL and S/3090/17/FL. These dwellings have changed the nature of the area, eroding any weight that can be afforded to the value of the end to the overall character of the village.

Whilst there may be a need to offer a degree of separation to Dennis Green, this can be achieved through the design and layout of development, as shown on the Indicative Masterplan, which incorporates an informal open space alongside approximately 28 dwellings, at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph).

In terms of the wider landscape, the site is well enclosed with views of the site limited to those from the immediate vicinity. The site's development would therefore have limited impact on the wider character of the area.

It is our view that to mitigate any concerns over the impact of new development on the character of the village, the focus of development should be on providing a range of small/medium sized sites, such as that on Heath Road, which can be planned as sensitive extensions to the village.

In the context of the significant need for housing in the South Cambridgeshire and the suitability of Gamlingay to support a growing population, the allocation of the site should be considered favourably.

The housing mix

Whilst the mix of dwellings on site would be subject to a detailed application, the size of the site offers the potential to deliver a mix of dwelling types and sizes, including affordable housing. The mix would be refined through discussion with the Council to ensure it was appropriate to meet local housing need whilst respecting the character of the area.

Lack of consideration of biodiversity

The previous reason refusal referred to the fact that the survey work recommended in the phase 1 ecology report had been not been submitted for consideration as part of the application. Whilst this level assessment is not required to support a call for sites submission, Kach have commissioned a preliminary ecological appraisal which assesses the ecological value of the site and makes recommendations for mitigating against any potential ecological harm.

High-level mitigation measures, such as enhancements to hedgerows, have been shown on the indicative masterplan. Other requirements, such as bird boxes and planting of appropriate trees, could be designed in at a later stage, with scope for ecological enhancement in the open space and on site boundaries.

Highway safety

The previous application was refused due to concerns over the number of new accesses in close proximity to each other onto Heath Road. As can be seen on the Indicative Masterplan, the site can be developed appropriately with just a single access from Heath Road, overcoming this previous concern.

The final location of the access would be subject to the detailed design but as shown on the Indicative Masterplan, there is more than sufficient scope to achieve the required viability splays (2x2.4x43m) for a 30mph zone, meaning the site is easily, and safely, accessible.

Other considerations

As noted at the outset, the site is in a single ownership. Therefore, there are no issues with the availability of the site for development. Kach are committed to realising the development of the site and on allocation would ensure development commences in a timely manner.

It is our view that there are no designations or technical considerations which would justify the site being considered unsuitable for development. The site does not form part of any designated landscape nor is it subject to any ecological designations.

The site is free from any risk of flooding, and as noted above, aside from one listed build to the south of the site, set away from Heath Road, the area is free from any heritage assets or designations.

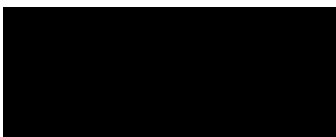
Kach are aware of the previous attempts to designate the site as a Local Green Space, but as noted above, the Local Plan Inspector and subsequently South Cambridgeshire Council correctly concluded that the site did not meet the criteria to justify designation. Whilst there may continue to be some local objection to the allocation of the site, this should not influence the initial assessment of the site as being potentially suitable for development and therefore a realistic option for allocation in the next Local Plan.

The site is well located with respect of services and facilities in the village. A number of facilities are within 400m-600m of the site, making them easily accessible on foot or by bike.

The Indicative masterplan shows how the site could comfortably accommodate 28 dwellings at a density of 30 dph alongside an area of informal open space which would provide separation to Dennis Green and provide an opportunity for any ecological and biodiversity enhancement of the site.

We look forward to reviewing your assessment of the site in due course. If you do require any further information to aid your assessment, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Mark Harris, MRTPI
Associate

Enclosures

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- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal