



PLANNING COMMITTEE: 1st June 2010
DIRECTORATE: Planning and Regeneration
HEAD OF PLANNING: Susan Bridge

N/2010/0301: 80 residential units with associated garages, roads and sewers.
Land off South Meadow Road, Northampton,

WARD: West Hunsbury

APPLICANT: Taylor Wimpey East Midlands Ltd
AGENT: None

REFERRED BY: Head of Planning
REASON: Major Development

DEPARTURE: No

APPLICATION FOR CONSULTATION BY WNDC:

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 That the Council raise concerns over the following issues -

- The proposed access to the site cuts across a piece of land which is required by an obligation of a S106 legal agreement associated with the planning permission for the greater St Crispin's development. This area of open space must be compensated for in addition to the open space requirement for the current proposal in the event that it is to be lost.
- The loss of mature trees / hedgerow adjacent to the established bridleway in the South East corner of the site would adversely affect the setting of this bridleway to the detriment of its users. Retention of this area may represent an opportunity to off set the loss of open space referred to above.
- The proposed layout would result in a poor residential environment in part of the development; specifically the view at the end of one of the main access points to the site is dominated by boundary treatment to the detriment of the streetscene.

- It is not acceptable for the flat proposed within the development to form part of the provision of affordable housing, as this is not representative of the overall mix of housing.
- WNDC must be confident of the stability of the land before granting planning permission.
- WNDC must be satisfied in consultation with the Highway Authority that the road network of the existing St Crispins estate is sufficient to cope with the increased demand from the proposed development.
- The additional information requested by the Council's Arboricultural officer to be obtained and submitted for his further comments, which must be taken into account, prior to any decision.
- Any permission must be subject to a Section 106 agreement to secure 35% affordable housing.
- A Condition re dealing with unexpected contamination must be attached to any permission in line with the advice of the Council's Public Protection service.

2. THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This is a full application for the erection of 80 residential units on a greenfield site adjacent to the St Crispin's development. The site forms part of the Upton Lodge site for which the WNDC Committee resolved to grant outline planning permission (ref S/2006/1654/W) in November 2008, subject to a legal agreement.
- 2.2 The Borough Council Planning Committee considered the consultation re the Upton Lodge application at its meeting on 2nd April 2008, when it resolved to raise significant objection to the application in that significant issues remain outstanding and unresolved, which will have a marked impact on the success of the new community if not appropriately addressed at this outline stage.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The site comprises an area of agricultural land which slopes gently north to south down the Nene Valley. It measures some 5 ha. There is a group of trees located in the south east corner. The eastern boundary and part of the northern boundary abut the outer western fringes of the existing St Crispin's development. To the south and west is open countryside. The western boundary runs along the Borough boundary with South Northants District. The site is designated in the Northampton Local Plan as forming part of an area of Greenspace (Policy E6), part of a Locally Important Landscape Area (E9) and within a Skyline Conservation Policy Area (E7).

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 S/2006/1654/W - Outline application for development of housing (up to 1,784 dwellings), community and education facilities including a new primary school (3.8ha), employment (22,000m² floorspace), park & ride facility (1,000 car spaces) and part of a country park (7.7ha). Resolution to grant permission subject to a section 106 agreement 25/11/08 (WNDC Decision).

5. PLANNING POLICY

5.1 Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The current Development Plan comprises of the East Midlands Regional Plan, the saved policies of the Northamptonshire County Structure Plan and Northampton Local Plan 1997.

5.2 National Policies:

PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS3 – Housing
PPG14 – Development on Unstable Land

5.3 East Midlands Regional Plan 2009

Policy 2 – Promoting Better Design

Encourages highway access and parking that improves both safety and the quality of public space, whilst seeking design that reduces crime and the fear of crime.

Policy 13b - Housing Provision (Northamptonshire)

Sets the housing delivery figure for West Northamptonshire to 2026.

Policy 14 - Regional Priorities for Affordable Housing

Sets affordable housing targets and priorities for West Northamptonshire to 2026.

Policy 17 - Regional Priorities for Managing the Release of Land for Housing

Requires Local Authorities, developers and relevant public bodies to work across administrative boundaries in all of the Region's Housing Market Areas (HMAs) to ensure that the release of sites is managed to achieve a sustainable pattern of development. In West Northamptonshire to achieve this joint development plan documents will be expected, with the development of joint Core Strategies across the HMA.

Policy MKSM SRS Northamptonshire 1 & 2

New development will be delivered through a combination of urban regeneration and intensification and the development of new sustainable urban extensions, integrated with the development of enhanced public transport and new public interchanges.

5.4 Northampton Borough Local Plan

E1 – Landscape and open space
E6 – Greenspace
E7 – Skyline development
E20 – New development (design)
E40 – Crime and vandalism
H1 – Sites for major new residential development
H4 – Sites for major new residential development
H7 – Other housing development: outside primarily residential area
H8 – Other housing development: list of sites
H14 – Residential development: open space and children’s play facilities
H32 – Affordable housing

5.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Northamptonshire County Parking Standards SPG 2003
Affordable Housing SPG
Planning out Crime in Northamptonshire SPG 2004

6. CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

Internal

- 6.1 **Access Officer** – Queries the absence of a disability access statement in support of the application.
WNDC’s response is that “The prerequisite for a Disability Statement is not part of our Local Validation Requirements and one has not been submitted with this application.”
- 6.2 **Arboricultural Officer** – provides very detailed lengthy comments requesting further details in respect of trees affected by the development to be provided prior to the determination of application, which have been forwarded to WNDC, who have passed these on to the developer for action.
- 6.3 **Public Protection (Environmental Health)** - Officers from this section have no objection to the principle of the proposal. The site investigation report submitted with the application is considered to be satisfactory. The report indicates that, on the basis of the samples taken, no remediation work is required at the site. However it is possible that there may be areas of contamination on the site that have not been located by the site investigation. it is therefore recommended that any approval be subject to the condition below.

- **Reporting of Unexpected Contamination:** In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with current good practice, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with current good practice, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

6.4 **Housing Strategy** – In general Housing Strategy support this application for further residential development of St Crispin's area. There were some pre-app discussions with agents acting on behalf of the applicant regarding the delivery of affordable housing. However there are a number of issues that we feel need addressing before we can offer our full support for this application:

- The fact that the only FOG on the site has been proposed as being affordable, this is not acceptable as having this unit as affordable is not a proportional representation of the scheme units as a whole.
- At numerous points in pre-app communication I specifically requested that a small number of 4 bed houses try and be provided as affordable, as family rented accommodation is in high demand in the town. As there are currently 27x 4 bed houses for outright sale on the scheme, I feel that having 2x 4 beds for affordable replacing 2x2 bed houses is a reasonable request to show proportionality on the scheme.

The affordable housing should meet HCA Housing Quality Design Standards. There should be a 70/30 tenure split within the proposed affordable units weighted towards social rented.

10% of the units should meet NBC mobility standard or other such standard which is equivalent or higher. It is to be agreed with the Housing Strategy team the Housing Association which is to take on the affordable units.

7. **APPRAISAL**

7.1 The main issues to consider in respect of this application are as follows – Policy Considerations, Impact on Ecology / Trees, Impact on adjoining land and occupiers, the layout and design of the site and the suitability of the site for construction (including solifluction issues).

Policy Considerations.

7.2 The site is designated in the Northampton Local Plan as Greenspace (Policy E6), A Locally Important Landscape Area (E9) and an Area of Skyline Conservation Policy (E7).

- 7.3 Policy E6 states that “in Greenspace areas planning permission will only be granted where the proposed development would not unacceptably prejudice the function of the areas as listed and identified in appendix 2.” This site is defined in Appendix 2 as being a site which “defines the extent and protects the setting of built up areas” The Plan goes on to explain the function of such sites as follows “These are sites on the edge of the built up area where retention of open space is proposed in order to maintain both the character and setting of existing villages and resist the outward expansion of the built up area.”
- 7.4 Policy E1 states “planning permission will not be granted for development which by reason of its siting, design and layout is likely to be detrimental to the character and structure of the landscape.
- 7.5 This is backed by Policy E9 which states that “when considering, in the context of policy E1, the impact of proposed development upon the landscape, special importance will be attached to its effect upon the character.... of the locally important landscape areas”
- 7.6 Appendix 28 of the Plan gives greater detail as to each of the Locally Important Landscape Areas. In this case the area referred to is the St Crispins Hospital Grounds, which are considered an important part of the views to the South and West of the Town.
- 7.7 Whilst the Policies of the Local Plan seek to protect this area as Greenspace, another important consideration is the much more recent East Midlands Regional Plan, including the Regional Spatial Strategy for the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area (NB the Regional Plan was adopted in March 2009, whereas the Local Plan was adopted in 1997). This strategy includes the expansion of Northampton by means of a sustainable urban extension.
- 7.8 Furthermore, the site is included within the area of the outline planning application for the site known as Upton Lodge (ref S/2006/1654/W). This has been considered by WNDC who have resolved to grant outline planning permission, subject to a Section 106 agreement.
- 7.9 In light of this, and the more recent policy developments as set out above, although the use of this site for development is contrary to policy of the Local Plan it is considered that the principle of development is established.
- 7.10 In addition, in respect of Policy E6 it is considered that the reasoning for maintaining the land as defining the extent of the urban areas has now been overtaken by the resolution to grant outline planning permission for an area including both this site and land to the west, which would mean that this site would not longer represent the edge of the town. A new edge to the town and separation between Northampton and Harpole would be created by the country park proposed within the Upton Lodge proposal, to the west of this site.

- 7.11 As regards Policy E9 (the impact on the important landscape areas), the proposed dwellings are two or three storeys in height and are on the slope of the valley below and to the west of the key visual assets of the St Crispin's site, particularly the clock tower. Therefore, distant views of these important features would not be disrupted.

Impact on Trees

- 7.12 Comments from the Arboricultural Officer indicate that further information will be required as to which trees are to be retained and which are to be removed, and to the root protection measures proposed for those which are to be retained. This has been communicated to WNDC and it is understood the applicants are providing the required information. It is recommended that the need for precise information is emphasised in the Council's response to WNDC.
- 7.13 The plans show the removal of an area of trees and other vegetation in the south east corner of the site. It is considered that it would be preferable for this established vegetation to remain in place, as it is an attractive existing feature that could be incorporated into the development and would provide a semi-rural context for the existing bridleway, which would otherwise become sandwiched between existing urban development to the east and the proposed development to the west. Although an area of green space is proposed to separate the site from the St Crispin's site to the north along with other open space in the site, it is not considered that this justifies the loss of this existing established vegetation.
- 7.14 The site is separated from the built form of the St Crispin's site to the east by another area of green space within that site. Under the Section 106 agreement for the original St Crispin's development, this is required to be transferred as public open space to the Borough Council. The proposed vehicular access to the proposed development cuts through this area of open space. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that this is likely to prove to be the most appropriate means of accessing this site and that the loss of this small area of greenspace may be acceptable in principle. However, any loss of open space resulting from the development must be compensated. This could be provided by means of the area of land referred to in the preceding paragraph.

Impact on adjoining land and occupiers

- 7.15 Given the separation of the site from adjoining areas of land previously developed for residential use by areas of existing and proposed open space, it is not considered that any adverse impact on adjoining occupiers would result from the layout of the estate.
- 7.16 Access to the development would be by means of a new access road crossing what is currently an area of open space. Houses on the St Crispin's Estate currently overlook this. If the development proposed were to proceed, these houses would instead overlook the road thereby

diminishing their quality of outlook. However, the greater part of the area of open space would remain beyond the road and it is not considered in planning terms that the resultant outlook would be unacceptable in this regard.

Suitability of the site's ground conditions for construction.

7.17 Objections received by WNDC have raised concerns as to the stability of the land and its suitability for building, citing problems in the early 1980s at sites within East Hunsbury due to land slippage (Solifluction).

7.18 This issue is referred to in the Geo-Environmental Assessment submitted with the application. This concludes as follows –

“Based on the results, it is considered that the three slopes ... may be regarded as stable.

“It is recommended that further advice must be sought if there is any further excavation/cuffing on the proposed slope especially at the toe of the slopes or whether additional loading is to be placed on the slopes/crest or whether any further steepening of the slopes is planned.

“It must be noted the above recommendations are given based on the current site layout and levels detailed in the drawing shown in Figure 12 . Even a small change (≈0.5m) in levels may have a significant effect on slope stability, and a further assessment may therefore be required.”

7.19 On the basis of this report, it appears that the stability of the slope has been adequately demonstrated for the proposed development. However, given the apparently low tolerance for any variation it is recommended that WNDC are advised to bear this in mind when considering any variations to the scheme.

7.20 WNDC has passed a copy of the objections raised on this matter to the developer for consideration and, if received in time, their response will be reported to Committee, but if not it is recommended that WNDC are advised to take full account of this in their decision and are satisfied regarding the stability of the land before granting planning permission.

Layout and design of the site.

7.21 The proposal includes 16 x3 bed and 36 x4 or more bed market houses 10 x2 bed and 10 x3 bed social rented houses, 5 x2 bed and 5 x3 bed intermediate houses and a single 2 bed flat. It is considered that this is a broadly acceptable mix, other than in the provision of a single flat. The Council's Strategic Housing team has expressed concern that this would be an affordable unit and that this would not reflect the overall mix.

7.22 The houses proposed are broadly similar to houses previously approved and constructed within the St Crispin's site to the north and east. The house types proposed comprise a mix of two, two and a half, and three storey detached, semi detached and short rows of terraced units. As

described above there is also one flat proposed. The layout and massing proposed would preserve the important long distance views of the clock towers, as discussed above.

7.23 The layout and urban design of the proposed development is also considered generally acceptable, with spaces between buildings and garden areas being of adequate size. Nonetheless, there are some areas of concern, in particular the view northward up the first proposed access road, which would be dominated by boundary treatment of Plots 1, 2, 13, 14 and 15 and the flank of the garage of Plot 13. This could be addressed by adjusting the road position / alignment. It is recommended that this concern is also passed to WNDK to resolve prior to determination of the application.

7.24 As discussed above access to the site is across an area of open space. This would result in all traffic passing through the existing St Crispin's development. WNDK should therefore be satisfied, in consultation with the Highway Authority, that the road network of the existing estate is sufficient to cope with the increased demand arising from the proposed development.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 It is considered that whilst the proposed development is acceptable in principle, the issues set out in report, as summarised at paragraph 1.1, must be fully considered and addressed before the application is determined.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Application file N/2010/0310

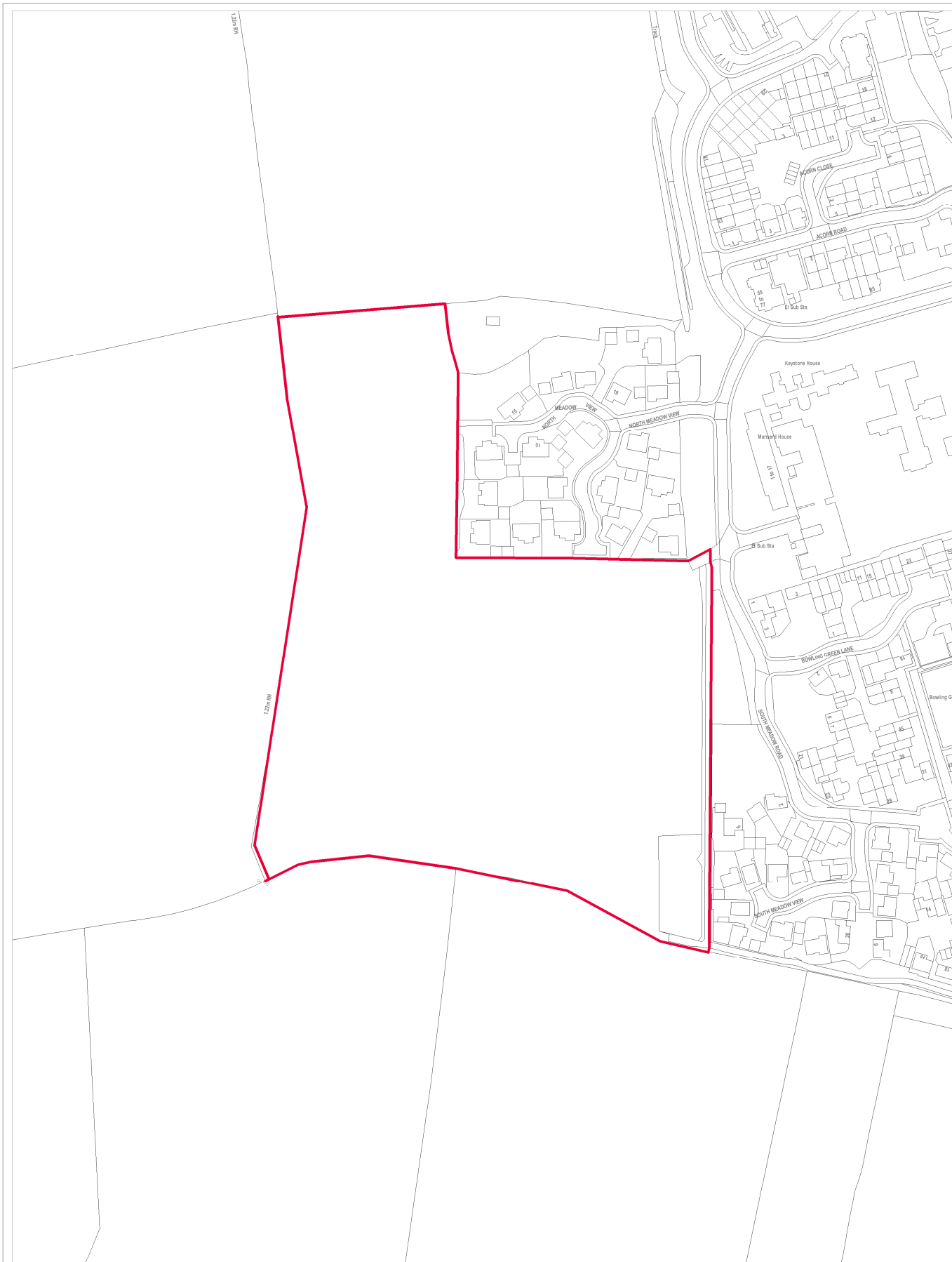
11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None

12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.

Position:	Name/Signature:	Date:
Author:	Andrew Holden	19 May 2010
Development Control Manager Agreed:	Gareth Jones	20 May 2010



Name: **Planning**
 Date: **20th May 2010**
 Scale: **1:1250**
 Dept: **Planning**
 Project: **Location Plan**

Title

Land off South Meadow Road

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