

Further Planning Comments July 2017

S/1963/15/OL - Bidwells, Bartlow Road

The earlier comments and our Holding Objection still stand. The information requested in the Holding Objection has not been produced; our objections could not have been fully assessed. The following comments update our previous comments but do not supersede them.

It is noted that there is a question over the ownership of the land, this site not being having registered Title and not documented with Land Registry. Decision on this application is premature.

The site and setting

- This site has been submitted for development for at least 30 years, and rejected for sound reasons, particularly for its association with the floodplain and impact upon the setting of the village..
- This site is outside of the village envelope, was part of an Omission Site (land East of Linton) in the Local Plan and rejected in the SHLAA assessments as having no development potential.
- Linton is a minor Rural Centre which allows a maximum of 30 houses in any development.
- The area is part of the Chalk land Character Landscape, a special landscape which deserves to be protected. The effect on the protected area has not been adequately assessed.
- The position would adversely affect the views and setting of Linton in the open landscape, being very visible rising from the river valley. The smaller site, on the crest of the hill, would spoil the long views across the valley.
- The A1307 is higher than the larger part of the site at this point. It is higher than any houses would be, so that housing would be difficult to screen. Tree barriers (to disguise the site and reduce traffic noise from the A1307) would take many years to be effective.
- Linton is hardly visible from outside, nestling into the river valley and generally set low in the landscape. This development would be evident as being out of place and disruptive to the long views and out of keeping with the natural chalk landscape .
- The expected housing would be mainly 2 to 3 stories high and, when viewed from the Leadwell Meadows/Pocket Park side of the river, would appear overbearing and dominant as the height would be accentuated by the rising ground. We ask that the site be viewed from the public park to imagine the effect on this popular public amenity and leisure area.
- Housing set along the edges of the Bartlow Road would be on the skyline and especially prominent in the Chalkland landscape, breaking up the long views out of the village
- The proposed housing does not preserve the character of the local landscape, fields, meadows, woodland and softer edge of this rural village. It would destroy the character of the area and the setting of the village and adversely impact on the protected landscape.
- Building here will neither conserve nor enhance the amenity of the village's natural, built or historic environment and resources. It certainly would not create "an attractive sense of arrival" but would impact adversely on the Special Conservation Area, listed buildings and character of the village.
- We asked for the views on arrival to the village from the south, from the valley and from the public open space at Pocket Park to be visited last time by Planning Committee before making their decision; they were not. They are very relevant to the policies now being reconsidered.

The River Granta

- The Granta is a chalk stream. Chalk streams are included on the list of priority habitats of principle importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Section 41. This has not been taken into consideration in this application.
- Chalk streams also have special EU status as being a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and as such are protected.

- The area associated with the River Granta has status as a County Wildlife Site - the effects of development in close proximity to the river must be judged with regard to its status and sensitivity - Planning Policy Statement 9.
- The seven policies within the Environment chapter of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England (GO-East, May 2008) set out the requirements for proper consideration to be given to the potential effects of development on the natural, built and historic environment of the East of England. At the local level, the planning policy documents of local planning authorities should take account of BAP and HAP targets and priorities, setting overarching policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. We feel that such consideration has not been given when assessing this development site.
- In the priority weightings at the end of RIVERS AND STREAMS INCLUDING CHALK STREAMS - LOCAL HABITAT ACTION PLAN FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH, ..."high priority given to monitor, maintain and improve water quality of those rivers identified under the water framework directive". The BAP and HAP recommendations also apply to our chalk stream and need due consideration.
- This development proposes handling surface water with a SUDs that would overflow into the Granta, bringing with it pollution from the housing and driveways. This would not meet the Councils own target to "Protect and maintain the existing extent of river and stream habitats"
- The recent wildlife Trust river survey notes that otters and other species are present in the Granta. The effect of building so close to their habitat has not been given due consideration. http://www.wildlifebcn.org/sites/default/files/otter_survey_report_2017.pdf

Surface water, river levels and risk of flooding

- This is a major issue and cause for concern for houses, the village centre and our Special Conservation Area. Surface water flooding affects many areas of the village. This comes from fields, roads (including the A1307 and the surrounding hills (Bartlow, Back and Horseheath Roads, Emsons, Finchams, Lonsdale, Lamb Fair Court, Bakers Lane, and housing off these are amongst those affected).
- The EA flood maps were updated following a meeting of Parish Councillors and land owners in May 2016. These revised maps have not been used to determine the extent of river and surface water flooding for the site.
- The application assumes the whole site is flood Zone 1 without referring to the other flood Zones within the site, and the potentials for the flood zones to extend.
- River flooding occurs when water from upstream gathers and then gushes down the valley, resulting in the river over-topping its banks and rushing downstream. Logs, fallen trees and railway sleepers from raised beds travelling extremely fast have been a particular danger...
- A Cambridge University Doctoral thesis was written to describe and analyse the problem following the 2001 floods, confirming the way that the water rapidly builds from upstream.
- The thesis written after the 2001 floods and local knowledge confirm there is more flooding than indicated in the submission.
- NPPF's 100 and 101 restrict development on floodplain and safeguard land required for current and future flood management. These should be applied to this site.
- Part of the site is on the opposite side of the river to where the Parish Council has worked to restore the function of the floodplain. Drains and river have been cleared of debris, known ditches restored, historic ditches re-dug, the pond re-dug, river banks re-formed, scrub cleared and land generally made to take flood water from rainfall, the road and river. This has been done on land owned by the village, but the restoration should continue on the other side of the river - the development site and Fleming's Field - to protect Linton and villages downstream. We are working with villages along the river on this project.
- The LOCAL HABITAT ACTION PLAN FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH considers work on rivers (such as on the Rhee and Granta) as a very important partnership opportunity. SCDC supports similar work at Trumpington Meadows and has supported us.
- Following our current restoration work, the same level of river water that caused floods in November 2014 did not cause flooding in 2016 (measured at the point where the A1307

crosses the river near the SE corner of the development site). Addition input here will affect water levels and could result in flooding downstream.

- Flooding of the village is frequent - the worst recent river flood in October 2001, saw the village centre, church, shops, pharmacy, Dog and Duck, etc., flooded and out of action for many months. Lesser flood damage occurred in December 2012 and February 2014.
- The torrential rain and hail on 18/19th July 2017 saw the Bartlow Road "running like a river", Bakers Lane flooded, and water entering houses south of Bartlow Road.
- The spine road on the smaller site would direct surface water across the Bartlow Road into the other site. Recent storm water from this field flooded onto Bartlow Road.
- The SUDs proposed as part of the development application is intended only for water management on site. Once full it would overflow into an already rising river, exacerbating the flash-flooding to which we are prone. The application accepts water storage in the flood plain, in a known area of flooding (zones 2/3), which was a noted concern of the Ecology Officer.
- The site is close to a bend in the river, an area sensitive to additional water input. The SUDs would overflow to this area.
- The A1307 - the historic Causeway - runs above the level of the site, to reduce its susceptibility to flooding and it still floods regularly. The water from the road would add to that on the site.
- The "balance ponds" and could be a hazard to residents and unpleasant when they dry out. The Council has not established the effectiveness of ponds located in the flood plain and their likely extent of river surge in time of flood.
- The loss of land for soakaway would result in more flow into the river, which can flood rapidly and with great volume (water gathers up stream and comes gushing down). The centre of the village would be under greater threat, increasingly more frequently.

Addition concerns

- The development would result in the loss of high quality farmland.
- Building here would involve total destruction of archaeology; this is not a designated site because although the existence of significant remains was expected, it was not known.
- The village as a whole is laden with evidence of continual occupation for the past 5,000 years. Archaeological investigations to the south of Cambridge Road revealed evidence of Iron Age occupation (ECB2922) and Roman Villa and Bathhouse (CHER 9841). The alignment and similarity of finds, ditches and roadway indicate it is an extension of these two Scheduled Sites. Further Anglo-Saxon cemetery evidence is known to the south east at Bartlow Road (MCB16249). We also have the Via Devana and Icknield Way passing through the village, Barrow Burials on Back Lane, Barrows and a Cursus on Horseheath Road, Neolithic remains, Celtic burials near the river, remains of religious foundations lost at the Reformation, Roman remains, the Outstanding Conservation Area, etc. It is expected that this site has more to be discovered than appears in the reports.
- The site is 3/4 mile 1km from the village centre and even further from recreation areas, schools and other amenities, so these would be unlikely to be accessed on foot. The development would add to the traffic parking problems within the village.
- The safety and capacity issues on A1307 and the hazardous junctions are a major issue. The Bartlow Road junction with A1307 is difficult and dangerous, so traffic from site would leave by the safer route of through the village, adversely impacting on our conservation area and its historic buildings. Bartlow road has parking issues already, which would be worsened.
- The infrastructure is already at /near capacity for sewage, traffic, water, and particularly for schools (currently 8 Linton children could not be given places at the Infant School, which has little scope for expansion). Cumulative infill developments will absorb any current capacity.
- It is assumed that the main route to the existing foul drain will work despite it being uphill. If it is pumped, there are implications for the old existing main. It is also assumed that there is capacity further along the system; practical experience would suggest otherwise.

Conclusion

The harm of this development to the character of the landscape, the conservation area, and the environment, significantly and demonstrably outweighs any benefit the housing would bring.