

SAWSTON PARISH COUNCIL



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South Cambridgeshire
Planning Services

FAO: Rebecca Ward – Case Officer

Change of use to residential use and erection of 158 residential units

S/3729/18/FL

Site H/1:b Land north of Babraham Road, Sawston, Cambs

Sawston Parish Council considered this application at the meeting of the Planning and Environment Sub- Committee on 23 October 2018. All Councillors were invited to the meeting in view of the importance of the application.

Before the discussion, a potential conflict of interest was considered. This concerned the gift of land to the Parish Council on the site of the Cambridge City Football Stadium by the owner of Site H/1:b. Both CAPALC and the Section 106 Officer at South Cambridgeshire DC were consulted. On the basis of their advice it was agreed to proceed to consider the application in accordance with the letter from SCDC dated 3 October 2018, but to notify SCDC of this potential conflict.

The subsequent discussion identified the following comments:

1. The proposed development appears to have a high housing density. It was noted that the average density is 30 dwellings per hectare on sites closer to the centre of Sawston compared with 43.5ph on Site H/1b. As a general principle, housing densities should decrease towards the edges of settlements. The proposal in the local plan was for 80 dwellings on the site, not 158. Therefore, the current application proposes a departure from the adopted plan.
2. We were concerned at the proposed height of 3.5 storeys (13.7m) for units adjacent to the Babraham Road industrial area. Such units would be one whole storey higher than the highest existing residential buildings in Sawston (e.g. the 2.5 storey pitched roof units opposite Bellbird school and the 3-storey flat roofed units along Green Road). Such tall residential buildings are out of character with the village and will have an adverse visual impact. The height of these buildings would be considerably greater than that of the planting intended to 'soften' the edge the built up area, thereby rendering the landscaping largely ineffective.
3. All roof and garden drainage and all vehicular trafficked areas with porous pavements will rely on soakaways and natural percolation into the soil beneath. Although percolation tests have been undertaken and show good soil drainage characteristics, inevitably particulates and contaminants will find their way into the drainage pathways, possibly leading to reduced soil porosity and drainage characteristics over time, as well as potential pollution of the aquifer. We think the flood risk assessment was prepared last summer and was based on fewer units than is now proposed. There are also concerns that there may be existing sewerage pipes on the site which have not been surveyed. The Anglian Water document was prepared in 2016 is based on fewer units, not the 158 now proposed. Anglian Water recommended a more detailed assessment in that document, a suggestion which we concur with.
4. There are effectively 4 points for vehicular access to the development, with an unknown number serving site H/1:c opposite. We would have thought a multiplicity of access points on

both sides of Babraham Road over a such a short distance would lead to considerable congestion, confusion, distraction, etc., to drivers accessing/leaving Babraham Road or driving along it. We also note that the Your speed monitor which has been operational on Babraham Road has so far recorded a prospective 620,000 car journeys out of Sawston, with a proportion above the speed limit. The 241 additional estimated cars on the site require factoring in to this.

5. The travel report includes several inaccuracies regarding frequency of bus services, and walking distances to bus stops. It is disappointing that this makes no recommendations regarding improved bus services to the new site. We are concerned about the lack of street lighting on Babraham Road along the frontage of the proposed development and would request that, if the application is approved, that street lighting is extended to the new edge of the built up area.
6. Archaeological survey – 2017 report says an appropriate investigation should be done as there is a high likelihood of sites in the area. Has this been done?
7. Health and wellbeing report – this mentions that the site has the potential to impact on disadvantaged group (paragraph 2.19). How and is this positively or negatively?
8. Arboriculture Method Statement – recommends a strategy is developed for tree crowning etc. Has this been produced?
9. Noise assessment – no mention of effect of noise from the site or restrictions on construction. We would like to know what noise restrictions apply to the site, and the impact of noise from the nearby industrial units on residents of H/1b. It should be noted that some sites on the South Cambridgeshire Business Park adjacent to the development have weak or non-existent conditions relating to noise generation. In particular, we wish to attract the attention of the Planning Authority to Plot H1 (M5) which appears to be able to operate under the historic permission S/1640/84/F (B8, no conditions relating to noise or hours of working) and Plot N (S/1782/98/F, B1c & B8) with a noise limitation condition to be monitored from a point at the northwest corner of the curtilage of 1, Sawston Rd., Babraham. This condition would be rendered unenforceable by the proposed development. The Council is concerned that were these extant permissions to be fully implemented, they would result in unacceptable disturbance to the future residents of the apartment blocks. The applicants' proposed mitigation does not appear to take into account the maximum noise levels that would be generated were these Class B permissions to be fully implemented.
10. Affordable housing – we note that this appears to be located around the perimeter and not dispersed throughout the site, as per planning guidance. We are also concerned that the apartment blocks, where much of the affordable housing is located, appear to be designed to act as a noise barrier to the rest of the estate, thus significantly disadvantaging those residents as opposed to the residents in the market housing.
11. We would like clarification on the restrictions to be applied to construction traffic movements, the route they will take and restrictions on times.
12. There is considerable concern about the impact of the development on the character of the village. Sawston has four vehicle/pedestrian entry points and each at present represents a gradual low to high density, with plenty of green space between and behind dwellings. This development will change the character of the village, adding what is in effect a bulge at one of the four entry points, with a considerable urban feel because of the density of the site planning application and lack of green space.