



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

9 September 2020

Report to: South Cambridgeshire District
Council Planning Committee

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

S/4057/19/OL – Harston

(Tanner and Hall Ltd, Station Road)

Proposal: Outline planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and provision of up to 16 dwellings up to 120sq.m of office accommodation, access, public open space and landscaping (including details of access and with all other matters reserved)

Applicant: Axis Land Partnerships Ltd.

Key material considerations:

- Principle of Development in the Green Belt
- Loss of Employment
- Location and Scale of Residential Development
- Housing Density
- Housing Mix
- Affordable Housing
- Developer Contributions
- Character and Appearance of the Area
- Heritage Assets
- Trees and Landscaping
- Biodiversity
- Highway Safety
- Flood Risk
- Neighbour Amenity
- Very Special Circumstances

Date of Member site visit: N/A

Is it a Departure Application?: No

Decision due by: 11 September 2020

Application brought to Committee because: At the request of the Local Member

Presenting officer: Karen Pell-Coggins, Senior Planning Officer

Executive Summary

1. The proposal seeks the erection of up to 16 dwellings and an employment building on the Tanner and Hall roofing merchant site which is previously developed land located outside the Harston development framework and in the Green Belt and countryside.
2. The proposal, as amended, is considered to represent inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green belt in policy terms.
3. The proposal would also result in other harm through a loss of employment land, an unsustainable location and scale of residential development, an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area in terms of the openness and rural character of the Green Belt, landscape character, and the pattern of development in the area, and damage to the setting of the non-designated heritage assets.
4. No very special circumstances have been submitted that would justify the development and clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt through inappropriateness and other harm identified.
5. The application is therefore recommended for refusal

Relevant planning history

6. S/0274/86/F - Extension to stores - Approved
S/0798/84/F - Extension to sales/display room - Approved
S/0384/82/F - Extension to offices - Approved
S/2194/79/F - Erection of a store - Approved
S/1659/75/F - Extension to stores building - Approved
C/0041/68/D - Erection of store with mess room - Approved
C/0007/68/D - Erection of offices and use of land as builders store - Approved
C/0460/67/O - Erection of store buildings and offices, change of use of station house to residential and use of land as builders store - Approved

Planning policies

7. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018**
S/1 Vision
S/2 Objectives of the Local Plan
S/3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S/4 Cambridge Green Belt
S/5 Provision of New Jobs and Homes
S/7 Development Frameworks

S/10 Group Villages
 H/8 Housing Density
 H/9 Housing Mix
 H/10 Affordable Housing
 H/12 Residential Space Standards
 E/14 Loss of Employment Land to Non Employment Uses
 HQ/1 Design Principles
 HQ/2 Public Art and New Development
 NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
 NH/4 Biodiversity
 NH/8 Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt
 NH/9 Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites and Infilling in the Green Belt
 NH/14 Heritage Assets
 CC/1 Mitigation and Adaption to Climate Change
 CC/3 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments
 CC/4 Water Efficiency
 CC/7 Water Quality
 CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems
 CC/9 Managing Flood Risk
 SC/6 Indoor Community Facilities
 SC/7 Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments
 SC/9 Lighting Proposals
 SC/10 Noise Pollution
 SC/11 Contaminated Land
 SC/12 Air Quality
 TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel
 TI/3 Parking Provision
 TI/8 Infrastructure and New Developments
 TI/10 Broadband

8. South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents

Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction - Adopted January 2020
 District Design Guide - Adopted March 2010
 Trees and Development Sites - Adopted January 2009
 Landscape in New Developments - Adopted March 2010
 Biodiversity - Adopted July 2009
 Cambridgeshire Flood and Water - Adopted November 2016

9. National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019
 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
 National Design Guide 2019

Consultation

10. **Harston Parish Council** – Strongly supports the application, as amended. The main reason for this support is the lack of affordable housing in Harston which would be slightly rectified by this proposal. If the application is to be determined by officers under delegated powers and only if they are minded to

refuse the application, we wish the application to be called-in and determined by members at planning committee.

11. **Landscape Design Officer** – Objects to the application. Comments that the proposal does not respect the strong rural local landscape characteristics and will have an adverse effect upon the openness of the Green Belt. The development would be contrary to policies S/2: Objectives of the Local Plan, HQ/1: Design Principles & NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character & NH/9: Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites and Infilling in the Green Belt.

The present site is a builder's merchants with offices, a former station house and a long building with a sales area and storage for building materials. Large areas of hard standing exist on the site used for the storage of building materials. The site is bordered by a railway line with open fields to the south, Newton road to the north and east with Tiptofts House and open fields to the west.

The site lies in an area which has no national or local designations and as such does not fall within the scope of valued landscapes under Paragraph 170 of the revised Framework. The site is located outside the existing village development framework boundary and does form part of the Greenbelt. There is a Public Rights of Way Ref: 116/4 approx..670m east of the site. There are no TPO's within or adjacent to the site which could be affected by the development. At National Level the site is situated within the National Landscape Character Area (NCA) 87: East Anglian Chalk. At local level the site is situated within The Chalklands as assessed by SCDC within District Design Guide SPD March 2010. As defined within the Character Areas the area has a strong rural character with a distinctive landform of smooth rolling chalk hills and gently undulating chalk plateau. Villages in the area typically have strong historic linear forms typically abutted by fields or woodlands that contribute to the rural character of the area.

Landscape, visual and visual amenity effect

Density – the development of 16no. dwellings within the site would not reflect the existing density of development upon the edge of the settlement and Station Road which consists of isolated large plot dwellings.

Scale – I agree with the applicant that 2 storey dwellings are typical of Harston village. However, 2 storey development to the west of the site would encroach into the open countryside and have an unacceptable adverse impact on the open countryside.

The Green Belt

As previously outlined the application is within the Green Belt. The proposal of residential dwellings upon the site would be considered as an exception as per item (e) the complete redevelopment of brownfield site of policy NH/9.

However, as previously stated the development does not reflect or respect the strong rural characteristics of Harston, the distinctive settlement pattern, density and scale particularly on the edge of the village. This would be an encroachment into the rural landscape which is predominantly large open fields. The development would be inappropriate and have an adverse effect upon the rural character and openness of the Green Belt and contrary to policy NH/9: Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites and Infilling in the Green Belt.

12. **Trees and Landscapes Officer** – Comments that trees on or adjacent site have no statutory protection.

Although the Tree Survey & Constraints AIA & Protection Plan (ref LSDP 1259-01 Rev A, date 03.02.2020) is useful does not allay my fears regarding light restriction and overhang for two of the proposed properties. The units which appear to be most affected are within the middle of the site, just to the north east of the little open space.

The trees are to the north west and could have some gentle pruning as suggested. However, my experience is that following occupation and the natural cycle of growth, honeydew drop and leaf/seed fall, the residents will seek to remove these perceived issues by pruning the trees back further. It is possible this will be inappropriate amounts and types of pruning.

I appreciate this is an outline application, but it would be remiss of me not to note this issue should the application be approved and then the reserved matters application does not address this issue.

13. **Ecology Officer** – Has no objections in principle subject to conditions. Comments that the site consists of a series of buildings and hard standing, with a shelter belt of trees on the southern and northern boundaries. The surrounding habitat comprises of agricultural land with hedges and other wooded boundaries. The site does sit within the impact risk zone of a nearby statutory protected site; however it does not meet the criteria that would require a consultation with Natural England. There are no non-statutory protected sites in the vicinity that I am aware of that are likely to be affected by this application. Species records in the area show a healthy population of likely breeding birds, invertebrates, bats, badgers, and barn owls.

In support of the outline application the applicant has submitted an Ecological Survey Report (MHE Consulting Ltd. December 2018). The document is sufficient to determine this application and no further information is required at this time.

The report has found limited ecological constraints on site; however there is a single tree that provides moderate bat roost potential, and building 3 (the long building on the southern boundary) has low bat roost potential. Other constraints found can be controlled through non-licensable methodology. Currently the three with moderate bat roost potential is to be retained. However, any lighting plan must be designed sensitively to avoid any impacts

on this three. Building 3 will require further surveys prior to the submission of any reserved matters application due to its low suitability for bat roosting.

The revised tree survey submitted has shown that some of the ash on the north west boundary are to have their spread reduced. The submitted ecology report has provided evidence that one of these trees has a potential bat roost feature; therefore if the identified tree is to have works carried out then an assessment must be done prior to works starting and included in the pre-commencement bat survey.

Lastly in accordance with NPPF paragraph 170, 174, and 175, and the Adopted South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan Policy NH/4, where applications should look to enhance, restore and add to biodiversity. Opportunities should be taken to achieve a net gain in biodiversity through the form and design of development. This should include the incorporation of bat and bird nesting boxes in 50% of dwellings within the development, use of native planting mixes and wild grasses, the inclusion of green and brown roofs, the inclusion of green walls, or the inclusion of features such as log piles, insect hotels and hedgehog connectivity. Using tools such as the DEFRA Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator can help to clearly show that the development is creating a positive gain in biodiversity.

Recommends conditions to in relation to a bat roost survey bat roost survey to include all trees subject to any form of works and buildings identified as having bat roost potential, *Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEcMP)* and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

14. **Urban Design Officer** – Objects to the application. Comments that the site is not considered to be of a sufficient size to accommodate 16 dwellings and 120 sq. m of office accommodation. The proposal would result in an overdevelopment on a Green Belt site outside the village framework of Harston, contrary to Paragraph 127 of the ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ (NPPF) (2019), Policies S/10 and HQ/1 (d) and (h) of the ‘South Cambridgeshire Local Plan’ (2018) and Paragraphs 6.72 - 6.75 and 6.82 and of the ‘South Cambridgeshire District Design Guide’ (2010), resulting in poor quality amenity space provision and poor parking layout dominating the public realm and having an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

The massing of the terraced block facing Station Road would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development. The use of a terraced block typology is not typical of the surrounding context, resulting in an unacceptably dominant and unsympathetic feature in the street-scene, and would be out of character with the village, contrary to Paragraph 127 of the ‘National Planning Policy Framework’ (NPPF) (2019), Policy HQ/1 (a) of the ‘South Cambridgeshire Local Plan’ (2018).

Massing and Scale

Policy S/10 of the 'South Cambridgeshire Local Plan' (2018) states that within the village development framework of Group Villages such as Harston, due to them being located in less sustainable locations, having fewer services and facilities, development of more than eight dwellings will not be permitted on sites. Policy S/10 also states that development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make the best use of a single brownfield site. As indicated in the submitted drawings, the proposal is for 16 dwellings plus up to 120m² of office accommodation on a site outside the village development framework. To achieve this level of development, predominantly terraced blocks with shallow gardens with a linear street layout is adopted for the development. This housing typology is out-of-character with the surroundings. The quantum of the proposed development is higher than that set out in the Local Plan and higher than the housing density of the surrounding areas. There is a lack of analysis of the site to inform the quantum of the development. An analysis should have been carried out to identify the site's constraints and opportunities, including the prevailing built form, character and materiality. This information can then be used to inform the overall design approach and quantum of development at outline stage. Therefore, the massing and scale of the proposed development is not acceptable as they would be out of character with the surrounding area.

Impact on the character of the area

Previously issued pre-application advice stated that the density of the development should be reduced because the proposed development in the pre-application layout drawing had a cramped character. Whilst the applicant has since reduced the number of proposed new houses to a total of 16, this number is considered excessive for the reasons set out above.

Whilst this is an outline planning application, due to site constraints, i.e. proximity to the railway line and the trees along the south-eastern boundary, the dwellings are likely to be sited along the north-western edge of the site as indicated on the illustrative masterplan (DWG no. J0024088_006). To accommodate 16 dwellings and on-site play space provision, it is likely that the house types would be predominantly terraced blocks with parking to the front, resulting in a housing typology and parking layout that is not characteristic of the area. The parking arrangement would be highly visible and intrusive to the street scene.

The massing of the terraced block facing Station Road would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

Pre-application advice stated that the long straight section of the road and the linear siting of the buildings are considered rather regimented in character. The road layout should be gently curved. The applicant has not responded to address this advice in the revised layout as the road and building line are both still very straight. The combined effect of the linear nature of the proposed

spine road, the terraced block arrangement and the parking layout would result in an urban character which detracts from the rural character of the area.

Whilst the masterplan is indicative, it does demonstrate that due to the progressively narrowing nature of the site towards the south-western end of the site, there is less space for frontage parking. If frontage parking arrangement is adopted to this part of the site as shown, they would be located very close to the associated dwellings with no separating distances. Of the 16 residential plots, 13 of them will have frontage parking, as shown in the 'Illustrative masterplan' drawing. This would mean that these parking spaces and parked vehicles are highly visible and intrusive to the street scene. This would also result in poor residential amenity for the residents due to car lights and engine noise. This approach to parking is not acceptable and is contrary to Paragraph 6.82 of the 'District Design Guide SPD' (2010), which states that: "Parked cars should not be allowed to dominate the street scene; they should preferably be accommodated within, beneath, or at the side or rear of buildings."

Collectively, the form of the proposed development is not considered to reflect that of the developments located to the north and south of Station Road (west of the site), which are characterised by predominantly detached dwellings loosely arranged along the road with set back and green verges from the main road. The proposed development would undermine the established character of the developments located to the west and north-west of the site because it would introduce an incongruent form of development better suited to a high density, urban context.

Residential amenity

Pre-application advice stated that residential garden areas would need to comply with the advice set out in the 'District Design Guide' (DDG). Officers measured two of the rear gardens (no plot numbers are provided on the drawing) as 42m² in size and the plot which lies second from the south west end (which has 3 or 4 bedrooms) as 55m² in size which would not be in compliance with guidance about minimum rear garden sizes in Paragraph 6.75 of the 'DDG'.

15. **Historic Buildings Officer** – Objects to the application. Comments that the application in question seeks outline consent for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site, currently a builders yard, and construction of up to 16 new dwellings. At this time, it is only the principle of development and access that is being considered, with details and layout being reserved. An indicative masterplan has been submitted, which suggests 3 groups of terraced dwellings towards the north-east of the site, closer to Station Road, a pair of semi-detached houses, and a further five detached dwellings towards the south-west, adjacent to the railway line and projecting out into the countryside.

In terms of the impact upon the historic environment, there are two elements worth noting.

Firstly, to the eastern-most corner of the site, next to the railway crossing, is the former station house. Harston Station (TL 45 SW 111) is recorded on HE PastScape as the 'Site of railway station on the Shepreth and Shelford Junction Railway, opened in 1852 and closed in 1963'. The former station house is understood to date from the mid 1800's and despite having been subject to the insertion of modern windows, doors and pebble-dash render, it is considered to possess historic and communal value, with the potential for evidential value also. Whilst its aesthetic value has undoubtedly been compromised, some pleasing details remain visible. It would therefore be preferable for any new development in the immediate vicinity to be sympathetic to its historic form, setting and primacy. With this in mind, a small terrace of two-storey houses as shown on the indicative masterplan, may be an appropriate form of development at the entrance to the site, reinforcing the setting and context of the former station house. It would also reflect the linear development pattern seen elsewhere within the village and could read as 'railway cottages' which one might expect to see in this location. However, it would be useful to see an indicative street-scene plan to comment further.

Secondly, there are Strip Lynchets recorded at Rowley's Hill, to the south of the site, which are visible on the approach to the village from the south-east along Newton Road and from the trainline, approaching from the south. These Strip Lynchets are earth terraces formed from historic farming and cultivation practices over time and are a feature of ancient field systems, usually found in the south of England. The wider setting of this historic landscape feature should be given due consideration as part of the planning process. In particular, it would be preferable that development nearest this site is more in-keeping with the open rural character of the outskirts of the village, which informs the setting of the Strip Lynchets. This site is very much at the outskirts and the approach to the village and marks the transition between the village (with the majority of the built development being to the west and some distance from the site) and the surrounding open countryside. Put simply, development of this density is not characteristic of this part of the village and would be inappropriate within this context, which is more rural and agricultural, than built-up as seen elsewhere within Harston village. Given the proximity to the countryside and the Strip Lynchets, it is considered that the indicative masterplan would not respond positively to, or preserve, the existing character or setting, and as such, a more restrained and modest approach would be required.

Taking the above into account, I consider that there is scope to achieve a modest residential scheme proposal without adversely affecting the character and setting of the historic features listed above, and in accordance with the NPPF and Local Plan policy NH/14, subject to a reduction in the number of dwellings proposed and a more sympathetic layout which responds more closely to the open, rural agricultural character of the site and the neighbouring historic features, which may be considered to be non-designated heritage assets subject to further research.

In addition to which, an assessment of potential impact to these features should accompany the submission and any subsequent RM applications.

In its present form, the application is not considered to satisfy the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF, 2019 or the thrust of policies NH/2 or NH/14 of the Local Plan, 2018.

16. **Affordable Housing Officer** – Comments that the site is situated outside the development framework of Harston and is situated in the Green Belt. The application is to demolish, the existing buildings and redevelop the site to provide 16 dwellings including 40% affordable, which would result in 6 affordable dwellings.

As the site is situated outside the development framework it should only be developed through as an exception site through, policy H/11 of the South Cambs Local Plan.

The current local housing need in Harston is for 21 dwellings. This comprises 8 x one bed, 4 x two bed, 3 x three bed and 4 x four bed for applicants under 60 and 1 x one bed, 0 x two bed, and 1 x three bed for applicants over 60.

The site should only, be developed as an exception site to provide 100% affordable housing to meet a local identified housing need in Harston.

17. **Environmental Health Officer** – Has no objections subject to conditions in relation to the provision of the recommended noise barriers and a scheme for acoustic glazing and ventilation suitable to meet the requirements to be submitted and approved at the reserved matters stage and implemented prior to first occupation.

18. **Contaminated Land Officer** – Has no objections subject to conditions in relation to a detailed investigation into contamination and remediation of any contamination found.

Comments that the site has a potentially contaminative historical usage comprising former railway sidings and latterly a builder's yard. The land is being developed into a sensitive end use (residential).

Intrusive investigation and assessment undertaken by Geosphere has identified some contaminant concentrations in exceedance of generic screening values, most likely associated with general made ground and hydrocarbons are present in the vicinity of an above ground storage tank. Elevated concentrations of CO₂ were recorded in the centre of the site, potentially associated with made ground, however the greatest thickness of made ground, 2.4m, was found in the south west of the site. Further investigation of the nature of made ground and source of ground gas was recommended. The report suggests further gas monitoring is also to be undertaken and reported as an addendum. Investigation has not been undertaken to assess the quality of the made ground beneath currently existing buildings.

Part a of the standard condition has been completed. Further investigation is recommended but would be best undertaken following demolition of buildings. There are no objections to demolition taking place prior to more detailed investigation required by the condition.

19. **Sustainability Officer** – No reply (out of time).
20. **Section 106 Officer** – Comments that in respect of this application, planning obligations are sought for:
 - a) Public Open Space
 - i) Formal sports in the form of an offsite contribution of circa £18,000 to help fund (a) additional outdoor gym equipment (b) dropped kerb for the overflow parking facility at the recreation ground and (c) improvements to the sports pavilion
 - (ii) Formal children’s play space in the form of an offsite contribution of circa £27,400 to fund several projects including (a) skatepark (b) BMX facility (c) children’s garden (d) replacement of slide (e) additional swings (f) new benches
 - (iii) Informal children’s playspace and informal open space in the form of onsite provision
 - (iv) Indoor Community Space in the form of an offsite contribution of circa £8,000 to help fund redecorations/furnishings at the pavilion and/or village hall
 - b) Monitoring Fees being a contribution of £500
21. **Local Highways Authority** – Has no objections, as amended subject to conditions. Comments that the information provided within the Technical Note dated 29th April 2020 satisfies the Highway Authority that the proposed visibility splays are suitable for the proposed access. Therefore, this removes any objection the Highway Authority has to the proposed planning application and the Highway Authority is satisfied that the proposals should have no significant impact on the public highway.

Requires conditions in relation to detailed plans of the layout of the site, including roads, footways, cycleways, buildings, visibility splays, parking provision and surface water drainage, the siting of the building(s) and means of access thereto, parking provision and turning area; and details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed streets within the development. Also requests an informative with regards to works to the public highway.
22. **Network Rail** – Comments that the proposed development is adjacent to operational railway lines and the proposed development is in close proximity to Harston Level Crossing and there is potential risk to create blind spot and signal sighting issues to passing trains. The developer should consult with NR Asset Protection (ASPRO) on the scheme for necessary consents subject to required documents being submitted to ASPRO for acceptance reviews. Consultation with relevant NR interface disciplines will be necessary and issues raised in the process addressed by the developer, prior to any works commencing on site in relation to the proposed development.

23. **Cambridgeshire County Council Flood and Water Team** – Has no objections in principle subject to conditions in relation to a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles.

The following documents have been reviewed:

- i) Surface Water and Wastewater Drainage Note 02, Cannon Consulting Engineers, Ref: Z271, Dated: 30 October 2019
- ii) Phase 1 – Desk Study and Preliminary Risk Assessment, Geosphere Environmental, Ref: 3864,DE,DESK,PC,JD,28-06-16,V1, Dated: 28 June 2019

The above documents demonstrate that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through the use of permeable paving over the car parking spaces and a filter drain picking up surface water from the road. Surface water then drains to tanked soakaways where surface water is infiltrated into the underlying ground.

Water quality has been adequately addressed when assessed against the Simple Index Approach outlined in the CIRIA SuDS Manual.

The condition should include the following: -

The scheme shall be based upon the principles within the agreed Surface Water and Wastewater Drainage prepared by Cannon Consulting Engineers (ref: Z271) dated 30 October 2019 and shall also include:

- a) Full calculations detailing the existing surface water runoff rates for the QBAR, 3.3% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) (1 in 30) and 1% AEP (1 in 100) storm events;
- b) Full results of the proposed drainage system modelling in the above-referenced storm events (as well as 1% AEP plus climate change) , inclusive of all collection, conveyance, storage, flow control and disposal elements and including an allowance for urban creep, together with an assessment of system performance;
- c) Detailed drawings of the entire proposed surface water drainage system, including levels, gradients, dimensions and pipe reference numbers;
- d) Full details of the proposed attenuation and flow control measures;
- e) Site Investigation and test results to confirm infiltration rates and any land contamination;
- f) Details of overland flood flow routes in the event of system exceedance, with demonstration that such flows can be appropriately managed on site without increasing flood risk to occupants;
- g) Full details of the maintenance/adoption of the surface water drainage system;
- h) Measures taken to prevent pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface water

The drainage scheme must adhere to the hierarchy of drainage options as outlined in the NPPF PPG.

24. **Environment Agency** – Has no objections. Agrees with the recommendations of the submitted GEO Phase 1 Contamination assessment. Requests informatives in relation to surface water and infiltration sustainable drainage systems, pollution control, foul water drainage, conservation, general issues and de-watering.

25. **Anglian Water** – Has no objections. Comments as follows: -

Assets Affected

There are assets owned by Anglian Water or those subject to an adoption agreement within or close to the development boundary that may affect the layout of the site.

Wastewater Treatment

The foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Haslingfield Water Recycling Centre that will have available capacity for these flows

Used Water Network

The sewerage system at present has available capacity for these flows.

If the developer wishes to connect to our sewerage network they should serve notice under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991. We will then advise them of the most suitable point of connection.

Surface Water Disposal

The preferred method of surface water disposal would be to a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with connection to sewer seen as the last option. Building Regulations (part H) on Drainage and Waste Disposal for England includes a surface water drainage hierarchy, with infiltration on site as the preferred disposal option, followed by discharge to watercourse and then connection to a sewer.

From the details submitted to support the planning application the proposed method of surface water management does not relate to Anglian Water operated assets. As such, we are unable to provide comments on the suitability of the surface water management.

Requests informatives with regards to the above considerations.

26. **Cambridgeshire County Council Growth Team** – Requires contributions as follows: -

Early Years - £0

Primary - £0.

Secondary - £95,496 towards expansion of Melbourn Village College by 150 places

Libraries - £600 towards stock resources

Strategic Waste - £0
Monitoring - £150

27. **Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team** – Has no objections subject to a scheme in relation to an archaeological investigation of the site and recording of any findings.

Comments that our records indicate that this site lies in an area of archaeological potential, situated to the south of Station Road in Harston. The site is located so that the eastern boundary of the application area is the Shepreth Branch of the Great Eastern Railway (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference MCB24042). The 1st and 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey maps demonstrate that the railway does not run within the application area. Adjacent to the north east corner of the proposed site is the former location of 19th century constructed Harston Station (MCB24043), which is not included in the development.

Surrounding the application area is cropmark evidence of settlement and occupation. For example, to the north east are rectilinear enclosures (MCB24067, MCB24065, 09717) and linear features (09627). To the south east are enclosure (08650), ring ditches (08647, 08922) and lynchet earthworks (04043). While to the south west is cropmark evidence of Iron Age-Roman settlement (04122a), the majority of which is the designated settlement site at Manor Farm (National Heritage List for England reference 1006809, CHER ref DCB173), rectilinear enclosures (08646) and D-shaped enclosures (09224). Further cropmark evidence of linear features (08963), enclosures (08944), Bronze Age/Iron Age remains and evidence of medieval and post-medieval cultivation visible as ridge and furrow (MCB24064) are recorded to the west.

28. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** – Requires a condition in relation to the provision of fire hydrants.

Representations from members of the public

29. Six representations have been received in relation to the application from local residents.
30. The following concerns have been raised: -
- i) Flood risk due to changes in levels.
 - ii) Protection of trees along the north western boundary of the site.
 - iii) Loss of light to dwellings from trees.
 - iv) Highway safety as access within 60mph speed limit and lack of visibility.
 - v) Traffic survey numbers and speeds questioned and request for extension of speed limit to south of railway.
 - vi) Height of buildings.
 - vii) Adequate water supply.
 - viii) Development would prohibit future reinstatement of use of the station.
 - ix) High density housing with small gardens.
 - x) Out of keeping with rural character of the area.

- xi) Need for smaller properties rather than larger properties.
- xii) The loss of the evergreen trees along the south east boundary would open up views of the site.
- xiii) Noise and disturbance from increased number of movements.
- xiv) Adequate parking for the office building and Station House.
- xv) Lack of notification of application.

31. The following benefits have been raised: -
- i) Principle of site for housing.
 - ii) Provision of affordable housing.

The site and its surroundings

32. The site is located outside the Harston village development framework and in the Green Belt and countryside. It is situated on the south eastern edge of the village to the south west of Station Road. The site measures approximately 0.64 of a hectare in area. It currently comprises a builders merchants which consists of a two-storey, brick office building and one and a half storey, brick and metal clad warehouse building on the north eastern part of the site and open storage, hard surfacing and single storey buildings on the south western part of the site. A row of mature trees run along the north western boundary and a row of evergreen trees run along the south eastern boundary. The site is situated in Flood Zone 1 (low risk).
33. Station House is a residential property to the north of the site with Station Road and open agricultural land beyond. and there is a level crossing to the east on Station Road. The Cambridge to London railway line lies beyond the south eastern boundary with open rising agricultural land beyond. Open agricultural land lies to the west. Tiptofts is a residential property to the west.

The proposal

34. The proposal seeks outline planning permission for the erection of up to 16 dwellings, up to 120sq.m of office accommodation, public open space following demolition of the existing buildings. Access forms part of the application with the layout of the site, scale of the buildings, appearance of the buildings and landscaping of the site reserved matters for later approval.
35. Six of the dwellings (40%) would be affordable to meet local needs. The size and tenure mix of the dwellings will be agreed with the Council's housing officer. Ten dwellings would be available for sale on the open market. The indicative housing mix consists of 5 x two bed dwellings, 6 x three bed dwellings and 5 x four bed dwellings.
36. The new employment building would have 120 square metres of office floorspace for approximately 8 employees. This could be occupied as one single unit, four smaller units or flexible accommodation.
37. The access would measure 5 metres in width and have 1.8 metre wide footways to each side.

38. An illustrative plan has been submitted with the application. This shows a terrace of three dwellings along the Station road frontage and a linear form of residential development to the rear consisting of 13 dwellings facing south east. Each dwelling would have two vehicle parking spaces. The office building would be to the rear of Station House. Four vehicle parking spaces would be provided to the rear. A building heights plan has been submitted that shows that the new buildings would be two storeys in height. An area of public open space measuring 730 square metres in area would be provided between the dwellings. The existing trees along the north western boundary would be retained. The existing evergreen trees along the south eastern boundary would be removed and replaced with new landscaping.

Planning assessment

39. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application relate to: -
- i) Whether the proposal would represent inappropriate development in principle in the Green Belt;
 - ii) Whether the proposal would result in any other harm in terms of the, loss of employment, location and scale of residential development, housing density, housing mix, affordable housing, developer contributions and the impacts of the development upon the character and appearance of the area, heritage assets, trees and landscaping, biodiversity highway safety, flood risk and neighbour amenity; and,
 - iii) Whether there are any very special circumstances that would clearly outweigh harm through inappropriateness and any other harm identified to justify the development.

Principle of Development in the Green Belt

40. The site is located outside the Harston development framework and in the Green Belt. It is a previously developed site.
41. Policy S/4 of the Local Plan states that a Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge that will define the extent of the urban area. New development in the Green Belt will only be approved in accordance with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework.
42. Policy NH/9 states that redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites and Infilling in the Green Belt will be inappropriate development except for, amongst other criteria, the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.
43. Paragraph 143 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

44. Paragraph 144 states that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
45. Paragraph 145 states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are, amongst other criteria, limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.
46. The existing site comprises a two-storey office building, one and half storey warehouse building and single storey storage buildings together with open storage and hardstanding.
47. The two-storey office building and one and half storey warehouse building are situated on the north eastern part of the site close to Station Road with the access between the buildings. The single storey buildings, open storage, and hardstanding are situated on the south western part of the site.
48. The total footprint of existing buildings on the site is calculated at 840 square metres and approximately. This would result in built form covering 13% of the site area. The existing hardstanding and storage that covers the remainder of the site is 5,560 square metres. This extends to 87% of the site area.
49. The volume of existing buildings on the site is calculated at approximately 3,848 cubic metres. The volume including the open storage to the rear that has a maximum permitted height of 2.4 metres as a condition under planning consent reference C/0007/68/D is calculated at approximately 8,728 cubic metres.
50. The application does not include the layout and scale of the buildings. However, the illustrated plan submitted shows that the proposed development would result in two-storey buildings in the north eastern and south western parts of the site. There would be an area of public open space centrally and the employment building and access would be to the east.
51. The total footprint of proposed buildings on the site is calculated at approximately 926 square metres in area. This would increase the built footprint on the site to 14%. The proposed hardstanding is calculated at approximately 2,242 square metres in area and 35% of the site area. The new

buildings would increase the footprint of built form on the site by 1% but would decrease the hardstanding and storage area by 52%.

52. The volume of proposed buildings on the site would be approximately 6,954 cubic metres. This would result in an increase of 3,106 cubic metres in volume of the volume of buildings on the site. The overall volume including the open storage area would be reduced by 1,774 cubic metres. However, it should be noted that this is a worst-case scenario and that open storage currently on the site is limited in scale.
53. Whilst it is acknowledged that the overall volume of built development on the site and hardstanding would decrease from that currently permitted, National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume.
54. The development of up to 16 dwellings and an employment building is considered to result in a significant increase in built form on the south western part of the site from the existing situation. The main bulk of the built development is currently concentrated in the north western part of the site close to Station Road. The development is highly visible from Station Road from the access point but there are limited views of the existing buildings from the south east and north west of Station Road due to their position on the site and mature landscaping screening along the boundaries.
55. The proposed two-storey buildings would be closer to Station Road than the existing development and extend into the south western part of the site that is currently single storey in height. In addition, the existing evergreen screen along the railway would be removed and replaced with native landscaping. The proposal would result in a more dominant development from Station Road adjacent to the access and open up views of the site from Station Road to the south east. This would consequently lead to an increase in built development on these highly visible parts of the site surrounded by agricultural land which is considered to cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
56. Although it is noted that there would be some gaps between the buildings particularly in the form of the open space, gardens and parking areas, these would be limited in scale, positioned between the buildings and would not be so readily apparent from close views on Station Road though the access of long distance views of the site from the south east of Station Road.
57. The existing landscaping on the site is not considered to contribute to the openness of a site as this relates to built development.
58. In summary, the proposal would represent inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt in policy terms.
59. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies S/4 and NH/9 of the Local Plan.

Other Harm

Loss of Employment

60. Policy E/14 of the Local Plan states that the conversion, change of use or redevelopment of existing employment sites to non-employment uses within or on the edge of development frameworks will be resisted unless one of the following criteria is met:
 - a. It is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand. Applications will need to be accompanied by documentary evidence that the site is not suitable or capable of being made suitable for continued employment use. Evidence would be required that the property has been adequately marketed for a period of not less than twelve months on terms that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises.
 - b. The overall benefit to the community of the proposal outweighs any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises.
 - c. The existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution, or unacceptable levels of traffic and any alternative employment use would continue to generate similar environmental problems.
61. The site is considered to be located on the edge of the Harston development framework given its proximity to the built-up development within the village.
62. The whole of the site is currently in employment use as a roofing merchants. This includes an office building, warehouse building, storage buildings and open storage. It has 8 employees.
63. The proposed development would replace the existing employment use with an office building comprising 120 square metres of gross office space for 8 to 13.5 employees based upon the guidance in the Homes and Communities Agency Employment Density Guide (3rd Edition) along with up to 16 dwellings.
64. The site has not been marketed for employment purposes and the existing use is not considered to be generating environmental problems.
65. The applicants consider that the proposal would provide overall benefit to the community that would outweigh any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises. The development would provide at least the same amount of employment as the existing site depending upon the type of office use, six affordable dwellings, and ten market dwellings.
66. The provision of at least the same amount of employment as the existing site is welcomed together with provision of six affordable dwellings that would contribute towards the local need for 21 affordable dwellings in the village of Harston and ten market dwellings would contribute to the overall need for dwellings in the district.

67. It is noted that the village comprises an existing employment site at the Button End Industrial Estate along with commercial premises such as a public house, shops, and car/motorcycle showrooms.
68. However, these benefits are not considered to outweigh the adverse effect upon employment opportunities through the loss of the employment land for a non-employment use. It is considered that the proposal would result in a substantial loss of employment land that could be utilised for further employment uses with a significant number of employees and provide economic growth in the village that would contribute to the rural economy.
69. Notwithstanding the above, the harm to the openness of the Green Belt and countryside, character and appearance of the area and non-designated heritage assets discussed later in this report also need to be taken into consideration when arriving at a balanced view.
70. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy E/14 of the Local Plan.

Location and Scale of Residential Development

71. Policy S/7 states that outside development frameworks, only allocations within Neighbourhood Plans that have come into force and development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside or where supported by other policies in this plan will be permitted.
72. Policy S/10 identifies Harston as a Group Village. Residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the development frameworks of Group Villages. Development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make the best use of a single brownfield site.
73. The proposal seeks the erection of up to 16 dwellings on a brownfield site outside the development framework.
74. The scheme would not comply with the strategy for the location and scale of residential developments that are directed to locations with easy accessibility to a wide range of services and facilities in order to safeguard against incremental growth in unsustainable locations.
75. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies S/7 and S/10 of the Local Plan.

Housing Density

76. The site measures approximately 0.64 of a hectare in area. The net developable area of the site for residential purposes excluding the public open space is approximately 0.55 of a hectare in area. The erection of 16 dwellings would equate to a density of 29 dwellings per hectare. This would comply with

the required of an average net density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) in Rural Centres, Minor Rural Centre villages, and Group villages.

77. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy H/8 of the Local Plan.

Housing Mix

78. The indicative housing mix put forward for the site is 5 x two bed dwellings, 6 x three bed dwellings and 5 x four bed dwellings. The housing mix has not been split between market and affordable dwellings but it has been advised that the mix will be based upon the needs of the district at the time of any reserved matters application. A condition would be attached to any consent to ensure that the market housing mix complies with policy and there is justification for any local circumstances.

79. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy H/9 of the Local Plan.

Affordable Housing

80. 6 of the 16 dwellings (40%) would be affordable to meet local needs. The indicative housing mix put forward for the site is 5 x two bed dwellings, 6 x three bed dwellings and 5 x four bed dwellings. The housing mix has not been split between market and affordable dwellings but it has been advised that the mix will be based upon the needs of the local community through consultation with the Council's Housing Team at the time of any reserved matters application. No details of the tenure mix have been submitted. The Council normally requires 70% affordable rented and 30% intermediate/shared ownership unless there is adequate justification for a different tenure mix. The dwellings would be secured as affordable in perpetuity through a Section 106 agreement.
81. The provision of 6 dwellings would comply with the requirement of 40% affordable housing on sites with developments of more than 11 dwellings required by Policy H/10 of the Local Plan.
82. However, the Affordable Housing Officer has advised that due to the location of the site outside the development framework, the site should comprise 100% affordable housing in accordance with Policy H/11 of the Local Plan.
83. Officers acknowledge that policy H/11 of the Local Plan provides support for affordable housing developments to meet identified local housing needs on small sites adjoining a development framework boundary. However, the application has not been put forward as a rural exception site and must be assessed on the basis of the scheme submitted.
84. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy H/10 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

85. When securing planning obligations from new development the Local Planning Authority must be satisfied that such requests are compliant with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) and paragraph 56 National Planning Policy Framework.
- (i) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - (ii) Directly related to the development; and
 - (iii) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

Public Open Space

86. Policy SC/7 of the Local Plan states that all housing developments will contribute towards Outdoor Playing Space (including children's play space and formal outdoor sports facilities), and Informal Open Space to meet the need generated by the development in accordance with the standards set out in the policy.
87. Outdoor play space, informal open space and allotments and community allotments is 3.2 hectares per 1,000 people comprising:
- a. Outdoor Sport – 1.6 hectares per 1,000 people
 - b. Open Space – 1.2 hectares per 1,000 people
 - c. Allotments and community Orchards – 0.4 hectares per 1,000 people
88. Subject to the needs of the development the open space requirement will consist of:
- d. Formal Children's Play Space – 0.4 hectares per 1,000 people
 - e. Informal Children's Play Space – 0.4 hectares per 1,000 people
 - f. Informal Open Space – 0.4 hectares per 1,000 people
89. Based the indicative housing mix (5 x 2 bed, 6 x 3 bed, 5 x 4 bed) the following would be required:
- i) Formal sports space – 637 m²
 - ii) Formal children's play space – 159 m²
 - iii) Informal children's play space – 159 m²
 - iv) Informal open space – 159 m²

Outdoor Sport

90. The Recreation and Open Space Study 2013 showed that Harston required 2.82 ha of sports space whereas it has 2.79 (i.e. a deficit of 0.03 ha).
91. Harston has single recreation ground containing a pavilion and a single full-sized football pitch.
92. An off-site contribution is required due to the increase in demand for provision of outdoor sports provision to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development.

93. Harston Parish Council has said that offsite sports contributions would be used to fund (a) additional outdoor gym equipment (b) dropped kerb for the overflow parking facility at the recreation ground and (c) improvements to the sports pavilion.
94. A contribution of circa £18,000 is required based on the indicative housing mix but the actual cost will be calculated at reserved matters.

Formal and Informal Children's Playspace

95. The Recreation and Open Space Study July 2013 showed that Harston has 0.16 ha of children's play space whereas it requires 1.41 ha (i.e. a deficit of 1.25 ha).
96. Harston has a play area at the recreation ground providing several play features for younger and older children.
97. Based on the housing mix the development would be required to provide 94 m² of formal play space and 94 m² of informal play space.
98. No formal children's playspace would be provided on site so an off-site contribution is required due to the increase in demand for provision of children's formal playspace provision to mitigate the impacts of the proposed development.
99. Harston Parish Council has said that offsite children's play space contributions would be used to fund several projects including (a) skatepark (b) BMX facility (c) children's garden (d) replacement of slide (e) additional swings (f) new benches.
100. A contribution of £27,000 is required based on the indicative housing mix but the actual cost will be calculated at reserved matters.
101. A Local Area of Play (LAP) would be provided on site that measures at least 92 square metres in area. This would represent an adequate amount of informal children's playspace to mitigate the impact of the development.

Informal Open Space

102. The Recreation and Open Space Study July 2013 showed that Harston has 0.36 ha of informal open space whereas it needed 0.70 (i.e. a deficit of 0.34 ha).
103. An area of informal public open space that measures at least 159 square metres in area would be provided on the site. This would represent an adequate amount of informal open space to mitigate the impact of the development.

Community Facilities

104. Policy SC/6 of the Local Plan states that all housing developments will contribute towards the provision of indoor community facilities to meet the need generated by the development. Contributions will be based on a standard of 111m² of such floorspace per 1,000 additional population.
105. In accordance with the policy Harston needs 186 m² of indoor community space whereas it has 305 m² (i.e. a surplus of 118 m²).
106. Based on the likely number of people arising from the development an area of circa 4.5 m² is required.
107. Harston is served by Harston Village Hall which the audit described as 'good'. It went on to say "The main hall building is showing signs of aging, but retains character. Main hall flooring, and in smaller meeting rooms, has been recently replaced and in good order. No evidence of energy efficiency measures - insulation likely to be problematic. Plans for a new facility are being explored".
108. Harston Parish Council has said offsite community facility contributions would be used to help fund improvements to either the pavilion or the village hall.
109. A financial contribution of circa £8,000 is required in accordance with the indicative housing mix with the actual contribution calculated at reserved matters stage.

Monitoring

110. To ensure the proper and timely provision and perpetual usage of onsite infrastructure (including public open space, children's play areas and affordable housing) the District Council is seeking to secure a contribution towards fulfilling its monitoring function. The estimated number of hours results in a contribution of £500.

Education

Early Years

111. The development is expected to generate 5 children of early year's age of whom 4 would be eligible for funded places. There two childcare providers in the primary school's catchment, Harston and Newton Playgroup based at the primary school and Little Hands Nursery School, Newton. The two settings have a total capacity of 73 x 15 hour places.
112. When including all the new developments a total of 62 15 hour places will be required. 62 x 15 hour places is below the current capacity, therefore it is not necessary to seek contributions.

Primary School

113. In 2019/20 Harston & Newton Primary School had a PAN of 25 and this means the school currently has an overall capacity of 175 pupils.
114. There are forecast to be 7 children generated by this development. This development will take the catchment population to $125 + 7 = 132$. 132 is below the capacity of the school, so, it is recommended that contributions do not need to be sought.

Secondary School

115. Melbourn Village College is the catchment secondary school for Harston. It has a PAN of 148 and this means the school currently has an overall capacity of 740 pupils.
116. There are forecast to be 4 children generated by this development. There are also a number of other developments either underway or with planning consent in the secondary catchment. Hence, even allowing for the movement of children to other secondary schools, there will be a shortfall in places. Discussions have begun with the school about further expansion plans, hence contributions are sought from this development.
117. A project to expand Melbourn Village College by 150 additional places. As there is not a detailed costed project, contributions will be sought using the scorecard costs for education. The indicative secondary contribution is £95,496 ($£23,874 \times 4 = £95,496$).

Libraries and Lifelong Learning

118. This development would therefore generate an additional 40 new residents (16 dwellings x 2.5 average household size). The number of new residents will put considerable pressure on the library and lifelong learning service in the village.
119. A contribution is required based on a rate of £15 per head of population increase. This would result in a total of £600. This figure represents the proportionate cost of mitigate the increased demand through the enhancement of the mobile library provision serving Harston. Contribution is requested towards stock resources to meet the need of the new population.

Strategic Waste

120. No contributions are required towards strategic waste.

Conclusion

121. The requested off-site financial contributions together with maintenance of the public open space are considered to comply with the CIL Regulations. They would be secured through a Section 106 agreement. The applicants have confirmed that the contributions are agreed.

122. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy TI/8 of the Local Plan.

Character and Appearance of the Area

123. The site is located outside the development framework boundary and in the Green Belt.

124. It is not situated in an area with any national or local designations and as such does not fall within the scope of valued landscapes under Paragraph 170 of the NPPF.

125. The site is located within the East Anglian Chalk Landscape Character Area. The area has a strong rural character with a distinctive landform of smooth rolling chalk hills and gently undulating chalk plateau. Villages in the area typically have strong historic linear forms typically abutted by fields or woodlands that contribute to the rural character of the area.

126. The southern side of Station Road comprises a mainly linear form of residential development parallel to the road. The exceptions are the development of the agricultural complex at Baggot Hall and the site that is in commercial use but was formerly the railway yard. These developments currently have an informal layout with buildings set in groups. The current site is viewed as fairly built-up from the access on to Station Road but there are limited views of the buildings from the railway crossing and south eastern part of Newton Road due to the existing row of leylandii trees.

127. A Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal and Green Belt Openness Appraisal has been submitted with the application. The report comments that the existing views of the site from the south east of Newton Road are of the hedgerow and leylandii trees that create a screen and an abrupt edge to the settlement. The site is seen alongside existing development at Lawrence Lea to the north of Station Road that defines the village edge. The leylandii trees and railway indicate a clear edge to the village but there are dark and incongruous that contrasts with the character of broadleaved trees. The views from the railway crossing are mostly of the leylandii screen that creates an abrupt harsh edge to the village.

128. The application does not include the layout and scale of the buildings. However, the illustrated plan submitted shows that the proposed development would result in two-storey residential development in a formal, linear layout at right angles to Station Road across the majority of the site.

129. The development is not considered to reflect or respect the strong rural characteristics of Harston, the distinctive settlement pattern, and scale particularly on the edge of the village. It would result in greater encroachment into the rural landscape which is predominantly large open fields and harm the landscape character of the area.

130. Whilst it is noted that the existing leylandii screen is visible, it is not considered to create a particularly harsh and abrupt edge to the village and has a role in providing a screen to the existing development on the site so that this side of Station Road retains a fairly rural character notwithstanding that it is not typical of the landscape character of the area.
131. The scale of the development is considered to introduce two-storey built form into an area that projects beyond the existing position of similar scale development. Although the landscaping would be more typical of the landscape character of the area, it would allow views through to the development from the south east of Newton Road. The view perceived, particularly during the winter, would be a substantial increase in built form on the site that is surrounded by open agricultural land. This would lead to a visually intrusive development that would reduce the openness of the Green Belt and countryside at the entrance to the village. It is not agreed that the development would have a neutral effect with a medium magnitude at Year 1 and a beneficial effect with a medium magnitude at Year 15 when the planting has established.
132. The layout of the development is considered to be out of keeping with the informal, linear pattern of development parallel to Station Road and would detract from the character and appearance of the south western side of Station Road.
133. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a similar style of development on the northern side of Station Road, this is considered materially different as it is a larger development that is situated adjacent to the main built-up part of the village and does not have the same character and the southern side of Station Road.
134. A central area of open space would be provided on site surrounded by dwellings. This would include a Local Area of Play (LAP). The space would measure 740 square metres in area. The location and size of the space is considered satisfactory.
135. Although it is noted that from the Axonometric Plan submitted the form and design of the dwellings appear rather urban in appearance and the illustrative plans shows the provision of vehicle parking to the front of the dwellings that would dominate the street scene, these detailed issues are matters reserved for later approval and will be considered at this stage.
136. No details of materials have been submitted but the submitted Axonometric Plan shows buff bricks for the walls and red and grey tiles for the roofs. These materials are likely to be acceptable but will be considered further at the reserved matters stage.
137. A condition would be attached to any consent to ensure that the dwellings would meet residential space standards in terms of the provision of an adequate level of internal accommodation. The gardens are likely to meet the

recommended standards set out in the Design Guide and will be considered further at the reserved matters stage.

138. Given the above concerns in relation to the general scale and layout of the development , it is not considered that 16 dwellings and an employment building can be accommodated on the site without resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
139. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies NH/2, HQ/1 and NH/8 of the Local Plan. However, it would comply with Policy H/12 of the Local Plan.

Heritage Assets

140. The site is situated within close proximity to two non-designated heritage assets.
141. Station House to the north east of the site is the former railway station on the Shepreth and Shelford Junction Railway. It appears to date from the mid 1800's and has some historic and communal value with the potential for evidential value notwithstanding the insertion of modern windows, doors and pebble-dash render. Any development in the immediate vicinity should be sympathetic to its historic form, setting and primacy.
142. Rowley's Hill to the south of the site has Strip Lynchets which are earth terraces formed from historic farming and cultivation practices over time and are a feature of ancient field systems, usually found in the south of England. The wider setting of this historic landscape feature should be given due consideration and any development should respect its rural character.
143. The application does not include the layout and scale of the buildings. However, the illustrated plan submitted shows that the proposed development would result in two-storey residential development in a formal, linear layout at right angles to Station Road across the majority of the site.
144. The proposed development, by reason of its in-depth formal layout and two-storey scale, is not considered to preserve the existing yard setting of Station House non-designated heritage asset which is currently viewed within the context of an informal arrangement of buildings on the site that is fairly similar to the historic layout.
145. The proposed development, by reason of its in-depth formal layout and two-storey scale, is not considered to preserve the or the rural setting of Rowleys Hill non-designated heritage asset which is currently viewed from Station Road within the context of open agricultural land, low single storey buildings, an informal layout and landscaping.
146. The development would consequently result in less than substantial harm to the significance of these non-designated heritage assets.

147. The site lies in an area of archaeological potential. The development is not considered to harm archaeological interests providing a condition is attached to any consent in relation to an archaeological investigation of the site and preservation of an important findings.
148. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy NH/14 of the Local Plan.

Trees and Landscaping

149. The site currently comprises a row of tall leylandii trees along the south eastern boundary. There is also a row of mature trees along the north western boundary within the ownership of Tiptofts House. The trees do not have any statutory protection.
150. A Tree Survey and Constraints Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Plan has been submitted with the application. The existing leylandii trees on the site would be removed. These trees are not of high quality and are not considered to provide an important contribution to the overall visual amenity of the area notwithstanding that they screen the existing buildings. No objections are therefore raised to their removal.
151. The existing mature trees adjacent to the site would be retained. The development is not considered to encroach into the root protection area of the trees or affect the canopy. However, concerns have been raised over the potential need to reduce the impact of the trees upon the dwellings, particularly the plot to the north west of the open space.
152. The application does not include the layout and scale of the buildings. However, it is considered that the scale of the proposed development could be accommodated on the site without compromising these existing important mature trees providing a condition is attached to any consent to ensure protection of the trees as shown on the submitted plan.
153. New landscaping would be provided within the site to compensate for the trees lost and enhance the quality of the development. The indicative landscape plan shows a new planting along the south eastern boundary, within the public open space and to the front and rear of dwellings. This is supported and a condition would be attached to any consent to secure a detailed scheme with appropriate native planting that respects the landscape character of the area.
154. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy NH/4 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity

155. The site consists of habitats in the form of existing buildings, hardstanding and trees.
156. An Ecological Survey Report has been submitted with the application. The buildings on site were assessed as having Low and Negligible Bat Roosting

Potential and one Ash tree was considered to have a potential bat roost feature. Building 3 and the tree with the bat roost feature requires further surveys prior to the submission of any reserved matters application and would be secured through a condition attached to any consent.

157. The trees and scrub have some potential for bird nesting. There are no ponds within 500 metres of the site that would have potential for amphibians. The site is not suitable for reptiles. No evidence of badgers has been recorded on the site.
158. Mitigation in the form of the removal of vegetation outside the bird breeding season and lighting together with is considered satisfactory to ensure that the development would not adversely affect any protected species.
159. Biodiversity enhancement on the site would be achieved through planting native trees and shrubs.
160. Conditions would be attached to any consent in relation to a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEcMP) to ensure adequate mitigation and enhancement together with a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) to ensure biodiversity on the site is maintained in the future.
161. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy NH/4 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety

162. The access to the site is off Station Road which is a busy through road with a speed limit of 60 miles per hour. There is a footway to the west side and a level crossing for the railway line to the east.
163. The existing site is a roofing merchants. A survey was carried out to determine the existing level of traffic at the site. The results show that there are 84 vehicular trips per day with a very limited number during the am and pm peak periods.
164. The TRICS database has been used to predict the proposed level of traffic from the development. The traffic levels are estimated to be 91 vehicular trips per day with a limited number during the am and pm peak periods.
165. The development would result in a minor increase in traffic generation to and from the site. However, the traffic would not be commercial in nature as existing. The development is not therefore considered to affect the capacity and functioning of the public highway.
166. A revised speed and volume survey for traffic travelling along Station Road has been carried out to determine the vehicular visibility splays required for the access. Concerns have been raised by the neighbour to the data but this has been accepted by the Local Highways Authority. The results show that the speed of vehicles is much lower than the speed limit. The design of the proposed access would therefore accord with the required standards in terms

of its 5.5 metres width and vehicular visibility splays measuring 2.4 x 54 metres to the east and 2.4 metres x 124 metres to the west.

167. Conditions would be attached to any consent in relation to detailed plans of the layout of the site, including roads, footways, cycleways, buildings, visibility splays, parking provision and surface water drainage, the siting of the building(s) and means of access thereto, parking provision and turning area; and details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed streets within the development to ensure that the development would not be detrimental to highway safety. An informative would also be attached with regards to works to the public highway.
168. The site is considered to be located in a sustainable location with easy access to services and facilities in the village by walking and cycling as discussed earlier in the report.
169. Two vehicle parking spaces would be provided on site for each dwelling that would accord with the required standards.
170. Four vehicle parking spaces would be provided on site for the B1a office use. The standards require 1 space per 25 square metres of floorspace. This would result in the requirement for 5 spaces. One additional space could be accommodated on the site to provide an adequate amount of parking that would accord with the standards and this matter will be considered further at the reserved matters stage,
171. No cycle parking has been shown within the development. Adequate cycle parking could be provided on the site for the residential and office uses and this matter will be considered further at the reserved matters stage.
172. The proposal would therefore comply with Policies TI/2 and TI/3 of the Local Plan and paragraph 109 of NPPF.

Flood Risk

173. The site is located within flood zone 1 (low risk). It is not situated in close proximity to any fluvial sources and the development is not considered to be at significant risk from flooding.
174. A Surface Water and Wastewater Drainage Note has been submitted with the application. This states that the surface water strategy for the development will be through infiltration as tests have demonstrated that this method of disposal is acceptable and sufficient storage will be provided on site to manage the 1 in 1000 year storm plus 40 % allowance for climate change. Features will include storage crates or similar, permeable paving and grass filter drains that would allow infiltration into the ground. The development is not considered to increase the risk of flooding to the site and surrounding area.
175. Conditions would be attached to any consent to secure a suitable surface water drainage scheme along with details of its long-term maintenance.

176. The development would therefore comply with Policies CC/7, CC/8 and CC/9 of the Local Plan.

Neighbour Amenity and Amenity of Future Occupiers

177. The development would be located adjacent to two existing residential properties at Station House and Tiptofts. The development is unlikely to result in an unduly overbearing mass, significant loss of light, severe loss of privacy or unacceptable increase in the level of noise and disturbance to occupiers of the adjoining dwellings. However, these matters will be considered further at the reserved matters stage.
178. Conditions would be attached to any consent in relation to the hours of use of site machinery and deliveries during construction.
179. The site is located adjacent to Cambridge to London railway line. A Noise and Vibration Assessment has been submitted with the application. The development would result in a number of dwellings facing towards the railway line with gardens to the rear.
180. The results of the survey carried out show that the existing noise levels from the railway are between 64 and 67 dB in the day (07.00 to 23.00) and between 57 and 62dB at night 23.00 to 07.00).
181. Noise levels at the ground and first floor windows of the dwellings need to not exceed 35dB for a living room window in the daytime, 40dB for a dining room in the daytime and 30dB for a bedroom at night. Noise levels in gardens need to not exceed 50dB with a maximum of 55dB.
182. Given the existing noise levels from the railway, mitigation is required in the form of acoustic glazing and acoustic in-frame trickle vents to the windows or acoustic wall vents to the dwellings facing the railway. 2 metre high acoustic fencing is required to the gardens to dwellings to the north east. The gardens to the dwellings facing the railway are screened by the buildings and would have satisfactory noise levels. These methods of noise attenuation are suitable and a condition would be attached to any consent to secure an appropriate scheme. The development is not considered to adversely affect the amenities of future occupiers of the dwellings.
183. The road traffic on Station Road and the level crossing is not considered to result in an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance to the occupiers of the new dwellings.
184. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy HQ/1 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

185. Foul drainage from the site would be discharged to the public sewer via a gravity system. The sewerage system has capacity for these flows. A

condition would be attached to any consent to secure a detailed foul drainage scheme.

186. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy CC/7 of the Local Plan.
187. Phase 1 and Phase 2 Land Contamination reports have been submitted with the application. The surveys have identified some contaminants on the site. Further investigation is required along with remediation and a condition would be attached to any consent to secure the works to ensure that the development would not have an adverse impact upon human health.
188. The proposal would therefore comply with Policy SC/11 of the Local Plan.
189. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application states that all dwellings would comply with Part L of the Building Regulations and that energy efficiency and a low carbon footprint will be provided through solar photovoltaics. Limited details have been provided so conditions would be attached to any consent in relation to renewable energy and water efficiency to ensure that the relevant requirements are met.
190. The proposal would therefore comply with Policies CC/1, CC/3 and CC/4 of the Local Plan.
191. A condition would be attached to any consent to secure broadband to comply with policy TI/10 of the Local Plan.
192. A condition would be attached to any consent to ensure there is adequate water supply for emergency use.
193. The development is unlikely to have an adverse impact upon Network Rail assets. However, the developer is encouraged to contact Network Rail to discuss the proposal further.
194. The development would prohibit the future use of the site as a station. However, there are not currently any plans put forward for such a proposal. It should be noted that the station platforms were originally on the northern side of Station Road with a goods shed and sidings next to Station House.
195. The neighbours immediately adjoining the site have been notified of the application along with a number of nearby residents. In addition, a notice has been displayed at the site. The local resident at Sunbourn is situated over 400 metres from the site and is not considered to be materially affected by the development.

Very Special Circumstances

196. The proposal is considered to represent inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green belt in policy terms. It would also result in other harm through a loss of employment land, to the character and appearance of the area and non-designated heritage assets. No very special circumstances

have been submitted that would justify the development and clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt through inappropriate ness and other harm identified.

Planning balance and conclusion

197. The proposal, as amended, is considered to represent inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green belt in policy terms.
198. The proposal would also result in other harm through a loss of employment land, an unsustainable location and scale of residential development, an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area in terms of the openness and rural character of the Green Belt, landscape character, and the pattern of development in the area, and damage to the setting of non-designated heritage assets.
199. No very special circumstances have been submitted that would justify the development and clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt through inappropriateness and other harm identified.

Recommendation

200. Officers recommend that the application is refused for the following reason: -
 1.
 - i) The proposed two-storey buildings would be closer to Station Road than the existing development and extend into the south western part of the site that is currently single storey in height. In addition, the existing evergreen screen along the railway would be removed and replaced with native landscaping. The proposal would result in a more visually dominant development from Station Road adjacent to the access and open up views of the site from Station Road to the south east. This would consequently lead to an increase in built development on these highly visible parts of the site surrounded by agricultural land which is considered to cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The proposal is considered to represent inappropriate development that is, by definition, harmful to the Green belt in policy terms.
 - ii) The proposal would also result in other harm through a substantial loss of employment land that could be utilised for further employment uses and provide economic growth in the village that would contribute to the rural economy, incremental growth of residential development in an unsustainable location, an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area in terms of the openness and rural character of the Green Belt as stated above, the landscape character and pattern of development in this part of Station Road through the introduction of a two-storey, formal, suburban linear development at right angles to Station Road that would not reflect the informal, rural yard style layout of the site, and damage to the informal and rural settings of the non-designated heritage assets of Station House and Rowleys Hill as a

result of the in-depth formal layout and two-storey scale of the development.

iii) No very special circumstances have been submitted that would justify the development and clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt through inappropriate ness and other harm identified.

iv) The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies S/4 and NH/9 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and paragraphs 143, 144 and 145 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 that seek to resist inappropriate development in the Green Belt, Policy E/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 that seeks to resist the redevelopment of existing employment sites to non-employment uses within or on the edge of development frameworks where the overall benefit to the community of the proposal would not outweigh any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises, Policies S/7 and S/10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 that seek to directs developments to the most sustainable sites with easy access to a wide range of services and facilities, Policies NH/2, HQ/1 and NH/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 that seek to preserve the character and appearance of the area, and Policy NH/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 that seeks to protect heritage assets.

Background Papers

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018
- South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents
- File references S/4057/19/FL

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