



Planning Committee Date	29 June 2022
Report to	South Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Committee
Lead Officer	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
Reference	21/02477/FUL
Site	Land North Of 39A Station Road (West) Whittlesford
Ward / Parish	Whittlesford
Proposal	Demolition of existing building and erection of three storey building to provide 8 flats, together with parking and landscaping
Applicant	Mr Best
Presenting Officer	Michael Sexton
Reason Reported to Committee	Referred by officers and Whittlesford Parish Council
Member Site Visit Date	n/a
Key Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Principle of Development2. Housing Provision3. Character and Visual Amenity4. Landscape and adjacent Green Belt5. Biodiversity6. Flood Risk and Drainage7. Highway Safety and Parking8. Residential Amenity9. Heritage Impact10. Renewables / Climate Change11. Noise12. Contamination13. Developer Contributions14. Other Matters
Recommendation	REFUSE

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of an existing building and the erection of a three storey building to provide 8 flats, together with parking and landscaping.
- 1.2 Officers do not consider that the design of the proposed development would make a positive contribution to its local and wider context or provide a place-responsive design while the proposed landscaping would be inadequate and would fail to successfully integrate the development within its surroundings.
- 1.3 Officers consider that the proposed development fails to make adequate provision of car parking spaces, with less than one space per apartment building, which would likely give rise to inappropriate on-street car parking, creating potential highway safety problems, in an area which is already under strain given its proximity to Whittlesford Parkway Station.
- 1.4 Officers recommend that the Planning Committee refuse the application for the reasons set out in this report

2.0 Site Description and Context

- 2.1 This site is located within the development framework boundary of Whittlesford Bridge and comprises a brownfield site with an area of approximately 0.14 hectares. The site is bound to the north by agricultural land that is located within the Cambridge Green Belt. A railway line (Cambridge to London) is located immediately to the east of the site with commercial development beyond. The southern and western boundaries of the site abut part of the wider brownfield site, which benefits from outline planning permission for residential development (S/0746/15/OL) and is the subject of a reserved matters application (21/02476/REM).
- 2.2 The site is not located in or near to a conservation area. To the south east of the site are two listed buildings: the Red Lion Hotel (Grade II) and the Chapel of Hospital of St John the Baptist (Grade II*), approximately 170 metres from the site.
- 2.3 The site is located in flood zone 1 (low risk) with some areas of the site identified as being at risk from surface water flooding.
- 2.4 The site comprises a vacant commercial building and associated yard area, which sits slightly lower than the adjoining agricultural land. Access to the site is to be taken from Station Road West to the south.

3.0 The Proposal

- 3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of an existing building and the erection of a three storey building to provide 8 flats, together with parking and landscaping.

4.0 Relevant Site History

Application Site

- 4.1 20/03756/FUL – Demolition of existing building and erection of a three storey building to provide 12 flats, together with parking and landscaping – Withdrawn (30 November 2020).

Adjacent Site

- 4.2 21/02476/REM – Approval of matters reserved for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale following outline planning permission S/0746/15/OL to provide 67 residential units following demolition of 39a Station Road West and the formation of a new access road. (Re-submission of 20/03755/REM) – pending decision.
- 4.3 21/03045/S106A – Modification of planning obligations contained in a Section 106 Agreement dated 10th August 2018 pursuant to ref: S/0746/15/OL – pending decision.
- 4.4 20/03755/REM – Approval of matters reserved for access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale following outline planning permission S/0746/15/OL to provide 86 residential units following demolition of 39a Station Road West and the formation of a new access road – Withdrawn (30 November 2020).
- 4.5 S/0746/15/OL – Redevelopment of site for residential use (outline planning application all matters reserved) – Approved (14 August 2018).

5.0 Policy

5.1 National

National Planning Policy Framework 2021
National Planning Practice Guidance
National Design Guide 2021

5.2 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/6 – The Development Strategy to 2031
S/7 – Development Frameworks
S/10 – Group Villages
CC/1 – Mitigation and Adaption to Climate Change
CC/3 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments
CC/4 – Water Efficiency

CC/6 – Construction Methods
CC/7 – Water Quality
CC/8 – Sustainable Drainage Systems
CC/9 – Managing Flood Risk
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/14 – Heritage Assets
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
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

5.3 Neighbourhood Plan

5.4 Whittlesford Neighbourhood Plan – Area Designated

5.5 Given the very early stage of development, no weight can be afforded to the Whittlesford Neighbourhood Plan.

5.6 Supplementary Planning Documents

Biodiversity SPD – Adopted February 2022

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD – Adopted January 2020

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted November 2016

5.7 The following SPDs were adopted to provide guidance to support previously adopted Development Plan Documents that have now been superseded by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. These documents are still material considerations when making planning decisions, with the weight in decision making to be determined on a case-by-case basis:

Health Impact Assessment SPD – Adopted March 2011

Development affecting Conservation Areas SPD – Adopted 2009

Landscape in New Developments SPD – Adopted March 2010
District Design Guide SPD – Adopted March 2010
Affordable Housing SPD – Adopted March 2010
Listed Buildings SPD – Adopted 2009
Open Space in New Developments SPD – Adopted January 2009
Public Art SPD – Adopted January 2009
Trees and Development Sites SPD – Adopted January 2009

5.8 Other Guidance

5.9 Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy for 2019 to 2023

6.0 Consultations

6.1 Whittlesford Parish Council – Objection

6.2 October and November 2021 Comments

This application breaches the housing density, SCDC-LP 2018 states the density should be between 30dph to 40dph this site is 62.5dph which is clearly over development of the site. The developer seems to avoid the village of the much needed 40% affordable housing.

This 3-storey block of flats is absolutely out of keeping with the properties surrounding the site. The children's play facilities are totally inadequate for both developments. A substantial piece of land in the development should be allocated for proper equipment.

Our school is up to capacity and could not accommodate a small fraction of the children who could be living on this site.

Apart from trains public transport is non-existent at the very best buses run every 1.5 hours and there are no services in the evenings or Sundays. We believe there is insufficient parking arrangements on site which means any overflow of vehicles would be parked on Station Road West where we already have problems with commuter parking.

It was stated at the presentation that the area would be pedestrians only but when asked about delivery vans, the presenter didn't have an answer, the same goes with the refuse lorry. It was stated that the area would be laid with York stone and brickwork again he was asked about the weight of those vehicles and again he didn't have an answer.

It seems that the developer really hasn't put a great deal of thought into this development and is trying to cram as many units as possible in this part of the site.

Therefore, Whittlesford Parish Council objects to this application as an over development.

The Parish Council does request that the application be referred to the District Council Committee.

6.3 Air Quality Officer – No Objection

6.4 n/a

6.5 Anglian Water – No Comments

6.6 n/a

6.7 Conservation Officer – No Objection

6.8 There are no material conservation issues with this proposal.

6.9 Contaminated Land Officer – No Objection

6.10 Recommend conditions requiring a detailed desk study and site walk over, a detailed scheme for the investigation and recording of contamination and remediation objectives, a remediation method statement, a verification report and the potential for previously unidentified contamination being found.

6.11 Designing Out Crime Officer – No Objection

6.12 Comments that would like to see more information in regards to access control to residents and details of external lighting.

6.13 Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue – No Objection

6.14 Requests that adequate provision be made for fire hydrants by way of a Section 106 agreement or planning condition.

6.15 County Education, Library and Strategic Waste – No Objection

6.16 Requests contribution to early years (£26,927).

6.17 Ecology Officer – No Objection

6.18 Recommend conditions for a Construction Ecological Management Plan and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.

6.19 Environment Agency – No Objection

6.20 Recommend conditions for contamination, surface water disposal and piling or any other foundation designs using penetrative methods.

6.21 Environmental Health Officer – None Received.

6.22 n/a

6.23 Housing Strategy Team – No Objection

6.24 As the development is below the minimum threshold (10 units) required for affordable housing (Policy H/10: Affordable Housing) and the Council has no cumulative policy at this stage, no affordable housing is enforced.

6.25 Landscape Officer – Objection.

6.26 Landscape, Visual and Visual Amenity
The site would have a negligible effect upon the wider landscape character, views and visual amenity

The development would result in significant harm to the local landscape character and views. The development would be contrary to policy NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character and HQ/1: Design Principles.

6.27 Green Belt
The proposed development would have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the adjacent Green Belt. The proposal is contrary to Policies S/4 and NH/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018.

6.28 Landscape
Hard landscaping details to be provided and to be conditioned. Further soft landscaping details required and to be conditioned – planting schedule, planting specification, sections of planting pits, 3D cellular confinement systems, tree root barriers.

6.29 General
Also raise concerns with clarity of boundary treatments (to be conditioned), drainage, car parking and bin storage, private amenity space and insufficient information on section details.

6.30 Local Highways Authority – No Objection

6.31 Recommend conditions for surface water drainage arrangements, future management and maintenance of streets, access falls and levels, traffic management plan, condition survey of the adopted public highway, provision of a 2m footway link to the village and reference to the Traffic Regulation Order in respect to the extension of double yellow lines as shown on submitted drawings and an informative that planning permission does not permit works to or within the public highway.

6.32 Confirm that the Local Highways Authority will not seek to adopt any part of the development.

6.33 Natural England – No Comments

6.34 n/a

6.35 Network Rail – No Objection

6.36 Provides a range of guidance relating to the proximity of the development to Network Rail infrastructure.

6.37 Public Health England – No Comment

6.38 n/a

6.39 Sport England – No Comments

6.40 n/a

6.41 Sustainable Drainage Engineer – Holding Objection

6.42 Infiltration is to be allowed through the base only, however, it is not clear how this addresses our concern that infiltration is not to be allowed in made ground. It is also not known if the site has contamination issues which could affect potential for infiltration to be utilised.

6.43 Sustainability Officer – No Objection

6.44 Recommend a condition to secure the approved renewable / low carbon energy technologies as set out in the submitted Energy Statement.

6.45 Trees Officer – No Objection

6.46 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (dated May 2021) has been submitted. This is sufficient for this proposal, trees and site and should be listed as an approved document

6.47 Urban Design Officer – Objection

6.48 Officers cannot fully support this application. It is acknowledged that improvements have been made to some aspects of the layout since the previous application; there is a reduced number of flats; the design of block A has been revised to reduce the height of the 3-storey block, provide a flat roof and include lower two-storey elements to reduce the appearance of the mass of the building and better reflect its sensitive location; removing the single storey communal garage (with roof gardens) has also enabled gaps to provide a less dense appearance.

However, officers raise concerns about privacy and overlooking, the lack of Public Open Space and a lack of supporting details about hard materials, boundary treatments, the bin stores, balconies and materials palette.

Officers have concerns about privacy and overlooking as it is calculated that there will only be 25m distance between the 3rd storey bedroom windows of building A and the bedroom windows of proposed building B, which these face, in the current reserved matters application. This would not be in compliance with paragraph 6.68 of the 'District Design Guide' (DDG) (2010).

It's a concern that the 'landscape masterplan' drawing (ref. CSA/4568/118) indicates that some of the pieces of play equipment at the proposed Locally Equipped Area of Play at the neighbouring proposal (in the reserved matters application) are transgressing the spine road to the east, impacting vehicular access for the shared surface / mews street to service the residents of Block A.

7.0 Third Party Representations

7.1 Nine representations of objection have been received. Full redacted versions of these comments can be found on the Council's website. In summary the following concerns have been raised:

Character / Design

- Density is 62.5 units per hectare, contrary to Policy H/8.
- Design does not enhance or match what is to be expected by Whittlesford residents, contrary to Policy HQ/1.
- Development is urban sprawl with no consideration of the setting.
- Inadequate child play facilities.
- Out of keeping.
- Overlooking within the development.
- Urban development in a rural environment.

Highways

- Additional parking on Station Road West is major congestion and safety concern.
- Insufficient parking provision.
- Junction onto the A505 from Moorfield Road is already not fit for purpose for existing traffic.
- Limited public transport.
- New development which will bring unwanted traffic and parking on station road which is already a big problem due to commuting traffic.
- No cycle routes on Station Road, Moorfield Road or Duxford Road, increased traffic and pollution will make these roads more dangerous.
- Single access onto Station Road West, a narrow cul-de-sac with existing parking issues.

Other Matters

- Additional units means it would be entirely appropriate to top up some of the provisions/costs to reflect the increase in units (Section 106 attached to outline consent of adjacent site).
- Cumulative impact with concurrent application 21/02476/REM.
- Lack of amenities in the local area.

- Lack of enforcement of existing parking regulations.
- Loss of employment land, contrary to Policy E/14.
- No affordable housing.
- School already at capacity.
- Surface water and drainage concerns.
- Whittlesford is a Group Village where normally developments of a maximum of 8 dwellings are permitted.

8.0 Member Representations

8.1 None.

9.0 Local Groups / Other Organisations

9.1 None

10.0 Assessment

10.1 Principle of Development

10.2 The site is located within the development framework boundary of Whittlesford Bridge.

10.3 Policy S/7 sets out that development and redevelopment of unallocated land and buildings within development will be permitted provided that:
 (a) Development is of a scale, density and character appropriate to the location, and is consistent with other policies in the Local Plan; and
 (b) Retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character, and development would protect and enhance local features of green space, landscape, ecological or historic importance; and
 (c) There is the necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development;

10.4 Criterion (a) is considered in more detail later in this report. Retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character, the site needs redevelopment and as such there is no conflict with criterion (b) while criterion (c) is considered below.

10.5 Whittlesford is defined as a Group Village under S/10 of the Local Plan.

10.6 Policy S/10 states that residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the development frameworks of Group Villages. Policy S/10 also details that development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make the best use of a single brownfield site.

10.7 The principle of residential development on the site would accord with Policies S/7 and S/10.

10.8 Another in-principle matter relates to the loss of employment land to non-employment uses, noting the historic uses of the site.

- 10.9 Policy E/14 of the Local Plan sets out 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 (in summary):
(a) demonstrates that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand (12 months marketing);
(b) overall benefit to the community outweighs any adverse effect on employment opportunities; or
(c) the existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution or unacceptable levels of traffic.
- 10.10 Officers acknowledge that the wider area to the west and south of the application site benefits from outline planning consent for residential development, which would surround the application site if developed. The adjacent permission, alongside the historic uses of the site, demonstrate that the site is heavily contaminated and its redevelopment would assist in clearing up contamination issues. These factors may make it difficult for employment use to continue on the site.
- 10.11 Paragraph 120(c) of the NPPF states that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.
- 10.12 Given the size of the site, relevant adjacent planning consent for residential use and the contamination issues associated to the site, officers do not consider there to be significant conflict with the aims and objectives of Policy E/14 of the Local Plan.
- 10.13 Overall, officers do not consider that the proposal would conflict with Policy E/14 of the Local Plan.
- 10.14 There is no in-principle objection to the development of 8 apartments on the site, subject to all other material planning considerations.

10.15 Housing Provision

Density

- 10.16 Policy H/8 of the Local Plan details that housing developments will achieve an average net density of 30 dwellings per hectare in Group Villages but that the net density on a site may vary from this figure where justified by the character of the locality, the scale of the development, or other local circumstances.
- 10.17 The site has an area of approximately 0.14 hectares. The provision of 8 residential units would equate to a density of approximately 58 dwellings per hectare.

- 10.18 The proposed density far exceeds the average standards of Policy H/8 and cannot be said to be justified by the existing character of the locality, which comprises relatively low density rural residential housing to the west of the site.
- 10.19 The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy H/8 of the Local Plan.
- 10.20 However, officers note the density of development accepted on the adjacent site, being around 52 dwellings per hectare at outline stage, which has relevance to the proposal site. Officers also note that at this time no consent has been given for the reserved matters and therefore it is not known how the higher density development could be successfully achieved.
- 10.21 Nonetheless, although a higher-than-average density might be acceptable on the site given the adjacent permission, any development must be design-led and responsive to the site's context. Matters of design are discussed later in this report.

Market Housing

- 10.22 Policy H/9 of the Local Plan states that a wide choice, type and mix of housing will be provided to meet the needs of different groups in the community including families with children, older people, those seeking starter homes, people wishing to build their own homes, people seeking private rented sector housing, and people with disabilities.
- 10.23 Policy H/9(3) of the Local Plan states that the mix of market homes to be provided on sites of 9 or fewer homes will take account of local circumstances.
- 10.24 The application proposes the development of 8 apartments in the form of 4x2-bed units and 2x3-bed units and 2x4-bed units.
- 10.25 Officers are satisfied that the proposed development would provide a reasonable mix of market units, with no evidence available to suggest that such a mix would not be appropriate to local circumstances.
- 10.26 Policy H/9(4) requires 5% of homes in a development should be built to the accessible and adaptable dwellings M4(2) standard rounding down to the nearest whole property, and four of the eight apartments proposed would be ground floor units.
- 10.27 The proposal would accord with Policy H/9 of the Local Plan.

Affordable Housing

- 10.28 Policy H/10 of the Local Plan requires that all developments of 11 dwellings or more, or on sites of less than 11 units if the floor space of the proposed units exceeds 1,000sqm should provide affordable housing.

- 10.29 However, NPPF paragraph 64 is a material consideration and states that provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). A major development can be defined as 10 dwellings or more.
- 10.30 The development proposes eight residential apartments which would not exceed 1,000sqm of floor space. Therefore, no affordable housing is required as part of the development.
- 10.31 The proposal would not conflict with Policy H/10 of the Local Plan and NPPF guidance.

Residential Space Standards

- 10.32 Policy H/12 of the Local Plan states that new residential units will be permitted where their gross internal floor areas meet or exceed the Government's Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015) or successor document.
- 10.33 All units within the proposed development would meet or exceed national space standards.
- 10.34 The proposal would accord with Policy H/12 of the Local Plan.

10.35 Character / Visual Amenity

- 10.36 The proposal represents a high-density development, as noted above. The attempt to deliver 8 apartment units on a relatively small site has a clear and direct impact on the design and scale of the development proposed that is considered to have compromised the overall design quality of the scheme.
- 10.37 The existing residential development to the west of the site along Station Road West and associated cul-de-sacs including The Moraine and Knights Orchard are arranged in a low density informal rural arrangement, with variations to property frontages and set backs from the public highway, with open green frontages being characteristic. Dwellings typically comprise detached and semi-detached forms with some sporadic examples of terraced arrangements. These properties present a mixture of two storey, one and a half storey and single storey properties of varying designs and footprints. In general properties are typically good-sized detached dwellings with some examples of semi-detached and occasional terraced arrangement.
- 10.38 Officers acknowledge the development to the east of the site and railway line, which comprises large industrial buildings of a two storey scale, hotel and car park. The Red Lion Hotel is a modest two storey building, the chapel a single storey building, while there are also a small number of two storey residential properties with a three and a half storey hotel adjacent to the A505. However, the railway line clearly acts as a divide between two

distinct characters and cannot be said to provide a basis for the character and scale of the application site.

- 10.39 The proposed building would present a flat roofed large rectangular two storey block approximately 7.3 metres in height with third storey elements above rising to approximately 9.2 metres, also with a flat roof. As amended, the design has sought to reduce the overall mass of the development along the sensitive north and east edges of the site by recessing the third storey. While this goes some way to reducing the overall scale and perceived mass of the proposal, the design and scale remains at odds with the general character and appearance of the area. The general proportions of the building (width and depth) also far exceed the typical proportions of development in the area.
- 10.40 Officers acknowledge that ground levels within the site would be lowered slightly given the likely contamination and remediation works enquired. Nonetheless, the scale of development would stand in stark contrast to the scale of residential development in the area and would also exceed the height of the industrial buildings to the east of the site. Officers therefore raise significant concern the three-storey design approach how the building responds (or fails to respond) to the context of the site.
- 10.41 The general character and appearance of the development is extremely urban in form with little regard to the surrounding rural characteristics of residential development to the west. Although no strong objection is raised to palette of external materials proposed, which do draw on some of the materials in the surrounding area including the Village Vet building to the south of the site, the design and scale of the building significantly compromises the appearance and quality of the development.
- 10.42 The footprint of the building occupies a relatively large proportion of the site, setting the built form of development towards the norther and eastern edges of the site. Although this is broadly acceptable along the eastern boundary of the site adjacent to the railway line it results in a detrimental impact on the surrounding character and landscape, considered in more detail below.
- 10.43 Several supporting documents contain visualisations to illustrate the proposed development. These clearly show that the scale of the building would sit above the scale of buildings in the surrounding area, appearing as a dominant and incongruous addition to the character of the area. While immediate views from Station Road West on approach to the site from the west may be limited, although glances of the rooftop may be available, public views of the development from the south and east of the site would be readily available. Longer distance views from the north, west and east would be available, as would transient views from the south along the A505.
- 10.44 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Urban Design Officer who raises objection to the proposal.

10.45 Overall, officers do not consider that the design of the proposed development would make a positive contribution to its local and wider context or provide a place-responsive design, failing to preserve or enhance the character of the local area and be compatible with its location in terms of scale, density, mass, form, design and proportions in relation to the surrounding area.

10.46 The layout of the development would be contrary to Policies S/2, S/7, HQ/1 and H/8 of the Local Plan and paragraph 130 of the NPPF.

10.47 Landscape / Adjacent Green Belt

10.48 The application is supported by a landscape masterplan and a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CSA Environmental, May 2021).

10.49 The landscape masterplan highlights key landscape details within the site. This includes indicative soft landscape planting within the site, sustainable drainage features, communal open space, biodiversity enhancements and entrance avenue and street trees.

10.50 In general, the amount of soft landscaping provided within the development is limited given the footprint of the proposed apartment building. The four ground floor apartments are provided with a private garden area while a small area of landscaping is provided along the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. This again stands in stark contrast to the existing residential development to the west where properties are characterised by soft landscape frontages and set back from the public highway.

10.51 Consideration is also given to the wider landscape impacts of the proposed development. The site abuts the edge of the Cambridge Green Belt on its western and northern boundaries. As noted above, the development is sited relatively close to the northern boundary of the site, which, in combination of the scale of development, results in a built form that would be evident in local and wider views.

10.52 Policy NH/2 of the Local Plan sets out that development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances, the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape.

10.53 Policy NH/8 of the Local Plan details that development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality.

10.54 The proposed development, as illustrated on the landscape masterplan, provides a modest landscape buffer along the northern boundary of the site adjacent to the Green Belt and open countryside, shown to comprise a single row of trees. Again, visualisations provided in support of the application show that the development would be evident in close range and longer-range views across the countryside, irrespective of the projected growth of the limited landscape buffer on the edges of the site.

- 10.55 Officers acknowledge that the existing industrial buildings to the east of the site already have a presence within wider views. However, the proposed development would exceed the scale of those existing buildings and would have a greater and detrimental impact on the surrounding landscape.
- 10.56 Officers consider that the proposed landscaping on the northern boundary of the site fails to provide a meaningful buffer that would integrate the development within its surroundings and open rural edge, particularly given the scale of development proposed. As outlined in the supporting Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Whittlesford is a well treed village and development has failed to provide sufficient landscape space to accommodate large long lived trees to soften views of the development and integrate into its surroundings.
- 10.57 The comments of the Council's Landscape Officer are acknowledged, which raise concern over the visual impact of the development on the wider surroundings, along with the overall landscape quality within the site.
- 10.58 Overall, officers do not consider that the landscaping of development would make a positive contribution to its local and wider context and would fail to successfully integrate the development within its surroundings.
- 10.59 The landscaping arrangements of the development would be contrary to Policies S/2, S/7, HQ/1, NH/2 and NH/8 of the Local Plan and paragraphs 130 and 174 of the NPPF.

10.60 Biodiversity

- 10.61 The application is supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment (CSA Environmental, May 2021). The report has identified badgers, breeding birds, and invertebrates as potential constraints to the application. However, the avoidance, mitigation, and compensation methods suggested are sufficient to remove any residual risk of harm and provide enhanced habitats once construction is finished.
- 10.62 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Ecology Officer who raises no objection, recommending conditions to secure a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEcMP) and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) which would include a proposal for 10% net gain in biodiversity, both prior to the commencement of works on site.
- 10.63 Officers consider that the conditions requiring a CEcMP and LEMP would be reasonable and necessary as part of any consent.
- 10.64 Subject to conditions, the proposal would accord with Policy NH/4 of the Local Plan.

10.65 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 10.66 The site is located in flood zone 1 (low risk) with some areas of the site identified as being at risk from surface water flooding.
- 10.67 The application is supported by, as amended, a Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy (Markides Associates, October 2021). The Assessment, which considers drainage requirements of the application site and the adjacent site that benefits from outline consent, details that the site is at low risk of flooding and that surface water can be managed through sustainable drainage systems, such as tank soakaway, with additional storage provided in permeable paving sub-base.
- 10.68 The application has been subject to formal consultation with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency, who raise no objection, and the Council's Sustainable Drainage Engineer, who raises a holding objection.
- 10.69 The Council's Sustainable Drainage Engineer has commented that infiltration is to be allowed through the base only, however, it is not clear how this addresses a concern that infiltration is not to be allowed in made ground. It is also not known if the site has contamination issues which could affect potential for infiltration to be utilised.
- 10.70 Officers note that the submitted Assessment covers both the application site and the adjacent site that benefits from outline consent and is currently subject to consideration at reserved matters stage. As part of that application, no objection has been raised by the Lead Local Flood Authority to the details submitted, noting the conditions attached to the outline consent that reserve details of surface water drainage, foul water drainage and pollution control.
- 10.71 Officers therefore consider that the site can deliver an appropriate drainage solution and that the remaining concerns of the Council's Sustainable Drainage Engineers can be adequately addressed by way of conditions.
- 10.72 Officers consider that it would be reasonable and necessary to impose conditions relating to surface water drainage, foul water drainage and piling or other foundation designs and investigation boreholes using penetrative methods, which would follow the approach on the adjacent and related site and adhere to the recommended conditions put forward by the Environment Agency.
- 10.73 Subject to conditions, the proposal would accord with Policies CC/7, CC/8 and CC/9 of the Local Plan.

10.74 Highway Safety and Parking

- 10.75 The application proposes a single point of vehicular access to the site from Station Road on its southern boundary, which would be provided following the demolition of no.39A Station Road.

- 10.76 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment, which includes drawing 19214-MA-XX-XX-DR-C-0003-P05. The plan provides an illustration of the access location and demonstrates that the required visibility can be achieved at the access. The access has been designed with 6 metre radii and such that parking proposed along the access road is located away from the immediate vicinity of the site access.
- 10.77 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Local Highways Authority who raise no objection to the access arrangements of the development nor the internal arrangements of the site, following the submission of amended and additional information.
- 10.78 In consultation with the Local Highways Authority officers are satisfied that the proposed development would provide an acceptable and safe means of vehicular access to the site.
- 10.79 The access to the proposed development is the same access that has been proposed for the adjacent site, which has been found acceptable as part of reserved matters application 21/02476/REM.
- 10.80 The Local Highways Authority have recommended a range of conditions including surface water drainage arrangements, future management and maintenance of streets, access falls and levels, traffic management plan, condition survey of the adopted public highway, provision of a 2m footway link to the village and reference to the Traffic Regulation Order in respect to the extension of double yellow lines as shown on submitted drawings and an informative that planning permission does not permit works to or within the public highway.
- 10.81 Officers consider that conditions requiring details of the future management and maintenance of streets, access falls and levels and a traffic management plan would be appropriate as part of any consent. Details of surface water drainage would be covered by a separate condition as noted above while it would not be reasonable to secure the provision of a 2m footway given the scale of development.
- 10.82 Reference to the Traffic Regulation Order in respect to the extension of double yellow lines could be included as an informative on any reserved matters permission alongside works to or within the public highway.
- 10.83 Subject to condition, the proposal would be acceptable in highway safety terms.
- 10.84 In terms parking, Policy TI/3 of the Local Plan sets out that car parking provision should be provided through a design-led approach (with reference to Policy HQ/1) and in accordance with the indicative standards set out in figure 11 of the Plan. This requires the provision of 2 spaces per dwelling, with 1 space to be allocated within the curtilage.

- 10.85 In design terms, as noted above, car parking is provided underground and therefore has been found acceptable in terms of its location and impact on the layout of the site.
- 10.86 However, the proposed parking plan submitted, which shows parking for the proposed development alongside the underground parking arrangements for the adjacent site, indicates the provision of six car parking spaces for the proposed development of 8 apartments. This would fail to provide at least 1 dedicated parking space per apartment unit.
- 10.87 Notwithstanding the proximity of the site to a railway station, noting that the apartment buildings comprise 4x2-bed units and 2x3-bed units and 2x4-bed units the provision is not considered acceptable and to fail to accord with Policy TI/3 of the Local Plan. Under provision of car parking may lead to inappropriate on-street car parking, creating potential highway safety problems in an area where parking restrictions are already in place, also noting local concerns raised in this regard.
- 10.88 The concerns raised locally in respect of parking are noted. However, the site is required to provide car parking associated to the proposed development only, which have not been found to be acceptable, and is not required to resolve existing parking issues that may exist in and around the area.
- 10.89 For cycle parking provision, Policy TI/3 requires this to be provided at a ratio of 1 space per bedroom.
- 10.90 The provision of cycle parking is unclear in the supporting documentation, including the application form, planning statement and parking plan. However, this can be adequately addressed by a condition requiring details of cycle parking prior to occupation.
- 10.91 The proposal would fail to accord with Policy TI/3 of the Local Plan in terms of adequate provision of off-street car parking.

10.92 Residential Amenity

Neighbouring Properties

- 10.93 The proposed development would be located to the rear of existing properties along Station Road West, set some distance away at approximately 130 metres. As such the proposal would not result in harm to existing residential properties to the south.

Future Occupiers

- 10.94 Consideration is given to the amenities of the future occupiers of the site.
- 10.95 The proposed building is located some distance from existing residential development to the west and therefore would not be directly affected by those properties.

- 10.96 In respect of the proposed buildings that form part of reserved matters application 21/02476/REM, officers are satisfied that a reasonable degree of separation has been provided between the proposed buildings to avoid significant harm to the amenities of future occupiers of both developments.
- 10.97 Officers note the comments of the Council's Urban Design Officer in respect of the 25 metre separation guidance of the Council's District Design Guide. However, a separation distance of approximately 23 metres is achieved between the balconies of the site building and proposed apartment block to the south (within the reserved matters layout), which is considered acceptable.
- 10.98 The ground floor apartments would be provided with private garden areas while the upper floor apartments would benefit from first floor terraces. Officers are satisfied that each apartment would be provided with a reasonable level of private amenity space.
- 10.99 The proposal would accord with Policy HQ/1(n) in respect of residential amenity.

10.100 Heritage Impact

- 10.101 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- 10.102 Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the (listed) building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 10.103 Policy NH/14 of the Local Plan sets out support for development proposals when they sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their settings, as appropriate to their significance and in accordance with the NPPF. Policy HQ/1 of the Local Plan also requires development to conserve or enhance important natural and historic assets and their settings.
- 10.104 The site is not located in or near to a conservation area. To the south east of the site are two listed buildings: the Red Lion Hotel (Grade II) and the Chapel of Hospital of St John the Baptist (Grade II*).
- 10.105 The application is supported by a Heritage Statement (CSA Environmental, May 2021), which identifies the relevant heritage assets that could be impacted by the proposed development and concludes that the residential development will not adversely impact any designated heritage assets as a result of alteration to setting.
- 10.106 The built form of development proposed is located approximately 180 metres from the Red Lion Hotel, a significant distance from the designated heritage assets. Furthermore, in terms of the potential impact of the

development on nearby heritage assets, there are several large existing buildings between the development site and listed buildings. As such there is limited intervisibility between the two and the proposed development is not considered to infringe on the setting of the relative heritage assets.

- 10.107 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Historic Environment Team and no objection has been raised on heritage grounds.
- 10.108 Noting the comments of the Council's Historic Environment Team, officers are satisfied that the proposal would preserve the setting of nearby heritage assets.
- 10.109 No formal comments have been received from the County's archaeology team. However, officers note the comments that have been received to the adjacent reserved matters application which set out that archaeological remains will have been destroyed through historic use of the site. The proposal is therefore not considered to cause conflict with archaeological remains.
- 10.110 The proposal would accord with Policy NH/14 of the Local Plan and associated guidance / legislation.

10.111 Renewables / Climate Change

- 10.112 The application is supported by a Sustainability Statement (ensphere, May 2021), an Energy Strategy (ensphere, May 2021) and a Water Conservation Strategy (Markides Associates, May 2021). These supporting documents provide details of several approaches to the sustainable construction of the proposed development including passive and energy efficient measures, energy efficient low/zero carbon and renewable technologies and water efficiency.
- 10.113 Based on the details submitted the proposed low/zero technologies should ensure the development achieves a carbon emissions reduction of more than 14.81%. The applicant has also provided a copy of Part G water calculations which demonstrate that the proposed dwellings will use no more than 106.3 litres of water per person per day, in line with Local Plan Policy CC/4.
- 10.114 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Sustainability Officer who raises no objection, recommending a condition securing the renewable/low carbon energy technologies as set out in the Energy Statement.
- 10.115 Officers consider that a condition securing the renewable/low carbon energy technologies as set out in the Energy Statement would be reasonable and necessary as part of any consent.
- 10.116 Subject to condition, the proposal would accord with Policies CC/3 and CC/4 of the Local Plan.

10.117 Noise

- 10.118 The application site is located adjacent to a railway line.
- 10.119 Policy SC/10 of the Local Plan sets out that planning permission will not be granted for development which would be subject to unacceptable noise levels from existing noise sources, both ambient levels and having regard to noise characteristics such as impulses whether irregular or tonal.
- 10.120 The application is supported by a Noise and Vibration Assessment (phlorum, May 2021). The Assessment considers the potential noise impact upon the development and future residents and provides recommended mitigation measures for internal spaces through fabric and window detailing while external amenity spaces would not be adversely impacted by existing noise sources.
- 10.121 The Assessment concludes that providing the mitigation measures considered in the Assessment are implemented, noise levels within the proposed properties should meet the internal noise level criteria specified in ProPG and the guidelines in BS4142:2014+A1:2019 for plant noise and BS8233:2014 for noise in amenity areas.
- 10.122 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Environmental Health Team, although no formal response has been received.
- 10.123 Officers are satisfied that the submitted Assessment demonstrates that the proposed development could be delivered without significant adverse Noise impacts on the future occupiers of the development. Officers consider that it would be reasonable and necessary to impose a compliance condition to secure the mitigation measures detailed in the Assessment, while a post construction noise report may also be appropriate prior to occupation of any of the units.
- 10.124 Subject to condition(s), the proposal would accord with Policy SC/10 of the Local Plan.

10.125 Contamination

- 10.126 The site has been previously developed and lies within the footprint of a wider parcel of land that has been subject to potentially contaminative activities relating to previous uses as a scrap yard, a fuel depot and an infilled pit. The application seeks to develop the site to a sensitive end use: residential.
- 10.127 The contamination issues of the adjacent site are well documented in the outline consent, reference S/0746/15/OL, with conditions imposed to ensure appropriate investigation and remediation.
- 10.128 The application has been subject to formal consultation with the Council's Contaminated Land Officer who raises no objection subject to conditions

requiring a detailed desk study and site walk over, a detailed scheme for the investigation and recording of contamination and remediation objectives, a remediation method statement, a verification report and the potential for previously unidentified contamination being found.

10.129 Given the sensitive end use proposed and known contamination issues of the site and surrounding area, officers consider that the recommended conditions would be reasonable and necessary as part of any consent.

10.130 Subject to conditions, the proposal would accord with Policy SC/11 of the Local Plan.

10.131 Developer Contributions

10.132 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 have introduced the requirement for all local authorities to make an assessment of any planning obligation in relation to three tests. If the planning obligation does not pass the tests then it is unlawful. The tests are that the planning obligation must be:

- (a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) directly related to the development; and
- (c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

10.133 Policy TI/8 'Infrastructure and New Developments' states that Planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. The nature, scale and phasing of any planning obligations and/or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions sought will be related to the form of the development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area.

10.134 In this case, the need for contributions is not considered necessary to make the development acceptable due to the Written Ministerial Statement dated 28 November 2014 that states contributions should not be sought from developments of 10-units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1000sqm.

10.135 Therefore, the early years contribution sought by Cambridgeshire County Council cannot be secured as part any consent for the proposed development.

10.136 Other Matters

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue

10.137 A condition could be imposed as part of any consent to secure appropriate provision of fire hydrants.

Lighting

- 10.138 Policy SC/9 of the Local Plan sets out that development proposals which include new external lighting will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed lighting scheme and levels are the minimum required for reasons of public safety, crime prevention / security, and living, working and recreational purposes, that light spillage and glare are minimised and there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the local amenity of neighbouring or nearby properties and road users.
- 10.139 Officers consider that it would be reasonable and necessary to impose a condition that restricts the installation of external lighting other than in accordance with a scheme that has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, to minimise the effects of light pollution on the surrounding area.
- 10.140 Subject to condition, the proposal would accord with Policy SC/9 of the Local Plan.

Network Rail

- 10.141 The comments of Network Rail are noted, who provide no objection to the proposed development. A range of guidance notes have been provided, which officers consider would be appropriate as informatives as part of any consent for the information of the applicant.

Third Party Comments

- 10.142 The comments made in third-party representations are noted, with many points already considered in the report. The remaining matters raised are considered below.
- 10.143 Whittlesford Parish Council raise concern that the only real public transport is the trains as other public transport in terms of buses is inadequate. As set out above, the principle of the development of 8 residential units within the village framework of a Group Village is supported in policy terms, with such villages considered as having suitable facilities and transport links to support such a level of development.

10.144 **Planning Balance**

- 10.145 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 10.146 Officers do not consider that the design of the proposed development would make a positive contribution to its local and wider context or provide a place-responsive design while the proposed landscaping would be inadequate and would fail to successfully integrate the development within its surroundings.

- 10.147 Officers consider that the proposed development fails to make adequate provision of car parking spaces, with less than one space per apartment building, which would give rise to inappropriate on-street car parking, creating potential highway safety problems in an area which is already under strain given its proximity to Whittlesford Parkway Station.
- 10.148 The limited benefits arising through the provision of eight apartment buildings and the remediation of a contaminated site and not considered to outweigh the clear and adverse harm arising from the design of the proposed development.
- 10.149 Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the statutory requirements of section 66(1) and section 72(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, as well as all other material planning considerations, the proposed development is recommended for refusal.

10.150 Recommendation

Refuse for the following reasons: subject to:

1. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, height, mass, design and proportions would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, promoting an incongruous urban form of development within in a rural area and a scale of development that is discordant and not in keeping with the scale and character of the surrounding area. The proposal would therefore fail to promote a high-quality and place-responsive design that would retain or enhance the character of the area and make a positive contribution to its local and wider context.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies S/2, S/7, HQ/1 and H/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 which require development to be of a high quality design, with a clear vision as to the positive contribution the development will make to its local and wider context and to be compatible and responsive to its location in terms of layout, scale, mass, form and design.

2. The proposed development, by virtue of its layout, scale, height, mass and design would be harmful to the adjacent Green Belt and surrounding landscape, appearing as a dominant and incongruous form of development in the immediate and wider landscape which fails to provide sufficient and meaningful perimeter landscaping to integrate the development with its surroundings.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies HQ/1, NH/2 and NH/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and paragraphs 130 and 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 which require development to preserve or enhance the character of the local area, natural setting and distinctiveness of the local landscape.

3. The proposed development seeks to deliver eight apartment buildings comprising 4x2-bed units, 2x3-bed units and 2x4-bed units but only provides 6 car parking spaces, failing to provide at least one dedicated car parking space per apartment. The under provision of car parking in an area where parking restrictions are already in place may lead to inappropriate on-street parking, creating potential highway safety issues.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies HQ/1 and TI/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which sets out that car parking provision should be provided through a design-led approach in accordance with the indicative standards set out in Figure 11 of the Plan.

NOTE: Plans to be listed on refusal notice:

B100 (Site Location Plan)
B101 (Site Plan)
B102 (Proposed Plans)
B103 (Parking)
B104 (Site Sections)

A101 (Building A Floor Plans)
A102 (Building A Elevations)
A103 (Building A Sections)

CSA/4568/118 Rev G (Landscape Masterplan)

Background Papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018
- South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
- Planning File References: 21/02477/FUL, 21/02476/REM, 21/03045/S106A, 20/03756/FUL, 20/03755/REM and S/0746/15/OL