

Comments made by LPC at its meeting on 14th July 2016

S/1963/15/OL Pembroke College, University of Cambridge & G.W. Balaam & Sons Ltd, land to north and south of, and immediate, Linton – residential development for up to 78 dwellings with landscape buffer and new vehicular accesses from Bartlow Road.

Amendment 30th June 2016: Reduction in scale of development and revised site layout.

PC Decision: To NOT support

General comments:

- This site has been submitted for development for around 50 years and has been rejected each time. The impact of this application would be significant and damaging not only to Linton and our floodplain, but would also have an effect a wider region along the river valley.
- This site is outside of the village envelope and was rejected in the SHLAA and Local Plan assessments as having no development potential. (SHLAA sites 102 and 104, and part of cumulative submission area 120.)
- Linton is classified as a Minor Rural Centre which allows a maximum of 30 houses in any one development.

Flooding:

- A major issue is that the site is part of the wider floodplain. The loss of land for soak-away would result in more flow into the river, which can flood rapidly and with great volume (water gathers up stream and comes gushing down). The centre of the village would be under greater threat, increasingly more frequently.
- The balance pond is in the area that floods and therefore is not a suitable way to cope with this as it would fill, then overflow, at times when rainfall and surface water flooding is greatest. In times of drought the balance pond could be a hazard to residents and unpleasant when drying out.
- The site is part of a long-term flood relief scheme worked out and agreed by the Environment Agency (EA) and SCDC. The adjacent Leadwell Meadows has had extensive work by the Parish Council to restore the floodplain, its drainage ditches, pond and river banks to improve water holding capacity. This development threatens to undo our work, which was done to protect Linton's historic and commercial centre and the villages downstream.
- The flooding at Leadwell Meadows will change the action of flood water on the meadows upstream and on the application site; risks shown in the Flood Assessment are out of date.
- The restoration work at Leadwell Meadows has seen the increase of wildlife, including species of birds and amphibians including newts, which are also spreading to the wider area.
- The thesis written after the 2001 floods, local knowledge and the newly revised EA flood maps confirm there is more flooding than is indicated in the submission.

Site and setting:

- The position is very visible in the rising ground and from the east, which would adversely affect the views and setting of Linton in the open landscape. There would be significant landscape impact to Linton, the river valley, our Leadwell Meadows, the skylines and main approach from high ground to the east. The development would be prominent and harm the character of all of these.
- Building along the Bartlow Road would neither conserve nor enhance the amenity of the village's natural built or historic environment. It certainly would not create "an attractive sense of arrival" but would impact adversely on the approach to the Special Conservation Area, our listed buildings and on the character of the village.
- The noise from the A1307 is significant around the village, and the A1307 is higher than the trees and housing. Noise amelioration is essential for the site and to reduce overcapacity of the A1307 for the village in general. Following this amendment, amelioration would remain insufficient with the tree zone too far from the road.
- The development would involve almost total destruction of archaeology; this is not a designated site because its existence was expected. Following a recent dig, it is confirmed

that this is a site of significance with a Roman road and Anglo Saxon village. This is hardly mentioned in the submission, which needs to be updated to include these finds.

- The housing has now been moved away from the A1307 but the thin slice of land left weakens the separation of the village from the A1307 and does not preserve the character of the local landscape, fields, meadows and soft edge to this rural village. The road frontage houses remain unprotected and buffering between the village and A1307 remains insufficient. The soft edge to the village would be lost.

Sustainability:

- The housing needs of the village are predominantly for bungalows and smaller, affordable homes. The housing mix here should reflect the needs, and lower budgets, of our current population.
- This development has no potential for employment within the village so would mainly attract incoming commuters; this is not conducive to sustainability.
- The sites, in their location away from the village, with the emphasis on on-site pedestrian travel and with their own LEAP's, confirm that these would be self-contained introverted developments, discouraging integration with the community and local life. The housing is aimed at commuters and not at current local needs. Again, this is not conducive to sustainability and inclusion into village structure.
- At its closest point the site is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (1km) from the village centre and even further from recreation areas, schools and other amenities so these would be unlikely to be accessed on foot (see separate comments to follow). Pedestrian and cycle access to the village centre is poor.
- Due to the limited parking and congestion in the historic village centre, it would be easier to use shops and supermarkets in nearby towns than to access local shops, so not benefitting village commerce; this is not conducive to sustainability.
- Further development would add to the traffic parking and congestion problems within the Special Conservation Area of the village. Residents would drive rather than walk to shops and village amenities, particularly as the return is an uphill journey.
- The infrastructure is already at capacity for schools. This is supported by evidence from Head teachers and Governors from the Infant and Junior Schools, and Linton Village College. The Infants School in particular has little room for expansion given its site in the conservation area. The schools take children from outside the village, as expected for a minor rural centre, so any places taken by new residents would have a knock-on effect to neighbouring settlements.
- This application does not address the utilities of water, sewage and other physical aspects which are at or near capacity. The other infill developments being built in the village will absorb any current capacity and we already experience blockages and overflow of foul water sewers.

Traffic issues:

- The safety and capacity issues on the A1307 and its hazardous junctions are a major issue. The Bartlow Road junction with the A1307 is difficult and dangerous. There have been several crashes, injuries and fatalities over the past few years, so traffic from the site would leave by the safer route of through the village, adversely impacting on our Special Conservation Area and its historic buildings.
- The traffic impact on Bartlow Road is still not based on up-to-date traffic assessment. It does not assess the impact of all 14 proposed accesses onto the Barlow Road, This is made more dangerous by the on-road parking, reducing visibility and hampering the free flow of traffic.

Summary:

- This site is part of the floodplain. Building here would adversely affect water soak-away, adding to the river water levels and increasing the probability of flooding to our historic and commercial village centre, and to sites and villages downstream.
- The appeals for sites at Waterbeach etc. are regarding grounds for sustainability – this site is not sustainable by the criteria applied in the NPPF and should be rejected.

- This development would bring significant harm to the character of the landscape, the conservation area and the environment that far outweighs any benefit the housing would bring (as there is likely to be more suitable sites elsewhere in the district).

Conditions:

Subject to the above objections, any approval on this site should include:

- A river-long (Ashdon to Abington and beyond) analysis of river flow.
- A suitable scheme of flood prevention measures must be put in place.
- Road safety is a major issue to be addressed.
- Noise attenuation from the A1307 is needed for the village, even without the additional burden of this development. This must be sympathetic to the landscape and local character.

Inconsistencies in the applications are worrying and need further investigation.