

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 Appeals under
Section 78

Appeal on behalf of Castlefield International Ltd

Land East of Teversham Road, Fulbourn

Design Proof of Evidence of James Carr RIBA ARB

March 2022

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Land East of Teversham Road, Fulbourn

Design Proof of Evidence

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

My name is James Carr. I am the owner of the design and planning consultancy Mapridge Design Studios Ltd.

I hold a BSc (Hons) degree in Architecture and Dip Ach (Dist.). I am a member of ARB and the RIBA. I have more than 35 years' experience in practice as an architect. I have worked in local authority, in housing associations and in private practice

Experience

I was senior design partner at Barton Willmore between 1996 and 2017 when I retired to set up my own practice providing specialist design and planning advice to a range of clients.

I have worked extensively on residential projects from single homes to schemes of over 650 units, with my particular experience being in urban regeneration development. I have also been responsible for the master planning of business parks in Britain and Europe and in the design implementation of residential, commercial, office, schools, leisure and mixed-use schemes throughout the UK.

Barton Willmore remains a highly successful practice with a project portfolio that includes exceptional projects that meet the high standards of design and detail required today.

Many of my clients are developers who have particular concerns in bringing forward sites which may have design and planning constraints. My skill is to ensure that the proposed design addresses those constraints and creates a sustainable development with a strong identity, is of a high-quality design, is an exciting place to live and is integrated within the local community.

I have been awarded two civic design awards and my schemes have featured in various publications.

I taught design to final year architectural diploma students for a number of years.

I was a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects Planning Group and have sat on the National Planning Forum.

2.0 Scope of evidence

- 2.1 My evidence provides an independent review of the design of the proposed development on the Appeal site and addresses the Reasons for Refusal. In particular I consider the proposals relationship with the adjacent Poor Well and the adjacent buildings on Cow Lane.
- 2.2 My evidence should be read in conjunction with that of the Appellants other witnesses and in particular, the Landscape and Visual evidence by Ms. Lisa Toyne
- 2.3 In preparing this evidence I draw on my expertise as an architect and urban designer, my observations of the site and its surroundings, and make reference to current government and local design guidance.
- 2.4 In my evidence, I address reasons 1, 4 and 5 in the RMA Refusal:
- Reason 1

The proposed development, by virtue of the scale and siting of the two and a half storey apartment buildings located centrally within the site and within a key view north through the site across Poor Well and along the chalk stream towards the open countryside beyond, would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and significantly erode the existing wide open view and green space, which provides a positive connection between the existing village and adjacent countryside.

Furthermore, the adverse visual impact of the apartment buildings is exacerbated by virtue of the buildings being sited on raised platforms, which would increase ground levels by up to a further 900mm above existing, enhancing the adverse prominence and dominance of the central apartment buildings within the site and within views from the surrounding area, creating a scale of development that is out of keeping with the character of the area.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, which require developments to be of high quality design, to be compatible with its location in terms of scale and appearance and to make a positive contribution to its local and wider context and the Fulbourn Village Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2020, in particular guidance notes 10.3, 10.10, 10.12 and Figure 46 of the Guide, which seeks in Section 10 to integrate larger developments within the village.

- Reason 4

The reserved matters scheme, by virtue of the proposed layout, fails to adequately distribute affordable properties throughout the site and to integrate those units appropriately with the market housing. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy H/10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023 which seek to provide affordable housing in small groups or clusters distributed through the site.

- Reason 5

The reserved matters scheme, by virtue of the proposed layout, locates 17 affordable units in a single cluster adjacent to Breckenwood Industrial Estate, a poor design response to the constraints of the site and integration of those units within the development site. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies HQ/1 and H/10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023 which seek to provide affordable housing in small groups or clusters distributed through the site.

Declaration

- 2.5 I have visited the Appeal site and its surroundings and have examined the relevant plans and documents for the purpose of this Inquiry. I had no involvement in the preparation of the RMA that forms this Appeal.
- 2.6 My proof of evidence deals wholly with topics that fall within my area of expertise.
- 2.7 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal (reference APP/W0530/W/22/3291523) is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of the Royal Institute of British Architects and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true professional opinions.

3.0 APPEAL SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 3.1 The appeal site is a generally flat, overgrown area of land to the north of Fulbourn Village with a narrow and heavily overgrown water course running north south through the site dividing the site in two.
- 3.2 The northern boundary to the Appeal site, east of the central water course, is formed by a railway line on top of an embankment which is between 2.15m and 1.75m above the level of the existing site. This embankment is overgrown with thick scrub and there are mature trees at intervals along the length of the boundary. These trees are between 10m and 18m high. This embankment, the thick scrub and the mature trees mean that there are no views to the north and the open countryside beyond.
- 3.3 This embankment can be seen in photographs in figure 14 of the DAS submitted with the RMA
- 3.4 The northern boundary of the site to the west of the central water course, is formed by an area of dense planting which is a mixture of dense undergrowth and trees.
- 3.5 To the west of this dense area of planting is a single story light industrial unit which I understand has been extended to the rear across the legal ownership boundary of the Appeal Site. The Application boundary is around the perimeter of this extension. There is existing and dense planting along boundary either side of the extension on the rear of the main industrial building. The rear extension to the industrial building is some 4m to eave. This and the industrial building have a pitched roof to a central and higher ridge.
- 3.6 To the west of the industrial unit there is further mature and dense planting along the boundary.
- 3.7 The western boundary is formed by the fenced rear gardens of two houses which face onto Teversham Road and then by Teversham Road itself.
- 3.8 The southern boundary of the site is formed by several different elements.
- 3.9 The southern boundary between Teversham Road and the central water course is formed by an overgrown water course, mature trees and dense underplanting.
- 3.10 Immediately adjacent to Teversham Road, the boundary is formed by the fenced rear garden of a residential property which faces onto and is accessed from Teversham Road.
- 3.11 To the east of this property and to the south of the watercourse the Appeal site extends to Hinton Road. This area consists of existing mature trees and undergrowth which and a pond, known as the Pumping House Pond. Hinton Road forms the southern boundary of this extended area. Hinton Road is an extension of Cow Lane.

- 3.12 To the east of this, the boundary is formed by Telford House, an elegant Victorian building in stone and brick which is a tall three story building with steep slate roofs. Dormer windows indicate that there appears to be accommodation in the roof. The building has been used for offices but is now empty. Telford House is accessed from Cow Lane to the south.
- 3.13 To the east of Telford House, the boundary of the site to the south of the water course is formed by the rear gardens of several properties of a cluster of houses known as The Pines. These properties have been built at different times and in different styles and are arranged around a central space. These brick built buildings vary from single storey with accommodation in the roof to two storey buildings with pitched roofs. The rear gardens have railings and fences along their garden boundaries. As with Telford House, The Pines is accessed from Cow Lane to the south.
- 3.14 To the east of The Pines, the boundary to the Appeal Site is formed by a mound on which there are mature trees. To the south of this boundary mound is an area of lower lying marshy land known as Poor Well. There are a number of mature willows on Poor Well and the southern boundary of Poor Well is formed by Cow Lane. There are five significant and mature trees on the edge of Poor Well along Cow Lane.
- 3.15 The trees along the boundary mound to the Appeal site appear to be between 20m and 30m in height and even in winter with their ivy growth on the trunks severely limit views from Poor Well to the Appeal Site. Where there are existing views though, those views are limited to the Appeal site because of the railway embankment along the northern boundary of the site.
- 3.16 To the east of Poor Well, the boundary to the Appeal Site is formed by the rear gardens and fencing of 48 to 60 Cow Lane and 3 Cox's Drove. There are existing hedges to the rear of several houses and smaller individual mature trees to several others. These houses are a mixture of single story buildings with accommodation in the roof to two storey houses. They are all accessed from Cow Lane.
- 3.17 The eastern boundary to the Appeal Site is formed in part by Cox's Drove and then Barnsbury Farm north of Cox's Drove. Between Barnsbury Farm and the northern boundary there is dense and mature planting to and beyond the boundary to the Appeal site.
- 3.18 In summary, the Appeal site has well defined boundaries to all sides and general and public visibility of the Appeal Site is limited. Visibility on to the Appeal site is possible in specific locations from Teversham Road, from which the main access to the site is proposed; from Cox's Drove where the secondary access is proposed and from Cow Lane including partial visibility across Poor Well, over the boundary mound and through the mature trees on that boundary.

4.0 Design Policies Context

4.1 The relevant Design Policies are set out in the Statement of Common Ground. These identified below should be noted in particular:

- The National Design Guide (October 2019 update Jan 2021)
- Local design guidance by South Cambridge District Council
- SCDC District Design Guide SPD March 2010
- SCDC “Homes for our Future” which in Priority 3 set down the importance of achieving a high standard of design and quality for new houses and communities. This document also highlights on page 23 that SCDC will “work with communities to develop Individual Village Design Statements”.
- NPPF (2021)
- Fulbourn Village Design Guide (January 2020).

4.2 Mr Fisher in his PoE sets out the relevant planning policies and identifies the weight that should be given to each in relation to the RMA

4.3 The planning history of the site is set out in the PoE by Mr Fisher, but I would note the following principal events and dates in relation to the evolution of the design on the Appeal site. This design history is set out in the DAS that accompanied the RMA in Sept 2019.

- An Outline planning application for the site was made in 2014. This was refused.
- The Refusal was appealed in 2016 and while the Inspector felt that the proposals would not be in conflict with the design and landscape policies of the Council and would not be detrimental to the character of the Village, the Appeal was dismissed because it was in conflict on policies of sustainable development.
- A revised Outline planning application was made in 2017 and Consent was granted. The relevant approved plan for this evidence is Barton Willmore DWG: 22430 MO6 Rev E.
- A detailed layout was prepared and a pre-application submission on this design was made in January 2019 with comments made in June 2019.
- A revised layout was prepared and formed the basis of a design workshop with SCDC in July 2019.
- This layout was then presented to the Parish Council in August 2019
- A further revised layout was presented to the SCDC Design Enabling Panel in August 2019.
- An updated layout, BW Dwg No: 28815 A-P10-010 P4, was submitted as part of the RMA in September 2019.
- There were further design reviews with SCDC in early and late November 2019.
- These informed a further revised layout and DAS Addendum submitted in February 2020. This is the layout and DAS that was considered by SCDC officers and recommended for approval in their report to committee of October 2021.

5.0 DESIGN APPRAISAL

- 5.1 In this section I give a design appraisal of the proposals on the Appeal site.
- 5.2 The design approach for the proposals is set out in detail in the DAS submitted with the RMA in Sept 2019 and in the DAS Addendum, submitted with the revision to the application in February 2020.
- 5.3 In summary, these documents set down that the Outline Application defined the agreed area for residential development on platforms raised above the existing ground level of the site and that 110 units was an acceptable number of units.
- 5.4 The defined development areas are indicated on the Approved "Parameters Plan", BW dwg: 22430 MO6 Rev E
- 5.5 This parameters plan shows the overall site divided roughly in half by clearing and enhancing the existing water course to create a central open space and wildlife corridor.
- 5.6 The western half of the site maintains and enhances the existing boundary planting around a single development area which extends to the main vehicular access to the site from Teversham Road. The currently overgrown historic gardens to the Pumping House which are in the Conservation area are restored, landscaped, and enhanced to create a new public garden.
- 5.7 The eastern side of the site is divided into two, east/west development areas separated by a linear park/open space. The boundaries are maintained and enhanced. There is a pedestrian and emergency vehicle access from Cox's Drove on the eastern boundary.
- 5.8 The approved Parameters Plan sets down that the development can be up to 2.5 storeys high and sets down "eave" and "ridge height" of 6m and 10.5m above "grade".
- 5.9 The Outline Consent also sets down in Condition 28:
- 'Notwithstanding the particulars shown on the parameters plan, the numbers of storeys and the height of the eaves and ridge above AOD of any built development hereby approved shall be determined through Reserved Matters applications. (Reason - In the interests of residential/visual amenity, in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)'*
- 5.10 It is clear that a well-designed, sensitive, and contextual residential development should be the aim of the RMA and that these height parameters should only be considered guidelines to that important goal.
- 5.11 In September 2019, the layout BW Dwg 28815 A-P10-012 was submitted as part of the RMA application.
- 5.12 It showed a variety of house types, sizes and styles arranged along the access and other roads to create a sense of place and containment.

- 5.13 Three distinct character areas have been created, the Village Lanes, Meadow Park and Village Streets. These are set out and explained in the DAS submitted in September 2019 and the subsequent Addendum DAS in February 2020. The creation of different character areas ensures that the overall development maintains a relatable scale and identity.
- 5.14 Where there was the potential of overlooking or privacy issues to properties beyond the Appeal site boundaries, in particular adjacent to the rear of the properties on Teversham Road and those on Cow Lane, the proposed houses were rotated so that their flank walls faced the boundary minimising the visual impact.
- The flank walls of these houses are some 14.5 m from the boundary and some 28m from 60 Cow Lane. Obscured glazing to various windows is also proposed to further minimise and potential impact.
- 5.15 The submitted plan showed the significant enhancement of the central water course and the newly created Meadow Park along its banks. The landscaping design adds the linear park between the two eastern development areas linking it to the central Meadow Park and through to the second linear park along the boundary with Telford House and The Pines to the newly created public gardens of the historic Pumping House Pond.
- 5.16 Crucial to the design is the location of two of the blocks of flats, Block A and B that face and look out and over the central Meadow Park. This careful placement of these two blocks allows for providing natural surveillance and security to these open public areas.
- 5.17 On review by the local authority this submission plan was found to have some of the proposed buildings outside the development areas on the approved parameter plan. As a result, minor amendments were made to the layout to bring all the proposed properties within the development area on the approved parameter plan.
- 5.18 On further review by the local authority, revisions were requested and made to the elevations of a number of properties including Blocks A and B. These revisions altered the fenestration and the ridge line giving the blocks greater visual variety and correctly reducing their overall visual impact in the scheme.
- 5.19 These two revisions were incorporated on the drawings in the amended submission in February 2020.
- 5.20 These revisions did not materially affect the design approach of the proposal nor alter the principles of the layout and its strong and cohesive design approach.
- 5.21 In order to resolve the potential of flooding, the levels of the development areas on the approved parameters plan have been adjusted by varying amounts. These levels are indicated on Cannon dwg B411-PL-SK-320 Rev P09 which was submitted to the SCDC during the application period.

- 5.22 This plan shows two potential flood levels, a 1 in a 1000 year event and a 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change event and the proposed finished floor level (FFL) of the various properties base on those two events. This plan shows that the FFL of each of the proposed residential units is 150mm above the highest flood event along with all the roads and access to each property.
- 5.23 The FFL of Block A is proposed to be 10.65 above datum. This is 1.02m above the existing site ground level.
- 5.24 The FFL of Block B is proposed to be 10.49 above datum. This is 1.04m above the existing site ground level.
- 5.25 The proposed ridge height of both Block A and B is 11.24m above FFL at ground floor. This is 0.74m over the height parameter indicated on the approved parameters plan.
- 5.26 The proposed ridge height of Block A is 12.26m above the existing site ground level and Block B is 12.28m above the existing site ground level.
- 5.27 It should be noted that it is only the ridge height and eave height of these two buildings, Block A and Block B in the whole of the development that exceed the heights suggested on the Outline parameter plan.
- 5.28 While these heights are above the heights identified on the approved parameters plan, they are entirely compliant with Condition 28 of the Outline Consent.
- 5.29 Condition 6 of the Outline Consent, S/0202/17/OL confirms that the details of the RM application should be in 'general accordance' with the illustrative layout and so the key assessment is whether there is any 'harm' caused by the increase in height or whether if there is, that 'harm' is unacceptable. I address this point in Chapter 6.

Materials

- 5.30 The DAS submitted with the RMA in Sept 2019 and the subsequent addendum DAS submitted in May 2021 set out in detail how the different character areas are designed with a variety of materials to help reinforce their individual identity. In the character areas there are both affordable and market residential units. High quality materials are used throughout the scheme and so ensure that there is no differentiation between the different tenures within the development.

Amenity provision areas

- 5.31 The proposed development benefits from a centrally located play area, a LEAP, on the eastern side of Meadow Park and three informal play areas elsewhere. The central play area is arranged on a number of accessible levels which are raised above the potential flood levels so that they can be used at all times.

Flood Impact.

- 5.32 The Outline consent on the Appeal site considered and approved a water management strategy.
- 5.33 I note that any proposed development in the RMA has to accommodate the potential of occasional flooding and the run-off from the proposed development.
- 5.34 A flood management strategy has been designed by Cannon for the Appeal Site.
- 5.35 The flood management strategy proposes all the potential flood water on the Appeal site is retained on the Appeal site and does not go on any land outside the boundaries of the Appeal site. In order to achieve this, it is proposed that designated flood areas are created and that will include eight gardens adjacent to the southern boundary to the east of Poor Well.
- 5.36 All the residential units in the RMA are located above the design flood level of 1 in 100 years plus 40% climate, including the communal play area in the central Meadow Park, so that the residential units and this amenity space will always be accessible to and available for all the residents in the event of a such a flood event.
- 5.37 All the proposed access roads in the RMA are above the flood level to ensure emergency access to all residential units in times of potential flooding.
- 5.38 As stated in para 5.34 above, Mr Totman of Cannon addresses the water management strategy in his PoE.

6.0 Local Design Guidance.

- 6.1 As I set down in Chapter 4 the local design guidance is set down in several SCDC's documents.
- 6.2 The Fulbourn Village Design Guide, (FVDG) is given significant weight in the planning officer's report to committee on the RMA and the given RfRs. I therefore review the proposed design in relation to the FVDG.
- 6.3 The FVDG is the document that sets down specific design guidance for development in the village. It sets down design guidance under a number of key headings – I refer only to the guidance which is pertinent to the Appeal Site.

6.4.0 Chapter 4: Character Areas

Poor Well Character Area

- *“This is a unique highlight in Fulbourn and partly in the conservation area. It has links to the heritage of water management and fenland agriculture and brings nature directly into the village. The tall trees and green aspect of Cow Lane at this location provide a memorable image of the village within trees:*
- *It has a part natural/part agricultural feel.*
- *It has ditches running along the road, a chalk stream and wetlands.*
- *It contains small industrial buildings and the grand Victorian building of the former Cambridge Water Company.*

- 6.4.1 This description highlights the existing mature trees around Poor Well and the containment they provide to the character area.
- 6.4.2 The appeal site is to the north of existing houses along Cow Lane and to the north of Poor Well. The proposals for the Appeal Site retain the existing mature trees along the southern boundary including those to the boundary with Poor Well itself and help maintain and enhance that containment to the character area.
- 6.4.3 The existing chalk stream which flows along the southern boundary and then flows north through the centre of the Appeal Site is cleared, enhanced, and becomes the central focus of the newly formed Meadow Park.
- 6.4.4 In summary the proposals carefully respect and enhance the features and character of Poor Well. The proposals retain the existing trees and planting along the boundary and with the creation of the new Meadow Park with its restored chalk stream and with the restored Pumping House Gardens, create new additional open spaces that echo the fenland and water management heritage.

6.5.0 Chapter 5: A close relationship with the countryside.

- *“The richness of trees, and layering of tree belt surrounding the village, where building rooflines are consistently below the tree crowns should be preserved and enhanced”*
- *“There should be clearly identifiable separation of the built up areas of Fulbourn from the countryside through open fields with long distance views*”
- *“Specific fields identified in Figure 17 contribute to the characteristic short distance views from inside the village to open landscape and therefore have a sensitive visual relationship with the village. These open views should be sustained and enhanced”.*
- *“The rural aspect and feel of walks, bridleways and routes that allow access from the village to the countryside, and to natural area and heritage sites, should be safeguarded and enhanced.*

- 6.5.1 The existing trees on the Appeal Site particularly on the southern boundary around Poor Well are being retained and the landscaping enhanced. As can be seen from Ms. Toyne’s evidence on the visual impact of the proposed development, the building sit behind these trees and below their crown hence retaining the visual dominance of the trees.
- 6.5.2 As has been noted elsewhere, the northern boundary of the site is formed by the existing railway and embankment. This embankment is over 2m above the existing Appeal Site level and while it is only 0.5m to 1m above the existing level of Cow Lane, because of the existing trees on the boundary with Poor Well and the distance between Cow Lane and the railway embankment, there are no views out to the countryside beyond the railway embankment. This can be seen in the panoramic views in the submitted DAS and in the photographs in figure 14 on page 14 and 15.
- 6.5.3 The aspiration to integrate the Appeal Site into the village and to provide short term views is demonstrated by the creation of the Meadow Park in the centre of the site, with development set back to its edges. This park created around the restored and enhanced existing chalk stream ensures that visually and physically the proposed development opens out from Poor Well and Cow Lane to maintain a sensitive visual relationship with the village.
- 6.5.4 The Outline proposals on the Appeal Site envisaged a pedestrian access onto the site through and from Poor Well to the proposed central open space. This was removed during, and in reaction to, the public consultation on the initial design and in consultation with the Parish Council. The access to the Meadow Park is now only via the restored Pumping House Gardens at the junction of Cow Lane and Hinton Road and then from Teversham Road and Cox’s Drove.

6.5.5 The proposals on the Appeal Site also provide shorter internal views through the development through the character areas through and along the central linear park to the east and the linear park along the southern boundary to the west back to the central Meadow Park.

6.6.0 Chapter 6: A legacy of majestic trees

- *Any development should contribute to the richness of rural-style greenery through retention and planting of new large trees and hedgerows.*
- *Ornamental and garden trees should be avoided in street and green spaces.*
- *Existing tall trees should be safeguarded and consideration should be given to succession planting to enrich and strengthen current tree presence.*
- *Road verges within the residential areas could be progressively enhanced by appropriate large tree species and hedgerows.*
- *Trees and rural shrubs should frame views and create a transition ('soft edge') between the village and open countryside.*
- *Village biodiversity and field ditches are important local features to be strengthened and integrated in new landscaped areas.*
- *The selection of tree species should consider ash dieback and climate change to ensure that new trees are selected to be resilient for the long term.*

6.6.1 As indicated elsewhere the existing trees on the boundaries and within the Appeal Site are being retained and the landscape design seeks to maintain and enhance that legacy of tall trees, hedgerows, field ditches and enhanced streams to create a rich biodiversity.

6.7.0 Chapter 7: Attractive and safe village street

- *Highway design and improvements should recognise and enhance the special character of the village.*
- *Carriageway widths should be reduced where possible, to calm traffic while accommodating anticipated vehicle movements and avoiding informal parking on pavements.*

- *Tall trees and green verges are essential to local character, with simple planting and occasional seating; pavements should be integral to the natural edges – typically on one side only.*
- *Low level pedestrian lighting is a better option to improve pedestrian safety within the village, without standard highway lighting, which is unnecessary and inappropriate.*
- *Design attention should be given to the streets and routes more frequently used by children to encourage walking and cycling.*
- *Technical equipment, road marking and signage should have minimal visual impact, particularly in the important locations.*

6.7.1 The DAS sets out how the proposed design incorporates and achieves this design guidance.

6.7.2 The key roads through the development all have landscaping to one side to echo the character of roads in the village and aspirations of the FVDG above. This is either the new landscaping of the linear parks or the retained and enhanced boundary planting.

6.7.3 The road widths are kept to the statutory minimum width required by SCDC with careful surface treatments to minimise their impact and integrate them into the general layout.

6.7.4 Tall trees are retained and maintained around the boundary of the development along with the retention and enhancement of the hedgerow and the creation of new landscaped areas in the central Meadow Park and the two linear parks.

6.7.5 The DAS states that pedestrian and cyclist movement has been prioritised with shared surfaces and segregated footways provided. Roads have been designed to allow a maximum speed limit of 20mph using changes in road surface and tighter road alignment particularly on bends. This will allow for only limited use of intrusive visual signage.

6.8.0 **Chapter 10: Integrating larger developments within the village**

- *Sites should have planted and irregular ‘soft edge’ at the interface with the countryside.*
- *Any green buffer between new development and existing built up area of the village should be intended to protect privacy and should not isolate the new community.*
- *Site planning should incorporate open views from and through the interior of the site towards the countryside and local landmarks.*
- *Street networks should be a natural extension of the village with informal, interconnected streets, lanes and spaces – avoiding rigid and regular grids.*
- *Sensitive treatment of main road frontages should include tall trees, hedgerows and the boundary walls typical of Fulbourn.*

- *There should not be gateway buildings at the entrance to the site: green gateway spaces with seating and public art are more appropriate to the character of the village.*
- *Buildings should be informally aligned and avoid forming perimeter blocks.*
- *Pedestrian routes and cycleways should form a network connecting to the village core and community facilities/services.*
- *Hard surfaced areas should use permeable materials to assist with sustainable drainage and control surface water flooding.*
- *3 story buildings are not typical of the village and should only be considered with extreme care – they should be sited away from prominent frontages to minimise visual presence, and be articulated to avoid any bulkiness.*
- *Courtyard/townhouse formats with direct entrance from the street are more appropriate than blocks of flats; tall lit stairwells are to be avoided as inappropriate to village character.*
- *The height should be lower than the crown of surrounding mature trees to retain the settling of a ‘village among trees’.*
- *Buildings should not be repetitive, and provide variety of building types and design with coherent scale, massing and elegant simplicity in detailing.*
- *Local and contemporary features, materials and detailing should be used; guidance on materials and detailing that are appropriate to the village context can be found in Section 11.*
- *Plots for self-build and custom-built houses could be an appropriate way to provide diversity in line with the character of the village.*
- *Car parking and garages should have minimal visual impact.*
- *Bins, cycle parking, meter boxes and other infrastructure should be integrated in the design.*
- *A strong rural-inspired landscape framework and public realm should be designed, starting from existing landscape features and including a network of green spaces and wildlife corridors.*
- *The landscape design of new development should improve opportunities for formal and informal sport and physical activity.*
- *Enhancement of biodiversity and opportunity for wildlife should be included within the development are. Attracting birds through hedgerow planting and bird boxes is particularly important as Fulbourn is well known for its swifts.*
- *Sustainable drainage should be integrated within the landscape, take inspiration from the traditional local ditches and contribute to the biodiversity of the site.*
- *Street lighting should be minimal and there should not be any floodlit spaces to minimise impact on night-sky and wildlife.*
- *Local artists could contribute to public art opportunities.*
- *Interpretation of local heritage in place naming will be welcome.*

6.8.1 The Appeal site does not have edges with the adjacent countryside. The northern boundary to site adjacent to the countryside is formed by an elevated railway line and embankment. That embankment remains with the existing planting retained and enhanced along the base of the embankment within the site boundary.

- 6.8.2 The existing boundary planting between the proposed properties on the Appeal site and existing properties in the village is maintained and enhanced to maintain privacy rather than thickened so as to ensure the proposals are not isolated from the existing village.
- 6.8.3 As I have highlighted elsewhere, there are no views through the site to the open countryside to the north. I have also highlighted that a central Meadow Park has been created in the centre of the proposed development along the existing and enhanced chalk stream to create a sense of visual openness and a visual integration across the proposed development from Poor Well and Cow Lane to the south. In particular, this central space allows views from the Appeal site to the south and back into the village between the existing development on either side of Poor Well along Cow Lane.
- 6.8.4 The street network on the Appeal site has been designed to be informal with a hierarchy of interconnected streets of different widths and surfaces so as to avoid grids.
- 6.8.5 Different character areas have been designed in the layout on the Appeal site so as to give variety and visual texture across the site and along the various roads and routes. Images indicating this are clearly set out in Chapter 5 and 2 the respective submitted DAS's
- 6.8.6 The decision has been taken to have frontages of properties on the key roads through the development more open and integrated by using low planting rather than walls etc. except at road junctions/corners where those houses have enclosing walls to rear gardens. This is in my view an appropriate approach as the roads only have a up to short frontages between lanes, so a cohesion is maintained along these short frontages and there is variety in the materials used on the proposed houses.
- 6.8.7 There are no gateway buildings, although two of the proposed buildings facing the central Meadow Park are two and a half storeys in height and contain flats so that they can provide natural surveillance to this key amenity space. This surveillance is achieved because the buildings contain flats which may have more activity during any time of the day and because they provide a slightly higher outlook than the surrounding houses.
- 6.8.8 The proposed frontages along the key roads are generally informally aligned with spaces between the houses with this variation enhance by using different designs and materials.
- 6.8.9 There is a clear and comprehensive network of pedestrian routes and cycleways as illustrated in Chapter 6 of the submitted DAS.
- 6.8.10 The sustainable drainage proposals are comprehensive and dealt with by Mr Totman in his PoE.
- 6.8.11 It is noted that three storey buildings may be used with care. The proposals on the Appeal site are limited to two buildings at two and a half storeys in height in the centre of the development as noted above.

- 6.8.12 The height of all the development on the Appeal site is below the crown of the surrounding mature trees and in particular those along the boundary with Poor Well.
- 6.8.13 The proposed buildings on the Appeal site are designed to have a variety of elevations and use a variety of materials and textures. This approach is set out in detail in Chapter 6 of the DAS.
- 6.8.14 The design approach to carparking on the Appeal site is set out in Chapter 6 of the DAS. A variety of parking is provided including integral garages, detached garages, attached garages, and courtyards. The short building frontages across the layout help minimise the impact of the parking provision.
- 6.9 The FVDG highlights “Additional Guidance” for the Appeal Site in Fig 46 on page 16. This highlights a number of key points to consider in the design of development on this site.
- 6.10 One of the points of “Additional Guidance” is the aspiration for a viewing corridor from Cow Lane. As I have stated elsewhere and as can be seen in the photographs in Appendix C, there are no long distance views north to the open countryside from Cow Lane.
- 6.11 The indicative viewing corridor is obscured by the mound and trees along the boundary of the Appeal Site and Poor Well and further by the railway and embankment along the northern boundary of the Appeal Site.
- 6.12 The indicative viewing corridor also steps westward behind the properties in The Pines. This step is blocked by the properties in The Pines.
- 6.13 It also should be noted that as stated on Fig. 16, because there is no access to the Appeal Site from Poor Well, the proposed viewing corridor could only be viewed from Cow Lane, not with Poor Well.
- 6.14 In the Addendum DAS submitted in February 2020, the aspiration for a viewing corridor is acknowledged and one along the restored and enhanced chalk stream is identified on Page 31 but like the viewing corridor aspired to in the FVDG, it cannot be viewed from Cow Lane. Nor can it provide long views out to the north and the open countryside because of the railway and embankment. As I have stated elsewhere, the railway and embankment are over 2m above the existing site level adjacent to the southern boundary of the Appeal Site with Poor Well.

7.0 Affordable Housing Provision

- 7.1 The provision and mix of affordable housing is set down in Schedule 3 of the S106 agreement signed with SCDC and attached to the Outline Consent in 2017
- 7.2 This Agreement sets down that 20 affordable units may be clustered together and that no clusters should adjoin or neighbour each other.
- 7.3 The Agreement sets down that 8x1 bed and 8x2 bed affordable rented units and 12x2 bed and 5x3 bed shared ownership units. This is a total of 33 units.
- 7.4 33 affordable units are provided and identified within layout, BW 28815 A P10-010 P4 submitted for the RMA.
- 7.5 The units are located in the Blocks A and B which overlook the central Meadow Park and in units in the north-western part of the proposed layout.
- 7.6 Block A contains 7 units. Block B contains 7 units. The remaining 17 units are located on the north-western edge of the site with 2 units located in the central area of the north-western part of the site.
- 7.8 It is my experience, that for appropriate management reasons, Housing Associations or Registered Social Landlords prefer to have their units in clusters and where they might be in blocks of flats located to ensure that access doors and staircases are easily managed and maintained without landlord confusion.
- 7.9 The proposals on the Appeal site adhere to that experience.

8.0 Response to the Reasons for Refusal.

Reason 1

'The proposed development, by virtue of the scale and siting of the two and a half storey apartment buildings located centrally within the site and within a key view north through the site across Poor Well and along the chalk stream towards the open countryside beyond, would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and significantly erode the existing wide open view and green space, which provides a positive connection between the existing village and adjacent countryside.'

Furthermore, the adverse visual impact of the apartment buildings is exacerbated by virtue of the buildings being sited on raised platforms, which would increase ground levels by up to a further 900mm above existing, enhancing the adverse prominence and dominance of the central apartment buildings within the site and within views from the surrounding area, creating a scale of development that is out of keeping with the character of the area.'

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridge Local Plan 2018 and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021, which require developments to be of high quality design, to be compatible with its location in terms of scale and appearance and to make a positive contribution to its local and wider context and the Fulbourn Village Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2020, in particular guidance notes 10.3, 10.10, 10.12 and Figure 46 of the Guide, which seeks in Section 10 to integrate larger developments within the village.'

- 8.1 As I have noted above in Section 5, the Parameters Plan approved with the Outline Approval in 2017 sets down that up to two and a half storey buildings are permitted and that the height of ridges and eaves are to be determined with the RMA to ensure that the proposals required:

'residential/visual amenity'

The issue is therefore whether those buildings:

- *'within a key view north through the site across Poor Well and along the chalk stream towards the open countryside beyond'*
- *'would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area'*
- *'significantly erode the existing wide open view and green space, which provides a positive connection between the existing village and adjacent countryside.'*

- 8.2 I have assessed the views into the site from Cow Lane and these views are further evaluated in Ms Toyne's Landscape and Visual impact evidence.

- 8.3 As I have noted above in my assessment, there is a significant existing planting along the southern boundary of the Appeal site and Poor Well. The boundary itself has a raised mound along it with the existing mature trees planted on it and on its banks. In my view there is a limited view through to the Appeal site.
- 8.4 I have also highlighted that the northern boundary of the site is formed by a railway embankment that rises above the existing level of the Appeal site some 2m and above the existing level both of Poor Well and Cow Lane. There are no views beyond and to the north of the Appeal site because of this embankment.
- 8.5 Although this view from Poor Well and the adjacent Cow Lane is identified in the FVDG as a viewing corridor, it is clear that because of the existing planting on the boundary and because of the height of the railway embankment along the northern boundary of the Appeal site, there is no view to the open countryside beyond the Appeal site and only a limited view of the Appeal site.
- 8.6 Similarly, as there are only limited views through to the Appeal site from Poor Well and Cow Lane in front of it and no views to the open countryside to the north, the proposals on the Appeal site cannot be
- ‘significantly erod(ing) the existing wide open view and green space, which provides a positive connection between the existing village and adjacent countryside’*
- 8.7 The FVDC identifies in Chapter 10 that:
- ‘The height should be lower than the crown of surrounding mature trees to retain the settling of a ‘village among trees’*
- 8.8 As Ms Toyne’s evidence shows, the proposed development on the Appeal site and in particular Blocks A and B, the tallest buildings on the site, cannot be seen above the crown of the existing trees on the southern boundary of the site with Poor Well. In fact, they are significantly below the crown of the trees on the boundary with Poor Well. Therefore, in my view, there can be no *‘significant harm’* caused to either the character or the appearance of the area.
- 8.9 Despite the lack of views to the open countryside to the north, the designers have clearly understood the general aspirations of the FVDG and have created a new wide central open space, north south, through the Appeal site along the existing chalk stream. The existing chalk stream which is heavily overgrown and inaccessible has been recognised for its habitat and landscape potential and forms the centre of a new Meadow Park with its ecology enhanced areas.
- 8.10 To ensure that this new park has some level of enhanced natural surveillance the two taller buildings in the development, two blocks of two and half storeys in height, entirely in accordance with the Outline Consent, have been located and framing it, on either side of the Meadow Park. This in my opinion has highly appropriate and sensitive design response.

- 8.11 I have noted above that the development on the Appeal site sits entirely within the permitted development areas set down on the plan approved with the Outline Consent and I have also set down in detail the levels of the various development areas.
- 8.12 I have noted that the new residential units have been located on 'development platforms' that are above the existing ground level of the Appeal site. I have also noted that the new residential units were always to be raised above the existing ground levels of the Appeal site.
- 8.13 In Ms Toyne's evidence, she assesses the visual impact of the proposed development at these proposed levels and while the development is raised above the existing ground levels, her evidence along with the verified views show that this does not *'enhanc(e) the adverse prominence and dominance of the central apartment buildings within the site and within views from the surrounding area, creating a scale of development that is out of keeping with the character of the area.'*
- 8.14 I also note that in the Officers Report to the planning committee for the RMA, they note that even if there is a view, the proposed development on the Appeal site is entirely within the parameters of the Outline Consent and its planning conditions and that in para 125 of their report: *'the introduction of built form of development into the existing undeveloped view is inevitable and that the layout has sought to retain key views along the chalk stream, framed by the proposed development'*
- 8.15 And that on balance in their para 133: *'Officers acknowledge that there is a degree of conflict with Figure 46 and guidance note 10.3 of the Village Design Guide by virtue of the introduction of a built form of development. However, the conflict must be weighed against the requirement for the layout of the site to follow the provisions of the outline consent secured in condition 4 and 6 of that permission. Therefore, the introduction of a built form of development into the existing undeveloped view is inevitable. Officers consider that the layout has sought to retain key views along the chalk stream, framed by the proposed development, as highlighted within the Village Design Guide'*
- 8.16 It remains my view that there is no viewing corridor as suggested on Fig 46 of the FVDG but the proposals on the Appeal sign acknowledge this aspiration in principle and have been designed as a sensitive and appropriate response to that aspiration. The proposals either in height or scale do not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area but rather significantly enhance the existing site and provide a well-designed residential development addition to the village.

Reason 4

'The reserved matters scheme, by virtue of the proposed layout, fails to adequately distribute affordable properties throughout the site and to integrate those units appropriately with the market housing. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy H/10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023 which seek to provide affordable housing in small groups or clusters distributed through the site.'

- 8.17 I have reviewed and assessed the affordable housing provision in the proposed development on the Appeal site.
- 8.18 The affordable housing to be provided within the development is set down in the S106 Legal agreement attached to the 2017 Outline consent. This requires 33 units in clusters of no more than 20 units.
- 8.19 The proposals on the Appeal site show the affordable units in:
- two buildings, Block A and Block B, one on either side of the central chalk stream and separated by Meadow Park. Each building contains 7 units
 - A cluster of a pair of semidetached houses, Block C and Block D each containing 6 units and Block D1 which contained 3 units at the north-east of the site. This is 17 units.
 - A pair of semidetached houses in the centre of the west of the side. This is 2 units.
- 8.20 I have noted the policies highlighted in the RfR but both policies were adopted after the Outline Consent was granted.
- 8.21 I note that in the Officers report to committee in para 102 that:
- *'the Council's Affordable Housing Team has confirmed their support for the mix, tenure and layout.'*
- And in para 104
- *The proposals would comply with the provisions of the outline consent and associated Section 106 Agreement in terms of affordable housing provision and clustering within the proposed layout.*
- 8.22 In my view the proposals in the development on the Appeal site fully comply with the provisions of the S106 Agreement attached to and the Outline Consent for the site granted in 2017.

Reason 5

The reserved matters scheme, by virtue of the proposed layout, locates 17 affordable units in a single cluster adjacent to Breckenwood Industrial Estate, a poor design response to the constraints of the site and integration of those units within the development site. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies HQ/1 and H/10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 and the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023 which seek to provide affordable housing in small groups or clusters distributed through the site.

- 8.23 I have reviewed the proposed location of the 17 affordable units in a single cluster in the north-western part of the Appeal site.
- 8.24 As I have stated above in my consideration of RfR 4, having 17 units in a cluster is entirely in accordance with the S106 Agreement attached to the Outline Consent in 2017.
- 8.25 In my evidence above I highlight that the developer was aware of the potential for noise from the light industrial units to the north of the western part of the site. A noise mitigation study and strategy was undertaken and submitted. This study confirmed that development could be acceptable, and the proposed mitigation strategy was subject to formal consultation with the Council's Environmental Officer who raised no objection to the proposals. The principle of development in this location was agreed and the issue settled.
- 8.26 In Para 275 of the Officers report to committee it states:
- *Officers were satisfied that, subject to the appropriate mitigation measures secured by conditions 19 and 20 of the outline consent, the future occupiers of the development would not be adversely impacted by the adjacent noise sources.*
- 8.27 In my view residential units can therefore be located in the north-western part of the site so long as the noise mitigation measures are achieved. Those units can be affordable rented, shared ownership or for sale.
- 8.28 In my view the proposals in the development on the Appeal site fully comply with Policies listed in the RfR.

9.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 9.1 I have set out the Reasons for Refusal in Section 2 and 8.
- 9.2 I have set out and reviewed the design proposals in Section 5
- 9.3 I have set out and reviewed the relevant design guidance and the planning policies and in particular the Fulbourn Village Design Guide in Section 6.
- 9.4 I have set my Response to Reasons for Refusal in Section 8
- 9.5 It is my view that the proposals address and fully and successfully meet the design aspirations set down in the **NPPF** and the local design guidance including the Fulbourn Village Design Guide.
- 9.6 I conclude that the proposed layout and detail design in the RM application on the Appeal site demonstrate a careful evaluation of the constraints on the site and provide a well-considered, sensitive, robust and a highly appropriate design solution in the context of the site and the policies of SCDC and the local design guidance, in particular the Fulbourn Village Design Guide and that there are no sound design reasons for the refusal of the Appeal scheme.

James Carr

Mapridge Design Studios Ltd

26th April 2022