
Land at Teversham Road, Fulbourn: Summary Landscape and Visual Proof of Evidence

PINS Reference: APP/W0530/W/22/3291532

Application Reference: S/3290/19/RM

Prepared on behalf of Castlefield International Ltd

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1.0 SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE

- 1.1 The Appeal Site was granted outline planning permission in 2017, for consideration of access points, for residential development of up to 110 dwellings with areas of landscaping and public open space and associate infrastructure works. A Reserve Matters (RM) application was subsequently submitted, on 20 September 2019 **“for appearance landscaping layout and scale following outline planning permission S/0202/17/OL for the development of 110 dwellings with areas of landscaping and public open space and associated infrastructure works The outline was screened and confirmed not to be EIA development”**. Notwithstanding the SCDC Officers recommendation for approval, as set out in the SCDC Officers Committee Report (CDA9a), the RM proposals were refused 20 October 2021
- 1.2 The Appeal Site immediately adjoins the northern settlement edge of Fulbourn. The village of Fulbourn has a leafy character, largely due to the mature trees present throughout the village, within gardens and along streets, including Cow Lane along which are a number of mature trees, including those associated with Poor Well Water and The Pump House Garden. This characteristic is one of the features identified in the Fulbourn Parish Plan (CDH1), described as a *“village among trees”*, and *“living among trees”*, at Pages 10 and 5 respectively.
- 1.3 This is also identified in the Fulbourn Village Design Guide (CDE5) in Section 6.0: A Legacy of Majestic Trees, which sets out that:
- “Fulbourn is characterised as a village set among trees, where tree crowns and foliage dominate over most buildings and where rural biodiversity is often richer within the built area than in the countryside itself. Ensuring a strong legacy of tall trees, hedgerows, field ditches and streams is essential to preserving the character of the village.”***
- 1.4 The draft Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan, Submission Draft – V3, 8th October 2021, (CDE7), also acknowledges this vegetated character of Fulbourn, at Paragraph 4.35, noting that the village has *“the visual impression of ‘living among trees’”*, and, at Paragraph 5.3, that the *“mature trees and hedgerows, distinguish[ing] Fulbourn as ‘village set amongst trees’”*.
- 1.5 Fulbourn and the Appeal Site are located within the *East Anglian Chalk* NCA, the *Fulbourn Fen Edge Chalklands* LCA and *Fen Ditton Fen Edge Chalklands* at County level, and the *Chalklands* LCA at District level published Landscape Character Assessments.
- 1.6 The LCAs therefore all identify the location of the Appeal Site and Fulbourne within a Fen Edge Chalkland landscape. At all levels, the landscape character assessments acknowledge that

settlement is a characteristic component of the landscape, with the LCA 2B: Eastern Fen Edge-Fulbourn, as defined in Cambridge Green Belt Study, and the 6C: Fulbourn Fen Edge Chalklands as defined in the Greater Cambridgeshire Landscape Character Assessment described as 'settled'. This was acknowledged as a characteristic of the landscape context of the Appeal Site by the Inspector in the Appeal Decision (Paragraph 19) (APP/W0530/W/15/3139730) (CDD2) and reinforced by the outline consent for housing on the Appeal Site, which has now established the principle of development on the Appeal Site.

1.7 The Appeal Site predominantly comprises two unremarkable, somewhat scrubby rough grass fields with increasing scrub encroachment, and which are subject to the Outline Consented Scheme; these fields entirely enclosed by the built development on three sides, and the railway and associated embankment on the fourth, with further enclosure provided by substantial boundary and surrounding vegetation. The enclosed nature of the Appeal Site has been a long-standing recognised attribute of the Appeal Site, notably pre-dating the Fulbourn Village Design Guide (2021); as referred to:

- in the SHLAA (2013) (CDH2) which under Site Description & Context the Appeal Site is noted as being **"two enclosed fields"**, and that **"there is limited opportunity to view the [Appeal] Site from the surrounding area"**, and in the assessment of Townscape and Landscape Impact, it concluded that **"Development on the Site would have a neutral effect on the landscape setting of Fulbourn because the site is so well screened from the residential and commercial buildings that surround it on three sides with the railway forming a barrier to the north"**, and which was accepted by the Inspector for the 2016 Appeal in his Decision Notice at Paragraph 29;
- by the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) Landscape Officer, who states in his Consultation Response to the 2014 Outline Application (CDH3) that **"the [Appeal] Site is fairly enclosed."**, and that **"the northern boundary is entirely enclosed by a well vegetated railway embankment"**; and
- in the SCDC Committee Report for the 2017 Outline Planning Application (CDH4) which, at Paragraph 95, stated that **"the railway line demarcated [ing] the northern boundary and separated [ing] the site from the open countryside beyond"**, and at Paragraph 97, the Officers were of the view, **"taking into account the land parcel is almost fully enclosed by development, and notwithstanding the site is an attractive green space which extends into the village the extent of harm to the landscape character is 'less than substantial'. This view was supported by the earlier appeal decision on this site"**.

- 1.8 The enclosed nature of the Appeal Site has increased during the intervening time from 2016 up to 2022. Therefore, the combination of the flat topography and the extensive vegetation structure within and surrounding the Appeal Site, and the delineation provided by the Ipswich the Cambridge railway line running along the northern boundary of the Appeal Site, separates and distinguishes the Appeal Site, and the Outline Consented Scheme on it, from the wider landscape; and limit open views of the Appeal Site to its most immediate setting. Beyond the immediate setting of the Appeal Site, visibility of the Appeal Site is very limited.
- 1.9 As a result, there are no 'open' views of the Appeal Site, and no appreciation of the countryside to the north of the Appeal Site, even in winter, with a considerable further reduction in openness when trees and vegetation within Poor Well Water is in leaf. Therefore, notwithstanding that the retention of '*wide open views towards the countryside*' is an aspiration of the Fulbourn Village Design Guide for respectful development of the Appeal Site, and that the Fulbourn Village Design Guide is an SPD and a material planning consideration, these wide open views do not actually exist, and this is not a practical nor deliverable objective.
- 1.10 Likewise, the enclosed nature of the Appeal Site results in heavily restricting views to and over the RM Proposals. Where there are views, as demonstrated by the LVIA for the RM Proposals, these are generally restricted to the immediate boundary, predominantly from immediately adjoining properties. Where infrequent open, partial or glimpsed views of the RM Proposals are obtained, they are seen in the context of existing residential, commercial, industrial development, set within a well treed and vegetated context, either in the foreground, as a backdrop, or both.
- 1.11 From Poor Well Water, glimpsed views of the proposed residential dwellings would be obtained in winter. However, these views would be seen through the canopies of existing trees within Poor Well Water, and seen in the context of existing surrounding residential development, as illustrated by **Appeal Site Context Photographs: Fulbourn Village Design Guide Views 1 and 2**, and **Realm AVRs of Fulbourn Village Design Guide Views 1 and 2**.
- 1.12 Furthermore, as also illustrated by **Realm AVRs Views 1 and 2**, the RM Proposals would be seen as "*set among trees, where tree crowns and foliage dominate over most buildings and where rural biodiversity is often richer within the built area than in the countryside itself. Ensuring a strong legacy of tall trees, hedgerows, field ditches and streams is essential to preserving the character of the village*", which reflects the Legacy of Majestic Trees, set out in the Fulbourn Village Design Guide, and would be no different than existing views of residential development in the locality, and as proposed tree planting of well over 100 trees as part of the RM Proposals mature, the 'treed' context would be enhanced.

- 1.13 The LVIA also identifies that although the RM Proposals would result in the loss of some field area and trees, firstly, this loss is accepted in consideration of the Outline Consented Scheme for the Appeal Site; and secondly, these are not unique or remarkable features, and the RM Proposals would adequately mitigate for this through incorporating new areas of open space with areas identified for habitat retention and translocation, and areas of proposed open space including generous areas of proposed wildflower meadow and grassland, introducing well over 100 new trees into the scheme, providing new sustainable drainage systems, including the enhancement of the Chalk stream running through the Appeal Site, and new recreational opportunities, all of which contribute positively to green infrastructure and improving connectivity. In addition, the RM Proposals would restore The Pump House Garden and provide public access to The Pump House Garden, which would be an enhancement to the character of Fulbourn. Furthermore, a detailed Landscape Management and Maintenance Plan (CDA3: 12.5.21 LMMP Parts 1, 2 and 3) prepared by Chris Blandford Associates, and a detailed Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan prepared by the Landscape Science Consultancy Ltd (CDB3a) address how the landscape proposals will be successfully implemented, maintained and managed, and demonstrate how the landscape and nature conservation objectives will be effectively delivered.
- 1.14 Therefore, the Appeal Site, being of unremarkable character, contained by existing residential and commercial development on three sides, and contained by the railway embankment to the north, which forms a natural boundary to the northern extent of the village, and being subject to an Outline Consented Scheme for up to 110 dwelling with an acceptance of an inevitable change in character, is suitable to accommodate residential development. As the LVIA demonstrates, any limited changes to the landscape character would be confined to the Appeal Site itself and the very immediate locality, would not introduce any uncharacteristic components to, and would be in keeping with, the 6C: Fulbourn Fen Edge Chalklands LCA, which is described as 'settled' and within which settlement is a characteristic component; and with substantial landscape enhancements delivered through the RM Proposals, the proposed residential development would be set within a 'leafy' and 'treed' context which complements the existing character of Fulbourn.
- 1.15 With regard to the RM Proposals, 2½ storey apartment blocks have been located centrally, as corner blocks to provide key corner frontage and way finding points around the larger open green area of Meadow Park and are located away from the rural aspect of the northern boundary, as set out in the DAS for the RM Proposals. These locations are in accordance with the Parameter Plan (CDC3b) for the Outline Consented Scheme, which preceded the Fulbourn Village Design Guide. The **Realm AVRS Views 1 and 2** illustrate the very limited extent to which these dwellings will be visible in the view north across Poor Well Water from Cow Lane, being glimpsed views of the proposed built form located centrally within the Appeal Site in

winter when deciduous vegetation is devoid of foliage; and confirm that the visual impact is no greater than that anticipated in the Outline Consented Scheme, and that considering the extent of development is reduced, the varying building height of the RM Proposals, the screening effect of vegetation in leaf for the majority of the time, and the existing available filtered views of residential development, the visual impact is reduced, such that it is now of minor adverse effect.

1.16 Considering that the Outline Consent Proposals establishes the principle of development on the Appeal Site, based on the Parameters Plan, and therefore this degree of visual impact was found to be acceptable in planning terms, when considered in the planning balance; and considering the limited extent to which wide open views are currently obtained, the lack of any meaningful connection with the countryside to the north of the Ipswich to Cambridge railway line on the northern boundary of the Appeal Site, and the views of existing components of residential development glimpsed through the intervening vegetation, the limited views of the RM Proposals cannot result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

1.17 Furthermore, the RM Proposals provides a central Green Space within the centre of the Appeal Site, which accords with the requirement to provide a play space 'within a planted green' as also set out on Figure 46: Design considerations for respectful development of the Teversham Road site. In addition, all the other design considerations have been accommodated within the RM Proposals, including:

- *Environmental management and biodiversity enhancement of chalk stream corridor, by creating a green connected corridor along the chalk stream through the Appeal Site*
- *Green edges ('Soft edges'), by creating green landscape buffers around the edges of the Appeal Site*
- *Continuous green link from Poor Well along the chalk stream and wildlife corridor, provision of a green corridor from Cow Lane and into the Appeal Site along the chalk stream and through the central Green Space, albeit that this is not currently 'open' and would be planted*
- *Poor Well natural area not to be used for access to the development*
- *Public space node at the Waterworks Lodge with opportunity for seating and public art with restricted pedestrian access, and enhancement to the existing pond*
- *Informal layout with all streets designed as traditional lanes*
- *Gateway space at entrance with views across to the open countryside but no 'gateway buildings'*

1.18 Furthermore, the DAS demonstrates how open views through the Appeal Site and RM Proposals have been achieved, 3 Storey buildings are not being proposed as part of the RM Proposals, and having updated the Tree Survey heights for the Appeal Site, and with reference to the **Accurate Verified Representations Views 1 and 2** prepared by Realm, the RM Proposals

would sit below the tree-line of the existing trees on the Appeal Site boundary and immediately surrounding the Site, such that the height of the Proposed RM Proposals would be below the height of the surrounding mature trees, and would retain the characteristic of the setting of a village amongst trees.

- 1.19 In conclusion, as settlement set amongst trees is a characteristic component of the 6C: Fulbourn Fen Edge Chalklands; the principle of development, in accordance with the Parameter Plan (CDC3b) is established on the Appeal Site; the alleged wide open views across the Appeal Site to the wider countryside from Poor Well Water do not exist; the essential design considerations set out in 10.3, 10.10 and 10.12 have been adhered to: and the RM Development Proposals contribute to the character of a 'village set amongst trees', where rural biodiversity is encouraged, field ditches and chalk streams are retained and enhance, and there legacy of tall trees is supported and enhanced; there is no conflict with Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, nor Paragraph 130 of the 2021 NPPF, nor the Fulbourn Village Design Guide SPD, in particular Guidance Notes 10.3, 10.10, 10.12 and Figure 46: Design considerations for the respectful development of the Teversham Road site.