

NOCTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of an Extra Ordinary General Meeting of Nocton Parish Council held in the Village Hall, Main Street, Nocton on Tuesday, 9 August, 2016 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Cllr Ian Goldsworthy (Chair)

Cllr Neil Faulkner
Cllr Graham Jones
Cllr Jane Kania

Cllr Michael Kaye
Cllr Elisabeth Murray
Cllr MaryAnn Williams

In Attendance: Steve Altridge, Clerk.

Eighteen members of the public were also present.

Apologies for Absence: Cllr John Money, North Kesteven District Council (NKDC).

1 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were asked by the members of the public present.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

3 PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ISSUES

- (a) The Parish Council considered the following planning application, and invited comments on it from the public present at the meeting:

Plot 72A – Formerly 27 Steamer Point Road, Nocton

The Parish Council agreed unanimously to request the Clerk to comment on the application in the following terms:

This application was considered at the meeting of my Parish Council on 9th August 2016. Members agreed unanimously to oppose this application in the strongest possible terms.

The assumption in favour of permitting sustainable development in Para. 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is qualified by the statement “unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole;”

Core Planning Principles

Para. 17 of the NPPF states that planning should:

“not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to improve the places in which people live their lives”; and

“always seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;”

We shall seek to demonstrate that:

- these planning principles are not adhered to in this application;*
- the development is completely out of kilter with the former Ministry of Defence (MOD) housing that surrounds it*
- it will adversely affect the amenity of existing residents of the surrounding houses*
- it would provide low grade accommodation for those who might occupy this house; and*
- its construction would have significant Road Safety implications.*

Rationale

The existing MOD development consists of well-designed and constructed semi-detached houses of traditional materials, set well back from the road, and with generous green verges. The impression of a well-spaced and open design is further enhanced by a covenant which specifies unfenced front gardens thus making the access roads appear even wider and giving good visibility at all junctions. (See the photo in Fig 1.)

The primary reason for the failure of this application to contribute to the amenity and design ethos of the existing houses derives from the limitations of the site itself. (Fig 2)

When the new access to Wegberg Road was constructed, a semi-detached pair of houses in the linear development along the North side of Steamer Point Road was demolished. In the space thus created, the new access road was constructed through at right angles to the line of houses. In the cramped space remaining, to one side of the new road and pavement, it is proposed to build a single detached house and garage. The plot is hemmed in by 26 Steamer Point Road on one side and the new access road on the other. This will become the new corner plot. It will differ from a traditional corner plot in that, instead of being set back from the road, it will be two metres in front of the existing building line on the south side and hard up against the pavement on the east, surrounded by high walls. All the other houses around the junction are set well back with open plan front gardens.

The design submitted for Planning Permission does not conform in any way to the carefully conceived MOD design for the estate. From the type of brick used, to the gable windows to the pantiled roof, to the walled gardens, it is completely at odds with its surroundings. The house itself is too big for the proposed site and considerably bigger than the half of the semi-detached house that it purportedly replaces. It could not fit on the same footprint as the original house and inevitably protrudes in front of the original building line.

The proposed building site has already been raised to comply with flood risk requirements. There is evidence that this has caused problems to No. 26, with outbuildings being flooded during the recent rains. The construction of a house on the site can only aggravate this problem. The site should be returned to grass, landscaped, and trees planted to replace some of those removed during the development, as was originally agreed.

It is proposed that the new house, whose frontage would face south and fill the narrow axis of the site, would have a seven foot boundary wall and fence around most of the site and a four foot boundary wall on the south side. This will adversely affect visibility at the junction, both for vehicles and pedestrians, many of whom are young children, and is completely at odds with the open-plan nature of the rest of the development. It will destroy what, at the moment is a pleasant and open four-way junction.

Local and Neighbourhood Plan Considerations

The emerging draft Local Plan provides for growth targets of 10% for each medium village of which Nocton is one. It has previously been agreed by NKDC that as Nocton and Potterhanworth are preparing a joint Neighbourhood Plan, this target can be combined. With recent planning approvals in each of the villages, this target has now been exceeded. Under the provisions of the draft Local Plan, approval to any development beyond this figure would require “demonstrable evidence of clear local support”. Given the views of residents and the Parish Council, there would, therefore, seem to be no valid reason for approving this particular application.

My Parish Council is also extremely concerned that approval is being sought, and in the majority of cases granted, for lots of small increases above the agreed levels of development for villages such as Nocton. The Nocton Park Estate is one example of the cumulative effect of such approvals. It has now effectively doubled in size from the layout originally approved. The core principle must be that there should be evidence of local support regardless of the size of the proposed development. There is considerable evidence that this is not the case at the moment, despite high-level assurances to the contrary.

As far as the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is concerned, the application would appear to be at particular variance with Policy 2 which, amongst

other things, requires that proposals for additional housing units should not result in an unacceptable impact on the levels of daylight, privacy, and amenity which occupiers of the units or of neighbouring properties may reasonably expect.

NKDC Planning Officers have repeatedly and consistently stated that as Local and Neighbourhood Plans near adoption, their policies can increasingly be given weight in the determination of planning applications. Although the Neighbourhood Plan is some way from conclusion, its proposed policies have been determined after extensive public consultation and have been agreed following discussion with NKDC planning officers and their professional advisers. They can, therefore, be considered to fairly reflect the community's views.

NKDC (and the Parish Council) is fully supportive of the proposals contained within the draft Local Plan and since it is, of course, much further forward in the adoption process one would hope that increasing emphasis will now be given to its policies rather than the continual reliance on the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, the weaknesses of which are clearly being exploited by developers.

Conclusions

The suitability of the site itself for a development of this nature, indeed any development, is clearly open to question. It is completely at odds with the existing design ethos of the estate, extremely cramped in nature (that feature exacerbated by being completely walled-in), and it crowds what at present is an open well-designed junction with good visibility in all directions. It will adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding houses and will provide a low standard of amenity for the occupants.

The Parish Council considers that this proposal, far from creating a high quality built environment, as required by the tenets of sustainability, creates an inferior property and in the process threatens the quality, amenity and safety of the existing estate. It should, therefore, not be permitted.

(b) The Parish Council considered the following applications for works to trees subject to a TPO:

1 *8 and 9 Bridleway Close, Nocton*

The Parish Council agreed not to comment on the application.

2 *7 Rostrop Road, Nocton*

The Parish Council agreed not to comment on the application.

4 **STREET NAMING: DEVELOPMENT AT WELLHEAD LANE, NOCTON**

The Parish Council considered a proposal that the roadway on which the development in Wellhead Lane is situated be named 'Hodgson Way'.

The Parish Council suggested that it would be more appropriate to name the roadway 'Hodgson Close' and requested the Clerk to inform North Kesteven District Council accordingly.

5 **LAND BEHIND THE VILLAGE HALL – PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

The Chair informed the Parish Council that an outline planning application for a three bedroom dwelling on the former Tennis Court had been received by NKDC. Cllr Kaye outlined the position regarding a meeting that he and Cllr Jones had attended with Mr Nick Grace, Grace Machin Planning Consultants (acting on behalf of Mr and Mrs Paul Clarke) to be informed about the proposals.

The Parish Council noted that any comments on the application were required to be submitted to NKDC by 8 September, 2016. The Parish Council agreed provisionally to meet on Tuesday, 30 August, 2016 at 7.00 pm to consider the application, but also to request the Clerk to ascertain from NKDC whether it would be possible to extend that deadline to 14 September, 2016 to enable the application to be considered at its next ordinary meeting on 13 September, 2016.

(Clerk's Note: NKDC subsequently agreed the proposed extension of the deadline to allow the application to be considered at the Parish Council meeting on 13 September, 2016).

(The meeting ended at 7.45 pm)

CHAIR