

CASTLE ACRE PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT

Minutes of the Parish Council special planning meeting held in the village hall on Monday 8 January 2018:

Present: Mr M Hickey (MH) Chairman Mr L Fisher (LF) Vice–Chairman
Mr S Allen (SA) Mrs H Breach (HB)
Mr Martin Tate (MT) Mr T Hubbard (TH)
Mrs Sheila Moister (SM)

In attendance: Ms L Roast (Clerk), and six members of the public.

Apologies: Ms C Williams (CW), Mr N Patrick (NP).

80. Holkham Massingham Road housing development – planning application 17/02341/RMM

MH clarified that this special planning meeting is called because the validation date of Holkham’s reserve matters application means the PC must submit their comments by 10 January to comply with the 21 day response deadline.

MH reminded Cllrs that the plans on display this evening, and in particular the site layout, mirrored those shown at the special meeting with Holkham on 30 November 2017 at which Cllrs generally expressed their support, as minuted and approved at the December PC meeting

MH then invited Cllrs to comment on the detailed plans before them:

HB stated that she was unhappy with Plot 3 and the house designs in general which she felt are inadequate and do not reflect the village. If local materials are to be used in the designs, they need to be used in the same way as the rest of the village. MH agreed about the designs, quoting the Borough Council’s guidance in the approved Local Plan to 2026 for Castle Acre:

‘Development on sites within or adjacent to the conservation area will need to be carefully designed to ensure appropriate regard is given to these historic assets. The sensitivity of the site will require careful design to ensure that the site makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. Standard housing designs are unlikely to achieve this.’

HB noted that Plot 2, the first house seen when entering the village from the north, is so positioned as to display a blank brick wall.

MT stated that the street scene now looked too even and ‘toy town’ like and that the landscaping added to this uniformity.

TH stated that Holkham said that the house designs relied on ‘how we implement the detail’. The PC had generally accepted the addition of a further four ‘affordable’ homes into the site. These would be windfall under the current Borough Local Plan as the approved hybrid application is for eleven dwellings only. The submitted site plan now looks cramped with the eleven houses illustrated in a reduced area, with three dwellings placed at the southern end, while leaving an empty space in the north west corner possibly to accommodate the additional four dwellings. He noted that it was always agreed to landscape the northern end of the site

with a planted belt of hedging. TH suggested that the first site plan shown to the PC last September has a better layout and more open space. The PC understands the importance of including affordable housing for young families in the housing mix but there must be a compromise. TH also raised his concerns about adequate water provision, given Castle Acre's supply comes via Narborough & Swaffham whose settlements are/will be expanding considerably.

SM agreed that the site now looked cramped and there was a need to look at the long term implication of this if the site is to be extended in the future.

LF agreed that the site now looked cramped and the street view is very uniform and simplistic, and that the house designs are nothing outstanding.

SA expressed his general opposition to this application.

MH proposed the PC supports a dark skies policy with low level, minimal lighting around the site and that both the access road A and the subsidiary road B should be adopted. Agreed. Cllrs questioned whether the access road would be adequate for the amount of traffic? It seems too narrow around Plot 3. Will there be a footway? MH also highlighted that the hedges at the rear of Bungalows 1 & 2 on Massingham Road are protected under a condition of the approved hybrid application. The resident of No.2 is calling for the proposed access path between the site and Foxes Meadow be extended round to Bungalows 1 and 2. Noted that both have back gates in their hedges onto the field. Cllrs agreed to support this extension.

MH opened the meeting for public comments. Doubts were expressed on the adequacy of the parking provision. Where would visitors park? There is a danger of overspill onto Massingham Road. Parking should not be hard standing to minimise flooding across the site.

Helen Breach then proposed that the PC object to the plans on the grounds of:

- Inadequate house designs. Does not meet the “exemplar development” called for by the Borough. Visually unacceptable, sterile and uniform.
- The site is now cramped.
- Not in keeping with the Conservation area.
- There should be a maximum of eleven buildings of which one could be a terrace unit
- Concerns over water supply.

Mr Sean Allen seconded the objection. The objection was carried five in favour with one abstention.

The PC's formal objection reads:

- Site plan. The site plan does not reflect the illustrative plan, dated 16 November 2015, submitted and posted on approved planning application 15/00942/OM, having removed the two dwellings on the north west corner of the site. The site plan now crams all eleven dwellings into the rest of the site, reducing the public open space to the west and south. CAPC acknowledge this reflects discussions between Holkham and CAPC following the latter's suggestion of changing the housing mix to include more ‘affordable’, two bedroom properties. However, the proposed four two bedroom properties (subject to consultation and a separate planning application) and sited in the north west corner are not acceptable to CAPC, making the whole site overdeveloped. The Council still prefers to retain the original eleven dwellings spread across the whole site and replacing the house on Plot 8 by a terraced dwelling of three more ‘affordable’ two bedroom units.

- Site layout. The siting of the dwellings is seen as too uniform and linear. Too ‘neat and tidy’, not reflective of a housing mix and style in Castle Acre.
- House designs. CAPC objects to the designs, finding them utilitarian, unimaginative and not reflecting the requirements set out in the Borough Policy G22.1 that calls for the design and layout to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area.
- CAPC objects to the siting of Plot 3. It is too close to the development boundary. Also to the design of Plot 2 in that there is a blank brick wall to the north which will be visible on entry into the village.

This application, as presented, does not comply with:

- The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 or The BCKLWN Core Strategy 2011
- The BCKLWN Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016
- Policy ENV 13: the design protects the quality and local distinctiveness of the rural built environment.
- Policy PPG1: the application meets the policy’s criteria, being in scale and in character with its surroundings.
- PPS1 – the design ensures a satisfactory external appearance and groupings of materials
- Policy 9/29 – the application meets a high standard of design and protects residential amenity.

Castle Acre Parish Council also wishes it to be noted:

- Water supply: the Borough must seek assurances from Anglian Water that this development (and subsequent developments) will not affect the water supply to the village. The Council notes with concern the extensive housing developments built, approved or planned for both Narborough and Swaffham, both towns receiving their water from the same pipe supply which eventually reaches Castle Acre.
- Parking: including garages, the site plan shows 35 spaces for 11 dwellings. This meets planning requirements. However, the outside spaces should be designed to maximise water ingress and not contribute to site flooding.
- Street Lights: CAPC supports a ‘dark skies’ policy and requests no column street lights. Individual dwellings will have their house lights front and back which will be adequate.
- Roads: the Council calls for both Road A and Road B to be adopted.
- The Council welcomes the proposed path at the south of the site, allowing residents in Foxes Meadow to access the adjoining field. We would ask that this be extended to the east to include No. 1 and 2 Bungalows.
- Hedges: the Council calls for the conditions 35 and 36 of the approved application 15/00942/OM for the preservation and care of the hedges of No.1 and 2 Bungalows be imposed for this application.

The planning meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

The next full Parish Council meeting is on Thursday 11 January at 7.30pm in the village hall.