

GNLP Regulation 18 Consultation Response

GNLP0404 – Land to the south-east of Chapel Road

On behalf of J Alston & Sons Ltd, we strongly recommend that site GNLP0404 (land south-east of Chapel Road, Spooner Row) should be allocated for residential development, comprising approximately 12-15 dwellings. The site is considered to be entirely deliverable, and capable of making a significant contribution towards satisfying the Councils' housing needs during the period to 2036.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF) definition of 'deliverable', set out in footnote 1 to paragraph 47, the site represents a suitable location for development now, is available immediately, is achievable with a realistic prospect of housing being delivered on the site, and is viable. These points are addressed in further detail below.

Assessment of Deliverability

Suitable

The site is located in Spooner Row, which is identified in the Joint Core Strategy as a Service Village, benefitting from a primary school, pub and a railway station on the Norwich-Cambridge mainline, and is therefore recognised as an appropriate location for small-scale housing growth.

Whilst the site is currently detached from the built form of the existing village, it is adjacent to an allocated site (SPO1 in the South Norfolk Site Allocations and Policies Document), which also benefits from planning permission for 14 dwellings under consents 2012/2016/O, 2014/2472/RM and 2016/2424/F. It will ultimately, therefore, be immediately adjacent to existing dwellings and consequently represents a logical extension to this part of the village. There are no Statutory Designations within or close to the site, and the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) recognises it is a suitable location for residential development.

In terms of more detailed site-specific considerations, the HELAA confirms through a 'Green' rating that there are no constraints or impacts anticipated in relation to Utilities Infrastructure, Contamination and Ground Stability, Flood Risk, Market Attractiveness, Significant Landscapes, Townscapes, Biodiversity and Geodiversity, Open Space and Green Infrastructure or Compatibility with Neighbouring Uses. Issues which are given an 'Amber' rating (Access, Accessibility to Services, Utilities Capacity, Historic Environment and Transport and Roads), or specifically referred to within the text of the Site Proposals consultation document, are addressed in more detail below.

Access, Transport and Roads

A Transportation/Highway Statement has been prepared by Richard Jackson Engineering Consultants Ltd and is submitted in support of this Representation. This outlines that the access consented for the adjacent development would be entirely suitable to cater for an additional 12-15 dwellings; the visibility splays are correct for the speed of vehicles passing the site, and the consented Type 3 access road is suitable for serving up to 100 dwellings.

Whilst it is acknowledged that at the time of the previous planning application 2012/2016/O, Norfolk County Council (NCC) did comment upon the width of Chapel Road for the accessibility of vehicles to and from the site, this issue was not seen as a reason to refuse the 2012/2016/O planning application on highway grounds and as such the minor increase of traffic from an additional 15 dwellings is not seen as severe in highway terms. An additional 15 dwellings is likely to generate a very low level of trips during the peak hour, approximately 8 movements, and this very minor increase in traffic would not have a detrimental impact on the local road network.

Accessibility to Services

Whilst the site is located at the edge of the village, it is still within comfortable walking distance (800m) of key facilities, such as the pub and railway station. The Transportation/Highway Statement prepared by Richard Jackson Consulting Engineers in support of this Representation details the safe walking route to the school and other amenities.

Furthermore, this location was deemed sufficiently close to services to allow the site immediately adjacent to be allocated for residential development in the 2015 Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document.

Utilities Capacity

The HELAA commentary specifically refers to the local sewerage network, and potential requirements for upgrade. A Foul Drainage Statement has been prepared by Richard Jackson Consulting Engineers, and is submitted in support of this Representation. This explains that any development in this location would be served by a private foul sewage treatment plant, as there are no public foul sewers in the vicinity. This arrangement was agreed for the adjacent site, and it would be possible to increase the capacity of the consented package treatment plant without any impacts on the layout of the approved development, so that it could deal with the increased flows resulting from an additional 12-15 dwellings. Alternatively, a separate treatment plant could be provided for the additional dwellings. An Environment Agency permit to discharge treated effluent to the watercourse has already been obtained for the adjacent development, and it is therefore considered that it would be just a formality to obtain such a permit for the proposed additional development.

Historic Environment

In relation to the Historic Environment, the closest designated Heritage Asset is Grade II Listed Pilgrims Farmhouse, some 200m to the site. Whilst the site abuts land associated with Pilgrims Farmhouse, there is extensive mature boundary screening, and consequently the site does not contribute in any way to the setting of the Listed Building. An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment was undertaken in support of the application 2012/2016/OUT on the adjacent land, which concluded that there are no features of archaeological interest, and it is assumed that this would also be the case for this site. Therefore, there are no likely impacts on the Historic Environment.

Other Matters

The Site Proposals Consultation document states that development of the site would double the depth of the consented development, potentially producing a depth of development that would be out of keeping with the surrounding frontage development. Whilst there is a single row of frontage development immediately opposite the site on the north-western side of Chapel Road, it would be disingenuous to suggest that there is an overriding character of single-depth development in this part of the village. Chapel Loke, immediately to the south-west comprises a small development of dwellings on a classic 'backland' site, with development three dwellings deep. Similarly, Pilgrims Farmhouse to the south comprises a cluster of buildings set well back from Chapel Road. The depth of development resulting

from development of site GNLP0404 and the consented site would mirror the depth of development on the opposite side of Chapel Road, where the dwellings have very long gardens in excess of 100m. The landowner also owns the surrounding farmland, and it would be possible to plant a substantial landscape buffer along the north-eastern boundary of the site to ensure that views of the village from Wymondham Road to the north-east are suitably screened, to reduce the landscape impact of any development. Similarly, there is scope for substantial screening along the south-eastern boundary to soften views from Guiler's Lane to the south. Consequently, we dispute the comments regarding development of the site being potentially out of character, and would also note that the HELAA gives a 'Green' rating to both impacts on Significant Landscapes and Townscapes.

We strongly disagree with the comments in the Site Proposals consultation document that this site represents a 'less attractive' option than others in Spooner Row including 0567, 0568 and 0446. Whilst it is acknowledged that site 0567 now has outline planning consent for residential development, further development on site 0568 would fundamentally alter the character of the village, resulting in the merging of the existing isolated cluster of dwellings on Top Common with the rest of the village and giving an impression of significant expansion of the village. By contrast, site 0404 would have very little impact on the character of the village, as described above.

In summary, the site is considered to be entirely suitable for residential development, and represents a logical and low-impact location for further growth of the village.

Available

The site is available for development immediately; it is within a single ownership, with no tenancies, and could be brought forward without delay. The landowner has an established track-record of delivering new homes in the village, and has recently commenced work on a second phase of development at Bunwell Road.

Achievable

There are no constraints that would threaten delivery of housing on the site; development of 12-15 dwellings here is entirely achievable.

Viable

Development of the site for residential purposes is considered viable, taking into consideration the various policy requirements in relation to matters such as affordable housing provision and CIL contributions. Further evidence on viability can be provided on a strictly private and confidential basis, should this be deemed necessary.

Summary

As outlined above, the site is suitable, available, achievable and viable, and is therefore deliverable. On this basis, the site should be taken forward as an allocation for residential development in the emerging Local Plan, and would represent sustainable development.

Spooner Row is already recognised as a suitable location for small scale growth, and this site represents a logical extension to the existing and consented built form of the village. A clear and defensible boundary to the village can be created here, mirroring the extent of existing development on the north-western side of Chapel Road.

Economically, further development in villages such as Spooner Row will help to sustain the existing services and ensure that these facilities are not lost. Economic benefits will also arise during the construction period.

Socially, development of the site will assist in the creation of a high quality built environment, and will offer homes in an established community with accessible local services and sustainable transport options. It will provide a range of housing, both market and affordable, to meet the needs of local people.

In environmental terms, the site is not covered by any Statutory Designations, and its development will have no adverse landscape impact, nor any adverse impacts on biodiversity or geodiversity. Spooner Row benefits from a station on the main Norwich-Cambridge railway line, offering a highly sustainable transport option and reducing the demand for travel by private car.

The site is capable of delivering a modest quantum of development, and allocating this site for housing would reduce the pressure on other, more sensitive, sites in the village. The site is available for development immediately, and there are no constraints that would threaten its delivery.