



Unit 3 Brices Yard, Butts Green, Langley Upper Green, Saffron Walden, Essex. CB11 4RT  
Tel: 01799 551261 Mobile: 07792 057538  
E-mail: s.bampton@pelham-structures.co.uk

Planning Policy  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

21 March 2019

**Land West of Hardwick Road, Toft, Cambridge, CB23 2RQ**

Dear Sir,

Pelham Structures Ltd are promoting the above referenced land on behalf of [REDACTED]. The site is available and suitable for development and could be brought forward in the near future.

**Location**

Toft is a village to the west of Cambridge, within the rural area that surrounds the city. Although the village can trace its roots back to serving agricultural uses in the surrounding area, it grew considerably after the Second World War thanks to connections to the electricity, water and drainage networks.



There has been relatively little new development in recent years, with the population of the parish falling from 583 people in 219 households at the 2001 census to 503 people in 224 households in the 2011 census.

The site comprises 1.6 hectares (3.95 acres) of land on the north-eastern side of the village and is currently used for grazing. It is immediately to the north of the existing built-up area of the village and abuts the settlement boundary.

Hardwick Road defines the eastern boundary, with a gate providing access in the north-eastern corner and the 30mph speed limit that covers the centre of the village starting just alongside the south-eastern corner. Trees and a hedgerow separate the site from the road, with a field in agricultural use stretching away to the east and a haulage yard to the south east. The northern boundary is also defined by existing landscaping, including some mature trees that help to define the character of the village when approaching from the north.

Bungalows in Mill Lane back on to the north-western corner of the site, with long rear gardens running up to the boundary. Glebe Close runs up to the south-western corner of the site, with a gate at the end of the road that provides access to the site. It is a tree-lined, single track, privately owned road that serves just five properties, two of which share boundaries with the site.

Mature landscaping stands on the south western and southern edges of the site, marking the existing edge of the village and creating a transition between the urban and rural land uses. To the south of the site are large gardens and three houses in relatively close proximity to the boundary, with planning permission recently granted for another house alongside the south-eastern corner that takes access from Hardwick Road. Just to the south and roughly halfway along the boundary is a dovecote: this is a Grade II listed building as well as a scheduled monument. It is not visible from the public realm but can be seen from the site, although the trees on the boundary create a great deal of screening in the summer. The site is relatively flat, sloping gently from north west to south east and, as noted above, almost all existing landscaping is confined to the edges of the land.

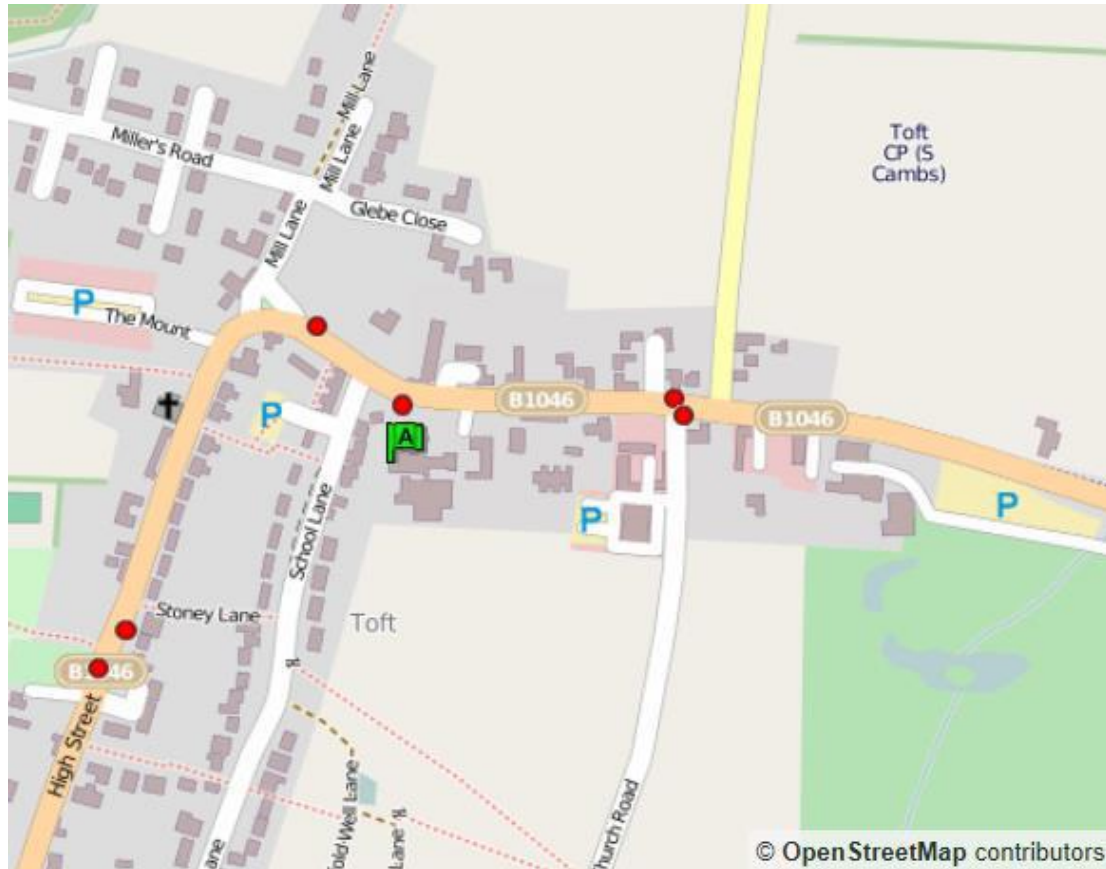
The site is outside of the settlement boundary as defined by the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, but immediately abuts it on the southern and western edges, with the existing houses alongside the site all within the village envelope. The site is also outside of the green belt – Hardwick Road is the boundary and the designation stretches away to the east, enclosing Comberton and Barton. The edge of the conservation area that covers the centre of the village also follows the southern boundary, including the houses on the south side of Glebe Close and the dovecote. Although the site is outside of the conservation area, it is important that the scheme aims to preserve and enhance the character of the village.

## **Toft**

Despite being categorised as an Infill Village in the Core Strategy, Toft is a highly sustainable settlement in terms of its access to employment, services and other facilities. As shown in the following extract from Googlemaps, the village (edged in red) is centrally located between Comberton, Hardwick, Bourn and Caldecote. It is approximately 6 miles west of Cambridge city, and approximately 4 miles from the M11 motorway. The A428 to the north leads west to the A1 and Bedford.

The following extract from the Traveline East Anglia website shows the close walking distance of bus stops from the application site. The two closest stops on Church Road

serve routes 2 (Cambridge - Hardwick - Toft - Caldecote – Boxworth), 18 (Cambridge – Cambourne) and 28 (Cambourne – Gamlingay), including villages in between. Cumulatively these operate from 0818 to 1928 (hourly/ 2-hourly) Monday to Friday and a 2-hourly service between 0918 to 1928 on Saturdays. Residents can also access the services of Cambridge Dial-a-Ride, a charitable organisation which provides transport for groups and individuals who otherwise have difficulty accessing public transport.



Within Toft itself there is a village shop & post office, hair dresser, 2 hot food takeaways, a licensed social club<sup>1</sup> and village hall, and two churches. Comberton Village College (CVC), providing education for 11 – 18 year olds, falls within Toft Parish, and is within walking and cycling distance of the application site.

The village contains a number of businesses which cumulatively employ over 170 people. These businesses are identified on the submitted housing needs survey which accompanies the application, and the same survey identifies the number of employees who commute into the village and would benefit from the availability of additional market housing in the settlement. In this context, not only does the settlement have close access to the higher order services of the city of Cambridge but it also meets many of the employment and other needs for local residents within its own boundaries.

It is also understood that there is a desire from several of these businesses to expand within the vicinity and that Toft would benefit from both additional housing and employment allocations in order to maintain, enhance and support local business, as supported by NPPF Paragraphs 78 and 83.

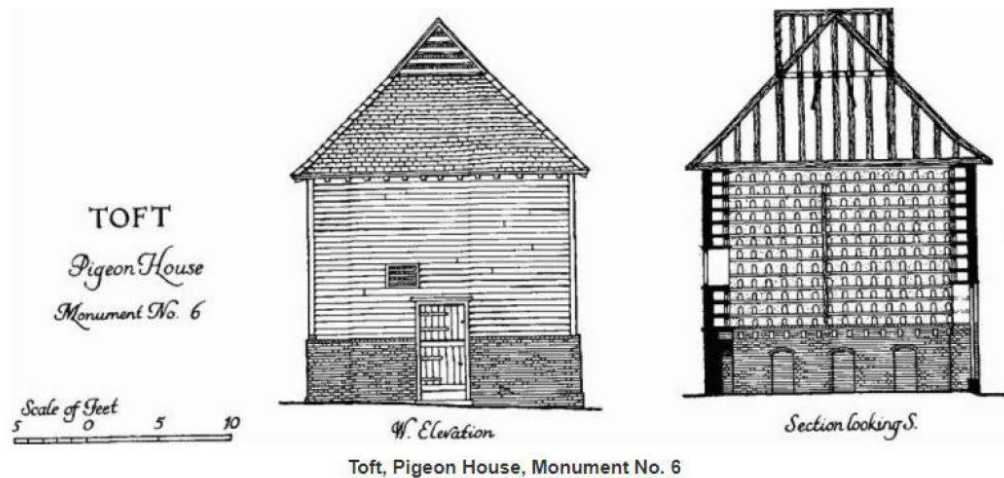
The neighbouring village of Comberton is readily accessible to residents by non-car modes of transport, and contains further facilities such as additional employment, the secondary school (CVC), Meridian Primary School and Comberton Playgroup. There is also a health centre and dental practice. A Community Primary School and a Pre-School are also located at Hardwick to the north.

## Existing Use

The site is currently used for grazing and neither reads as part of the village to the south nor as part of the farmland to the north.

## Heritage Assets

Within the land immediately to the south of the site is a dovecote, dating from the late 17th or early 18th Century. It is a scheduled monument and a Grade II listed building and the Heritage Statement describes it as being in good condition and almost unchanged.



The cote was originally part of the agricultural land to the north, but this link has been broken by the introduction of trees around the edges of the site. In addition, there are currently no public views of the cote, whilst views from the site are only possible in the winter months when there is no leaf cover on the boundary trees. The development of the site offers the opportunity to create a view or views of the cote, bringing the important asset back into the public realm.

## Access

Vehicle access to the site will be taken from Hardwick Road. To create the required visibility splays, the entrance will need to be positioned close to the centre of the frontage, although the exact position will also be determined by the impact on the trees and hedgerow, seeking to remove as little as is possible. In this regard, the scheme includes the creation of a footway on the western side of Hardwick Road to provide pedestrian access and it should turn into the site at the earliest possible opportunity so that the trees and hedges on the road frontage can be retained.

## Ecology and Biodiversity

An ecological survey has been undertaken and is provided that demonstrates that the site has limited benefit for biodiversity and wildlife habitat in its current form.

## Landscape Impact

As set out above the site is well related to the existing settlement and well contained by established vegetation, which will screen views from the open countryside beyond. If developed the site would assimilate well into its surrounding protecting the character of the locality.

## Flood Risk

The site is not within a flood risk area. It is designated as being within Flood Zone 1, with a low probability of flooding,

### **Summary**

The site is in a sustainable location and well related to the existing settlement of Toft, it is unencumbered by physical constraints that would prevent or delay its delivery. It therefore has the potential to support the Governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, set out at NPPF Paragraph 59.

Yours sincerely



Samuel Bampton