

Land between 12 and 14 Station Road, Steeple Morden SG8 0NW

Site reference 40054

On 22nd April our planning consultant wrote to you alerting you to the fact that the call for sites database incorrectly represented our site in terms of its planning history. The site now benefits from an extant planning consent. Our submission to the local plan matches (does not exceed) the scale of development and land extent of the approved outline planning application S/1887/18/OL. The consent notice was dated 24th June, 2020.

The implication of this is that the District Council's own assessment concluded that there were no factors in terms of Landscape and Townscape effects which outweigh the need for development. Indeed, the application was recommended for approval without objections from professional technical consultees for landscape and conservation area matters working on behalf of the District Council.

In the light of the foregoing we note that the Local Plan team's site assessment (Map 596 site 40054) categorises our site a "Red" in the summary and "Red" against Landscape and Townscape. The assessment states that, "A key concern here is the woodland that comprises the site, development in this location would adversely impact the immediate and adjacent setting". This conclusion is clearly based merely on a desktop appraisal and in ignorance of the various detailed professional submissions that led to recommendations for approval by the Council's own professional officers in these areas of expertise. By this message we submit that the Local Plan's site assessment is demonstrably technically flawed. A substantial volume of technical submissions are held on the planning portal for the outline consent sufficient to outweigh the Local Plan's conclusion and obviate the necessity to provide detailed argument here.

Our second area of concern is the stance taken in the plan to ignore the need for small scale opportunities for development in established settlements.

We submit that it is clear in paragraph 69 of the NPPF that '*small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the*

housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly and that local planning authorities should *'promote the development of a good mix of sites'*. It is considered that the Council 's strategy focuses on very large sites to deliver their housing requirement with virtually no small or medium allocations.

Furthermore, paragraph 79 of the NPPF is clear that in order to *'promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.'* By delivering more housing in settlements such as Steeple Morden, development will continue to support local services and facilities, supporting their retention and growth. The need for additional housing in Steeple Morden was demonstrated by a formal 'Housing Need Survey' undertaken for the project by Cambridgeshire Acre in September and October 2020.

Taking these two points together we submit that there is a strong case to be made for the site to be allocated to deliver homes which meet a local need and for the settlement boundary for Steeple Morden to be amended to include our site 40054 within the development framework. As was concluded in the District Council's assessment of our planning application, development of our site represents gains in terms of housing, landscape, ecology and arboriculture. We hope that the Local Plan team will reconsider the status and the record of assessment of our site.

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Steeplefield Ltd