

29.10.2019 – Thurston Parish Council

MEETING to discuss provision of Alms-houses on a development on land off Barrells Road.

In attendance:

Edward Myatt; Paul Myatt; John Burton – Purcell UK; Adam Edwards - Purcell UK; Christopher Dashper – (Chair)Thurston PC; Derrick Haley – Thurston PC; Julian West – Thurston PC and Vicky Waples (Clerk to Thurston PC).

Background given to the proposal for alms-houses and houses for young people – idea that this will be the first that could be rolled out. Proposal is to build houses for young people where needed. Believe this to be in accordance with Policy 2 of the Thurston NDP – Meeting Thurston's Housing Needs.

Vast number of organisations / trusts offering alms-houses – for older persons; retired soldiers etc. Right way forward for young people.

Outline plans of the area to be developed were shared –overall analysis of site – 1 site has now become available to provide access from Church Road (site 2). Site 1 has been included within previous Local Plans but issue bringing it forward in planning terms was access. Site 2 has unlocked piece of land for access. A request for this site to be included within the draft Joint Local Plan has now been submitted on behalf of the landowner.

Site analysis – railway sidings to the south of the site. Understand that typography results in an area that is very steep to the West but this will be heavily foliated and the steep banks will provide relief from the rail-line. Existing boundary to the North are houses along Stoney Lane. Heavily landscaped to the North. Houses along Stoney Lane tend to be on a lower elevation.

Services – power and drainage – this will be taken from The Drift for electricity with sewerage and dirty water taken from along Church Road. Gas is also believed to be in Church Road and Stoney Lane.

The Parish Council reminded those present of complaints of noise from the railway line from those further along in Thurston and of the increase in freight traffic from Felixstowe. The quoted figures of a couple of trains an hour were regarded as inaccurate and it was suggested that further data be obtained.

Representatives from Purcell stated that the idea was to create an access point from off Church Road – noted that this would be a long route through. It was suggested that the opportunity to create a series of terraces to break down the route thereby slowing traffic should be explored.

Proposal for 12 alms-houses proposed at the entrance of the development – suggested that these should be reproducing the vernacular and not as a regimented line.

Proposal for car parking at rear and covered bays – suggested that the houses should be turned 90 degrees from the railway track. The Parish Council have an issue with covered bays and parking at rears with regards to the lack of passive surveillance and covered parking bays not adjacent to houses. Suggested that the Suffolk Crime Out Officer be consulted on this matter and reference drawn to the adopted Thurston NDP.

Proposal for central areas to be individual houses. Parish Council had an issue with the layout – very regimented and failed to take account of the Spatial Organisation of the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Area. Agreed that Purcells would study this document.

Notes taken by the Clerk to the Parish Council – 29th October 2019

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Proposal for a shared site for cyclists, pedestrian and vehicle users. Aim to allow Sustrans Cycle Route 51 to traverse the development.

Proposal for a Barrells Road entrance – will only be used for refuse, emergency access etc. Parish Council had a concern at the location of this entrance and potential use of this entrance by residents of the development – issue of increased use of inappropriate roads Stoney Lane and Barrells Road

Proposal for 64 houses (12 alms-houses). In principal no issue with the proposal for alms-houses – issue is the overall number of dwellings (Thurston NDP preference of development of plots of 50 or less). Recognised that 80% are 3 beds or under but question was raised as to whether this was needed given that 80%+ of 818 approved dwellings were 3 beds or under.

Proposal for allotments – open to general public or on site only? Allotments are currently used now – under licence – proposal for 18 across the site. Entrance to allotment currently is a green lane. No parking for allotments – green track will remain – allotments will remain on land as is with the new ones extended further along on the land behind properties bordering Sandpit Lane.

Proposal fits in with aspects of Neighbourhood Plan – architectural fit - landscape and housing; street lighting (less effecting); fulfilling a need (alms-houses) and 35% affordable.

Existing cottage stays but Appletree Cottage will be removed.

Timetable – proposals for alms-houses sent into government in 2018 with ongoing discussions and expectation that this will form part of the Green Paper / study on housing issues. Jo Churchill MP to meet with Myatts on this matter early in 2020.

12 alms-houses is 18.75% of total being offered would rank as seriously affordable and would form part of the allocation of affordable housing / shared ownership – overall balance of 35% affordable across the site will be honoured.

Site submission – under the draft local plan – submitted before end of October 2019.

Myatts wish to make progress with land and proposal – mid 2020 for a planning application to be submitted.

Parish Council suggestions:

- Softer lines might be more appropriate for the street scene.
- Bungalows to the North of the site.
- Any further discussions would need elevations and would be subject to consideration as pre-application with the PC as a whole
- Require more of a village feel and not such a regimented approach. Needs to look like cottages and replicate properties that have been built to the south of Church Road.
- Adopt more of principals of Suffolk Preservation Guidance with a lower density.
- A lower market density will be preferable to the Parish Council.
- Noted that the alms-houses need to be self-funding within the scheme and as such the density might be restrictive to the numbers shown.