

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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SENT AS AN E-MAIL

Mr. P Isbell
Chief Planning Officer –Sustainable Communities
Mid Suffolk District Council
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich IP1 2BX

5th November 2020

Dear Mr. Isbell,

APPLICATION FOR RESERVED MATTERS - DC/20/01249

Proposal: Submission of details under Outline Planning Permission 5070/16 - Appearance, Scale, Layout, and Landscaping in respect of Phase 2 – Erection of 104 No. dwellings

Location: Land On The North Side Of, Norton Road, Thurston, Suffolk

Case Officer: Vincent Pearce

Reason for re-consultation: revised drawings dated 22.09.20

The Parish Council, having considered this application in light of the revised drawings, would like to confirm that it continues to strongly object to this application in its current form.

The Parish Council maintains its disappointment that the applicant has failed to engage in a meaningful manner with either the Parish Council or the Ward Members. The applicant has only attended one meeting (13th March 2020) with the Parish Council prior to the submission of reserved matters. At this meeting, the submitted plan was shown to the Parish Council which is in direct conflict with the original phase 2 expectations of this site and with the outline planning permission granted for the whole site. The Parish Council's viewpoint was made very clear to the representatives and yet despite there being clear opposition to the plan being discussed, the applicant failed to engage in any meaningful debate with the Parish Council or even the community in which the site is located. A copy of the notes taken at that meeting were submitted in the Parish Council's response dated 23rd April 2020.

The Parish Council objects to the application on the grounds that the density has been increased by incorporating similar numbers into the area expected for Phase 2 but on a much smaller area thereby leaving other areas for a further application to be submitted. **The changes that are shown on the revised drawings submitted for re-consultation are considered not to be sufficient to enable the Parish Council to change its original stance of objection, the substance of which is repeated below.**

Overall the Parish Council feels that the overall proposal fails to take into account the made Thurston Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and has repeated all of the negative aspects that were criticised in Phase 1. Generally there is an urban feel to the dwellings being proposed and the Parish Council is disappointed that this has been the tone for the remaining phase of this development.

The made Thurston NDP, as described by the examiner, and as supported by the parishioners of Thurston, is described as providing a strong practical framework against which decisions on development can be made and it is against this document that this application should be determined as it has significant weight.

The Parish Council would request that the application be refused until the following concerns are addressed:

- Density of the build – there is a significant urban feel to the design which neither complements nor enhances the village. Overall the density, by limiting the scheme to a much smaller area, has increased and fails not only to respect the spatial strategy within the village but also that of Phase 1.
- Furthermore the layout fails to take into account guidance as given within Suffolk County Council's (2000 revised) Suffolk Design for Residential Areas, the Government's Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 as well as Historic England's Streets for All documents. The Thurston NDP provides exemplar information on the street scenes that are acceptable – Chapter 5 Housing and Design – at page 39 has an example of Spatial Organisation that would be supported.
- The current proposal not only fails to take into account the Spatial Organisation as mentioned in the Thurston NDP and the Thurston Character Assessment 2017 but it would appear that the applicant has decided to use Page 38 of the Thurston NDP (Spatial Organisation – how not to) as its design model.
- The applicant has failed to take into account the Officer Comment submitted in the Officer Report for Phase 1 in which it is stated that “it is considered appropriate for phase 1 to have what is an urban/suburban feel where it adjoins other development but as later phases move northward to may be appropriate to spread density around in order that elements over look the adjacent woodland and/or the planned large are of open space have a looser more organic layout with reduced densities to provide a stepped transition from urban to rural.
- The Parish Council therefore contends that there should be a more rural feel to the development coming forth under Phase 2 and wishes to see a less regimented form of design with the use of cul-de-sacs to avoid the ‘tunnel’ effect. Given the location of Phase 2 on the site there should be more connection with the rural landscape surrounding the site and the use of soft landscaping to shape views and enclose space is sought.
- As has been mentioned previously by the Parish Council on other significant planning applications within Thurston, it is disappointed to note that, contained within this phase, there are a number of 2 and a half storey dwellings. As has been stated previously, within the northern side of the village, there are no 2.5 storey dwellings. The Parish Council is concerned that their inclusion at different roof heights from the surrounding dwellings will provide for a street scene that is neither in keeping with the surrounding area nor enhancing of the area as a whole. Acknowledging that a number of 2.5 dwellings were approved at Phase 1 stage, the Parish Council draws reference to that fact that these were to be sited on the crescent which would read as a place in its own right and that at the Planning Referral Meeting of 24th July 2019, the Committee was in agreement that there was a need to ensure that Linden Homes, the Parish Council and the Planning Officers continued discussions for future areas coming forth in terms of there being no 2.5 dwellings and no urban layout.
- Mixture of house types – the Parish Council acknowledges that there is a mix of house types and sizes within the 2nd phase and once again has a concern with the size of the smaller dwellings and would request that all properties are built to current Nationally Described Space Standards as published March 2015 and endorse the comments made by the Strategic Housing Officer.
- Parking – although it is stated that the scheme has complied with the Suffolk County Council Parking Standards (2015), there is a concern that the provision of a total of 198 allocated parking spaces and only 26 garage spaces is insufficient for the mix of houses on the site. It is noted that paragraph 6.23 states that provision is made for cycle parking within garages and within the curtilage of the dwellings. Given that there are only 26 garage spaces on the site (Phase 2), it is difficult to see how the security of cycles will be accommodated.
- The Parish Council is further concerned that there is insufficient regard to the requirement of an expectation that visitors will require parking facilities which will lead to congestion on the spinal road as well as private roads thereby impacting on highway safety for all users. In total there are only 17 visitor spaces. The Parish Council would like to see a revised layout showing adequate visitor parking suitably located and accessible for use. The Parish Council is also concerned that the layout shows a significantly reduced level of parking provision for rented/shared ownership homes.
- With regards to play provision the Parish Council is disappointed, once again, to read that there is no provision for formal play equipment to be provided at the site in accordance with the S106 Planning Obligation accompanying the outline planning permission. The Parish Council has stated during the discussion of the 1st submission for Reserved Matters that it feels that given the wooded area to the north – east of the site layout there should be some form of recreational activity provided and it further expected that further details on the type of equipment coming forth would be submitted under Phase 2. The Parish Council formally requests that such a facility should be a discussion point and condition of any planning permission going forward as it will be of a demonstrable recreational and amenity value. As has been stated previously the Parish Council is committed to ensure that any new play provision within the village is strategically placed to ensure it complements existing provision and meets any known deficits. In general, it has been acknowledged that there is a need for ‘adventure style provision’ particularly attractive to juniors and older children.
- The Parish Council therefore requires that this provision is included within the second phase and takes advantage of the woodland areas.

- Whilst the site retains the same ingress and egress, there are concerns that any proposed increase will further increase the safety risks with the new school being effectively part of the same site.

The Parish Council is disappointed to state that despite requesting, on a number of occasions, clarification from the Planning Officer at Mid Suffolk District Council as to whether there had been discussions with the applicant over the proposed uplift in numbers, no response has yet been received from Mid Suffolk Planning Department.

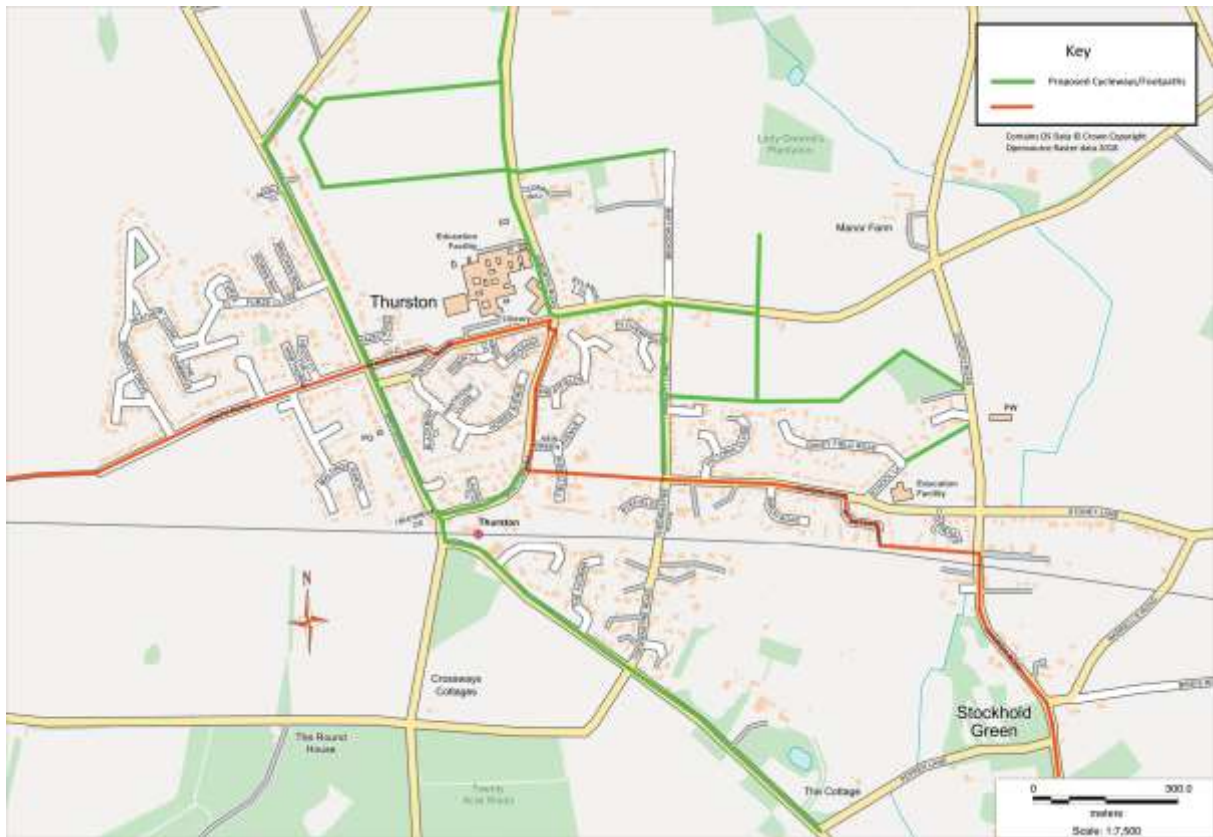
It is further disappointed that the request by the Mid Suffolk Planning Referrals Committee of 24th July 2019 for Linden Homes, the Parish Council and Planning Officers at Mid Suffolk to continue discussions for future areas coming forth in terms of no 2.5 dwellings; no urban layout and provision of play equipment in accordance with the requirements of the Parish Council and the overall maintenance of the very small grassed areas has not come to fruition. The Parish Council does however note that the Planning Statement as submitted by the applicant states that a pre-application engagement relating to the second development has held in November 2019 which was attended by Officers of Mid Suffolk District Council, the Applicant, and members of the Project Team. It is stated that the meeting was held in a constructive and positive manner. The Parish Council confirms that it was not made aware of this meeting.

The Parish Council is not in agreement with the comment from Place Services that there should be a connection onto Meadow Lane from this development (two have been created in this revised version) and feels that there is sufficient manner in which to gain access to this Quiet Lane from the footpath that borders Norton Road. This departure from the approved outline planning application is not supported by the Parish Council nor has it requested such a departure.

At no time has a request come from the Parish Council to vary the route of the public footpath nor create extra further accesses onto Meadow Lane.

Figure 14 of the Adopted Thurston Neighbourhood Plan (as adopted by Mid Suffolk District Council in October 2019), shows the proposed footpath routes that are supported by the Parish Council:

Figure 14: Network of shared-use routes linking key movement routes



The Parish Council supports the comment made by the Highways PROW Planning requesting that the Applicant accommodates FP7 within their plans in the public open space area only. It is further stated that the Applicant must also ensure that FP7 remains unobstructed at both ends where it crosses the site boundary, and that it is not obstructed by planting along its length.

The Parish Council further notes the comment within the submission from the PROW team of 1st April 2020 *“The granting of planning permission IS SEPARATE to any consents that may be required in relation to PROW. It DOES NOT give authorisation for structures such as gates to be erected on a PROW, or the temporary or permanent closure or diversion of a PROW. Nothing may be done to close, alter the alignment, width, surface or condition of a PROW, or to create a structure such as a gate upon a PROW, without the due legal process being followed, and permission being granted from the Rights of Way & Access Team as appropriate. Permission may or may not be granted depending on all the circumstances,”* and requires clarification as to why there are now two entrances from the site onto Meadow Lane.

Furthermore the Parish Council notes the comments made by the Senior Planning and Infrastructure Officer Planning Section, Strategic Development that if more than 200 dwellings are being brought forward a review of essential infrastructure that underpins growth in the village such as education and highways will be needed and an additional deed entered into to secure further s106 contributions and draws the Planning Officer’s attention to the planning obligation dated 20 March 2018 made between Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council and Peter Andrew Hay.

In summary, it is the Parish Council’s submission that this application should be rejected in its current form and that the matters raised are considered further prior to permission being granted.

Should it be that the applicant does not wish to develop those parcels of land entitled “land reserved for further phase of development subject to separate application”, perhaps they might wish to consider gifting such land to the Parish Council to be held in perpetuity for the residents of Thurston.

Yours sincerely,

Victoria S Waples

V. S. Waples, BA(Hons), CiLCA
Clerk to the Council

