



ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

King's Court, Chapel Street
King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 1EX

Tel: (01553) 616200
Fax: (01553) 616652
DX: 57825 KING'S LYNN
e-mail: borough.planning@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Wimbotsham Parish Council
c/o Swann Edwards Architecture
Fen Road
Guyhurn
Wisbech
Cambs
PE13 4AA

Reference No: 21/00190/PREAPP
Application
Registered: 13 January 2022
Parish: Wimbotsham

Details: **PRE-APPLICATION FULL (WITH CONSULTATIONS): Proposed Village Hall on recreation ground and two dwellings (option 2) at Wimbotsham & Stow Village Hall Low Road Wimbotsham KINGS LYNN Norfolk**

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE – POSSIBILITY OF APPROVAL WITH AMENDMENT

Further to your application for Pre-Application advice. I respond as follows:

APPLICATION FEE REQUIRED:

Please contact the Planning Technical Team for all fee enquiries.

PLANNING HISTORY

10/00078/PREAPP: INFORMAL - Likely to refuse: 13/05/10 - INFORMAL REQUEST: demolition of existing and residential redevelopment - Village Hall

SITE CONSTRAINTS

Wimbotsham Conservation Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zone

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Local Highway Authority: Provided the following comments:

Pre App Option 2 could be acceptable provided parking is submitted to accord with the adopted standards (1 car per 30m GFA minimum) and the access is upgraded, hard surfaced and formalised for all modes of transport (peds, segregated from motor vehicles). Note that coaches should be accommodated within the site! There should also be covered provisions for cycles. I would also recommend that you consult our Green Infrastructure Team as Chapel Lane is actually a Public Right of Way rather than adopted as a road.

I would not be against the principle of two dwellings of the existing hall site provided that any new access point accords with standard. Presently that proposed appears not to. However, if the car park is currently found to be utilised to support the recreation ground activities then no I would not support the conversion of the halls land to residential until new alternative off street parking provision is provided.

Sports England Referred to Sports England guidance relating to Sports England Statutory Role and Policy Exceptions, and provided the following detailed comments:

This proposal would see a new village hall built on the existing playing field, and the existing site sold off to accommodate two new dwellings.

With regard to the proposed siting of the new hall on the playing field, this will need to ensure that the existing football pitch on the site can still be accommodated, therefore any submitted plans will need to include existing and proposed site plans showing existing pitch provision on the site and proposed pitch provision, including the new village hall. The scheme also involves additional car parking.

If the above issues can be addressed, the proposal is likely to meet exceptions 2 and 5 of our playing fields policy.

Historic Environment Service Comments as follows:

Existing village hall site - Based on currently available evidence this option would not have any historic environment implications in relation to below-ground archaeology. No archaeological work will be required in connection with the new-build dwellings on the existing village hall site.

Proposed new village hall site - The footprint of the proposed combined village Hall and Sports facility lie adjacent and partly within the location of a suspected moated site of probable medieval date, identified from aerial photographs as very slight earthworks. If this option was taken forward as a first step we would like an archaeological desk-based assessment to be undertaken that re-examines the evidence for the possible moated site and map its location and extent accurately. Once the desk-based assessment is in place the applicant may wish to explore relocating the proposed combined village Hall and Sports facility east of the existing sports pavilion.

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

CIL
Habitat Mitigation Fee

PLANNING POLICIES

It should be noted that policies, constraints etc. change from time to time and may affect the advice given. The weight that can be given to pre-application advice will therefore decline over time.

LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES

CS01 - Spatial Strategy
CS08 - Sustainable Development
CS11 - Transport
CS12 - Environmental Assets

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

DM1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
DM9 - Community Facilities
DM15 – Environment, Design and Amenity

OFFICER ASSESSMENT:

Pre-App advice is sought for the construction of a replacement Village Hall in Wimbotsham and subsequent redevelopment of the existing site with up to 2 houses.

The hall is proposed to be relocated from its current site on Low Road to the recreation ground south of the school, accessed via Chapel Lane. Both the existing and proposed sites are within the Wimbotsham Conservation Area.

The proposed village hall site forms a parcel of approximately 3.94 acres of land with playing fields, a football pitch and basketball court as well as children's play equipment. An existing sports pavilion provides w.c.s, a small hall area, a kitchenette and storage facilities and would be demolished to make way for a village hall.

The recreation ground is located outside of the Development Boundary for Wimbotsham and therefore within the wider countryside for the purposes of planning policy. Policies CS10 and CS13 of the Core Strategy state that the priority is to protect community facilities where possible and Policy DM9 of the SADMP recognises the role that community facilities such as village halls provide to communities.

The Planning Statement submitted with this PreApp states that the Village Hall is 'coming towards the end of its useful life'. The principle of construction of a replacement village hall is considered acceptable, however justification would be required to determine whether the loss of existing playing fields provides a suitable alternative location, in line with Policy DM22 of the SADMP (2021) and the guidance provided by Sports England. Full consideration of the impact on the Conservation Area would also need to take place.

Loss of Public Open Space

Policy DM22 states: 'Proposals that will result in the loss or restriction of access to locally important areas of open space will be refused planning permission unless such loss can be offset by the replacement of equivalent or higher standard of provision or the wider benefits of allowing development to proceed outweigh the value of the site as an area of open space.'

The playing fields are well-connected to the village in regards to location and the proposed village hall building appears to provide improved facilities for the wider community which provides some justification for the loss of playing fields/part of a site of recreational value.

Consultation with Sports England would be required as part of any application to ensure that the proposed development meets their requirements. Their response to this application stated changes were needed to the overall design/layout of the building and the submitted plans must demonstrate that the pitch provision on the wider site will not be impacted by the new village hall.

Sport England will oppose the granting of planning permission for any development which would lead to the loss of, or would prejudice the use of:

*all or any part of a playing field, or

*land which has been used as a playing field and remains undeveloped, or

*land allocated for use as a playing field

unless, in the judgement of Sport England, the development as a whole meets with one or more of five specific exceptions.

The exceptions to this are set out in full within the Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and Guidance document (available online), however are summarised as follows:

- It has been demonstrated that there is an excess of playing field provision in the catchment and the proposal will not impact on this
- The proposed development is for ancillary facilities supporting the principal use of the site as a playing field
- The proposed development affects only land incapable of forming part of a playing pitch and does not reduce the size of any playing pitch or otherwise impact on the use of the pitch, other facilities, or capacity of the playing field
- The playing field will be replaced
- The proposed development is for a sport facility, the provision of which would be of benefit to outweigh the detriment caused by the loss

Plans provides as part of this application provide some justification for the development and outline which facilities would be improved or lost. Full consideration of the impact of the Sports England advice should take place prior to the submission of the application to ensure that the loss of playing field and existing pavilion is offset and/or overcome.

Design and Impact on the Conservation Area:

Public footpaths in the immediate vicinity of the site will allow long views of the proposed village hall from the boundary of the Conservation Area. The village hall must therefore be carefully designed to limit the potential impacts on designated heritage assets, in particular the Conservation Area and its setting. Typically, development that extends the built extent of Wimbotsham towards Downham Market would be resisted.

The village school to the immediate north of the proposal site has some character, with feature gable ends fronting Chapel Lane. The Front elevation plan of the proposed village hall recognises the form and character of this existing building and replicates the gable ends in a more modern design. Side elevations are left less detailed.

This pre-application was discussed at CAAP Panel. The Panel had no objection in principle to the use of the playing field site for the village hall, subject to appropriate design and details coming forward at full application stage. The site is a prominent part of this edge of the Conservation Area and the design of the building and surrounding landscaping will be paramount as part of any decision. Long views are available and the proposed positioning will result in built development of a scale and nature which will impact on the conservation area and its setting, and will cause some harm. Any harm needs to be weighed against public benefits of the scheme.

The use of materials and any associated landscaping would be an intrinsic part of any consent given and

submission of any application. This applies to both the construction of the village hall and the proposed residential units on the existing site.

Any application would be assessed on balance, based on the impact on the Conservation Area in this edge of settlement and undeveloped location which would need to be weighed against any public benefit of the scheme. Whilst some benefit could be justifiable, this will also need to be considered on the basis that the village hall could be replaced on its current site, which would lead to less harm to the Conservation Area with the same benefits to the wider community.

In its current form, the application is unlikely to gain the support of Planning Officers and the Conservation Team. Detailed designs would be required to demonstrate that the proposed building fits within its location and does not lead to harm to the Conservation Area. This includes the design of side elevations and the detailing proposed.

Impact on Potential Archaeological Assets

As well as the impact on the conservation area noted about, the proposed relocated village hall is on a site which the Historic Environment Service consider is likely to form part of a moated site of probably medieval date. A full assessment of the potential impact on this site as a heritage asset of archaeological importance should take place prior to the submission of any application. As a first step, HES recommend a desk-based assessment to be undertaken that re-examines the evidence for the possible moated site and map its location and extent accurately. This may result in a requirement to relocate the proposed building outside of the area to limit adverse impact on this site.

In accordance with the NPPF (2021), non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, are considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets. The harm to the significance of heritage assets would be assessed based on the NPPF (2021) and the development plan as part of any application.

Residential Development on the existing Village Hall site

Option 2 includes the redevelopment of the existing village hall site with 2 dwellings.

Wimbotsham is designated as a Rural Village within Policy CS02 of the Core Strategy (2011) and therefore benefits from a development boundary to guide development to the most suitable locations. The application site is wholly within the development boundary outlined on inset map G.126 of the SADMPP (2016) and residential development on site is therefore acceptable in principle. This could only take place once the replacement village hall is secured in order to comply with Policy DM9 of the SADMPP (2016). The construction of dwellings on site without the replacement village hall would not be supported.

The site is within the Conservation Area and forms a prominent part of the street scene, with long views available across the Green to the south east. Design will therefore be a fundamental element of any scheme.

Bungalows are located to the north and west. Given the height of the ridge of the bungalow to the north as well as the proximity to boundaries shown on the indicative plans, any residential scheme would need to be designed to remove opportunities for loss of privacy, overlooking and overbearing. The site is not within an area of Flood Risk and the opportunity for single storey dwellings may resolve these issues.

The indicative plans show the dwellings angled in the plot with individual accesses towards Low Road. Boundary treatments, landscaping and site layout will have an impact on the street scene and should be considered prior to the submission of any application. Whilst residential development of some form may be appropriate on site, the indicative layout does not reflect the typical layout of the immediate street scene and could result in the plots being overly prominent when viewed on approach. Plot 2 in particular feels forced and contrived and its angle and position when viewed along from the north/north-east will have an overly prominent and incongruous appearance.

This application was discussed at CAAP Panel - The Panel had no objection in principle to the proposed two new dwellings subject to design and details. The Panel felt that the design and details of the new village hall and new dwellings would be paramount given the prominence of the site in the Conservation Area.

Other material considerations

The Local Highway Authority make clear in their response that any loss of parking, both from the existing playing field provision or the loss of the village hall site will not be accepted. Full consideration should be

A mature established tree is located within the existing car parking area. This tree should not be impacted by the proposal due to its clear contribution to the wider street scene.

Conclusion:

Whilst the redevelopment of the village hall site and construction of a replacement village hall are acceptable in principle, the design of both elements of the proposal would need to be revised prior to the submission of any application. Both plots comprise a prominent site with the Conservation Area and it not considered that the current indicative plans are suitable for either site.

Without additional consideration being given to the design and the impact on the conservation area, for both the residential site and the recreation ground site, the scheme is likely to be considered contrary to Paragraphs 200-203 of the NPPF (2021) and Policies CS08, CS12 and DM15 of the Local Plan.

As well as the impact on the Conservation Area discussed above, the proposal will need to demonstrate no adverse impact on the archaeological remains associated with the medieval moated site at the location of the proposed replacement hall. Failure to have regard to the importance of the significance of archaeological assets would be contrary to paragraphs 194, 200, 201 and 202 of the NPPF (2021) and Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy (2011).

In the event that the relocation of the building and subsequent residential development on the existing site represents enabling development for the overall scheme, a full detailed case would need to be put forward as part of an application and this is likely to have some weight in the decision process. This consideration would however be weighed against the other considerations discussed above.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

LTAPOS Possibility of Approval



Executive Director, Environment and Planning
On behalf of the Council
12 April 2022

DECLARATION:

The advice given above is offered informally at officer level without prejudice to any future decisions that the Council may make.

The case officer who dealt with this application was Lucy Smith, telephone number 01553 616261.

Notes:

1. You should be aware that any pre-application advice provided by the Local Planning Authority is made at officer level only, and does not constitute a formal decision of the Council. Any views or opinions expressed, are given without prejudice to the consideration by the Council of any formal planning application, which will be subject to wider consultation and publicity. Although the case officer may indicate the likely outcome of a formal planning application from their professional point of view, no guarantees can or will be given about the decision that will be made on any such application.
2. It should be noted that policies, constraints etc. change from time to time and may affect the advice given. The weight that can be given to pre-application advice will therefore decline over time
3. The provisions of The Freedom of Information Act bind the Council, as a public authority, and therefore it should be presumed that information supplied to the Council is likely to be disclosable under the above Act. If you want information to remain confidential, you should state clearly why. Information sent to the Council "in confidence" may still be disclosable under the above Act. Before sending such information you are advised to take legal advice if there are fears that disclosure would prejudice you in some commercial way.
4. Please contact Planning Admin on 01553 6166234 for advice regarding fees.

5. Please note that for a pre-application (no consultation) enquiry there will be no comments included from relevant consultees, external and internal, which could be important in any recommendation should a formal application be submitted.
6. Please note that the Council have introduced a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charge for planning applications issued from the 15 February 2017. This charge applies to all new residential dwellings, only residential annexes and extensions over 100m², all retail supermarkets and warehouses.

If you have any queries about how this will impact upon your scheme please contact Amanda Driver, the Council's CIL Officer on 01553 616443 or by email CIL@west-norfolk.gov.uk.

7. Major

If it is your intention to dispose of foul sewage to a mains sewer then we would advise you to undertake a pre planning assessment with Anglian Water in order to understand the foul network capacity, identify connection points and any potential asset encroachment. This assessment should then be submitted with your planning application.

The Council would expect surface water from the proposed development to be disposed of using sustainable drainage systems and/or soakaways. Connection to main sewers would only be considered acceptable when evidence is provided to show that the surface water hierarchy has been followed. This evidence should include trial pit logs from infiltration tests and investigations in respect of discharging to a watercourse. In order for Anglian Water to assess your proposal the manhole connection point and the proposed pumped rate would need to be stipulated. For further details please view Anglian Water's SuDs policy <http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/developers/suds.aspx>

Anglian Water should be contacted at the earliest opportunity, information can be found on their website <http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/developers/pre-planning-service.aspx> or by contacting the Pre Development Team on 0345 60 66 087 Option 1 or planningliaison@anglianwater.co.uk

Minor

The Council would expect surface water from the proposed development to be disposed of using sustainable drainage systems and/or soakaways. Connection to main sewers would only be considered acceptable when evidence is provided to show that the surface water hierarchy has been followed. For further details please view Anglian Water's SuDs policy <http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/developers/suds.aspx>