## APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

### PLANNING MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  - 14 June 2017

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Committee Report

Case Officer: Amie Baxter

Date received: 13 February 2017
Date valid: 15 February 2017
Overall Expiry: 12 April 2017
Ward: Kings Forest
Parish: Laxton

Applicant: Mr And Mrs Richard Skillen
Agent: CMPS Ltd - Mr Colin Moore
Location: Land Rear Of Woodland Cottage Horse Lane Laxton Northamptonshire

Proposal: New dwelling and detached garage outbuilding

This application is brought before the Planning Management Committee at the request of Cllr Rodger Glithero.

1. Summary of Recommendation

1.1 That planning permission is REFUSED.

2. The Proposal

2.1 The proposal seeks full planning permission for the erection of a single detached dwelling and detached garage.

2.2 The dwelling would follow the same footprint as a former agricultural barn which has recently been demolished by the applicant.

3. The Site and Surroundings

3.1 The application site lies adjacent to the northern extent of Laxton village and is accessed via Horse Lane.

3.2 The site is currently vacant with no buildings or structures. There is an area of hardcore towards the centre of the site for parking and turning and foundations for the proposed dwelling have already been laid up to DPC.

3.3 Horse Lane is hard surfaced up to the application site and the access road leading into the site has been surfaced informally with hardcore. The access road loops around an agricultural field before going south toward the application site.

3.4 There is agricultural land and ancient woodland to the north. Also to the north is a small group of approximately 8 dwellings. To the east there is agricultural land and a small number of dwellings. To the south is a row of dwellings which front onto Main Street and share their rear boundary with the application site. There is open land immediately to the west and dwellings beyond that.

3.5 The application site is not within the conservation area but sits directly adjacent to the northern boundary of it. Woodland Cottage to the east is Grade II listed.
4. Policy Considerations

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework

4.2 Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan July 2011 (RNOTP)
   Policy 2-Windfall Development

4.3 North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011 - 2031
   Policy 1- Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
   Policy 2- Historic Environment
   Policy 3- Landscape Character
   Policy 4- Biodiversity & Geodiversity
   Policy 6- Development on Brownfield Land & Land affected by contamination
   Policy 8- North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles
   Policy 11- The Network of Urban and Rural Areas
   Policy 28- Housing Requirements & Strategic Opportunities
   Policy 29- Distribution of new homes
   Policy 30- Housing Mix and Tenure

4.4 Other Documents

5. Relevant Planning History

5.1 14/01383/PDU. Conversion of agricultural building to residential. Permitted on 09.10.14. As part of this application, the previous applicant stated that the former agricultural building was structurally sound and the development required to convert the building fell within the provisions of former Class MB of the General Permitted Development Order.

5.2 16/01739/VAR. Removal of Condition 2 (access surfacing) and Condition 3 (installation of a sprinkler system) associated with 14/01383/PDU. Permitted on 13.10.16.

6. Consultations and Representations

6.1 Neighbours: No comments received.

6.2 Laxton Parish Council: No objection.

6.3 NCC Highways: No objection. Horse Lane is not an adopted highway.

7. Evaluation

7.1 The following issues are relevant to the determination of this application:

7.2 Principle of Development

7.3 The NPPF sets out a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development and notes that planning authorities should positively seek to meet the development needs of their area. One of the core planning principles set out within the NPPF is to always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all occupiers of land. Further, it states that LPA’s shall encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed, provided it is not of high environmental value.
7.4 The NPPF states that applications for housing should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 49). Most importantly in terms of rural areas, para. 55 states that housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. LPA’s should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as agricultural worker housing, where such a development would provide the optimal use for a heritage asset, if the proposed dwelling is of exceptional quality or innovative nature or, significantly, where the development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting. The applicant has not put forward any exceptional circumstances and the proposal is not for the re-use of redundant buildings as the former agricultural building has been demolished.

7.5 The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Policy 1 clearly states that Local Planning Authorities (LPA’s) shall take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development as contained within the NPPF. The LPA will always work proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible. Development that conflicts with the policies of the Plan will be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.6 Policy 3 maintains that development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape setting, retaining and enhancing the distinctive qualities of the area which it would affect. Development should also contribute to maintaining the individual and distinct character and separate identities of settlements by preventing coalescence. This issue is discussed in detail at 7.15 of this report.

7.7 Policy 8 of the JCS states that development should create a distinctive local character by responding to the sites immediate and wider context and local character, respond to the local form, character and landscape setting of the settlement, protect neighbouring and future occupier amenity and prevent new development from contributing or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of pollution. Policy 8 closely follows Part 7 of the NPPF.

7.8 JCS policy 11 states that development will be distributed to strengthen the network of settlements in accordance with the roles set out in Table 1 of the JCS. Table 1 notes that, for the open countryside, development will be carefully managed to safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside to maintain distinctive and separate settlements by preventing coalescence.

7.9 In the rural areas, development will be limited to that required to support a prosperous rural economy or to meet a locally arising need that cannot be met elsewhere at a nearby larger settlement.

7.10 The policy notes that small scale infill development will be permitted on suitable sites within villages where this would not materially harm the character of the settlement and residential amenity or exceed the capacity of local infrastructure and services. Other than small scale infilling and rural exceptions schemes, development in the rural areas will be resisted. The proposed scheme does not meet the definition of infill development and is not considered to be within the settlement.

7.11 Policy 11 (d) states that the re-use of rural buildings will be supported and other forms of development will be resisted in the open countryside unless there are special circumstances as set out in JCS policy 13.

7.12 RNOTP Policy 2 covers windfall development. However, this policy is not relevant to this proposal because the application site is not positioned within the settlement boundary as defined by the RNOTP.
7.13 RNOTP Policy 23 which deals with the conversion of existing buildings to residential is not relevant to this proposal as the scheme is for a new dwelling, not a conversion. For the same reason, the previous permitted development scheme to convert a former agricultural building on the site to a dwelling is no longer relevant as the building has now been demolished and conversion is not now an option. Agricultural land is not included within the definition of previously developed land and this site cannot be considered as being previously developed.

7.14 Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area.

7.15 The application site is separated from the main village in a physical sense by the existing boundary treatment which runs to the rear of the existing residential development along Main Street. Further, the access to the application site is informal for the most part and is clearly rural in nature. The layout of the access takes users further away from the village before returning south, back towards the village and the position of the proposed dwelling. This gives the site an isolated rural feel and means that the site is read as separate to the village.

7.16 The proposed development would result in the site appearing visually domesticated, to the detriment of the existing isolated character and rural appearance of the site. Further, the development would not create a distinctive local character by responding to the sites immediate and wider context and local character, or respond to the local form, character and landscape setting of the settlement.

7.17 In conclusion, the proposed development would be contrary to JCS Policy 8 because it would not respond to the sites immediate and wider context and the local form and character; JCS Policy 11b due to the inability to demonstrate that the dwelling is required specifically on this site to meet a locally arising need or to support a prosperous rural economy, Paragraph 55 of the NPPF as the applicant has not demonstrated any special circumstances and para 58 of the NPPF as the development would not respond to the local character.

7.18 However, it is recognised that the proposed development could be beneficial in some respects and as such, the case is finely balanced. Members may wish to apportion a greater deal of weight on the positive aspects of the proposal, such as the possibility that the proposed development may support existing services in other local villages, and come to a different view to that reached by Officers.

7.19 Impact on neighbouring amenity

7.20 The proposed dwelling would be positioned approximately 40 metres to the north of 2 Main Street and approximately 50 metres to the west of Woodland Cottage. There is open land directly to the north and south of the site. As such, the proposed single storey dwelling would not have a significant impact on neighbouring amenity in respect of overshadowing or an overbearing impact.

7.21 No windows are proposed for the south elevation of the dwelling and Woodland Cottage is so far to the east that overlooking would not become a concern.

7.22 Overall, the impact of the proposed development on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers would not be detrimental.

8. Other issues

8.1 Parking: There would be ample space to park and turn within the site. No concerns are raised in this respect.
8.2 Bats: There are no buildings present within the application site and there is no risk of harming any bats.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That permission is REFUSED for the following reason:

Conditions/Reasons -

1. The proposed development, by nature of its position outside of the built form of Laxton village, would not respond to the sites immediate and wider context and local character, or respond to the local form, character and landscape setting of the settlement. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies 8 and 11 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy and the aims set out in paragraph 55 and Part 7 (paragraph 58) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1. In reaching this decision this Council has implemented the requirement in the NPPF to deliver sustainable development in a proactive and positive way in accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187. Unfortunately, the proposed development is considered unacceptable and a positive outcome was not reached.
Committee Report

Case Officer: Rosalind Hair

Date received: 13 April 2017
Date valid: 20 April 2017
Overall Expiry: 20 July 2017
Ward: Higham Ferrers
Parish: Chelveston-cum-Caldecott

Applicant: Federal Estates Ltd
Agent: Savills - Mr A Mann
Location: Chelveston Renewable Energy Park The Airfield Chelveston Northamptonshire NN9 6AR

Proposal: Construction of a 20MW energy storage facility incorporating battery storage, and associated transformers, security fencing, and hardstanding

This application is reported to the Planning Management Committee because it falls outside of the Scheme of Delegation in Part 3.2 of the Council's Constitution (2015).

1. Summary of Recommendation

1.1 That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

2. The Site and Surroundings

2.1 The site is located in the north west part of the Chelveston Renewable Energy Park (CREP), on land associated with the former RAF Chelveston Airfield and subsequent military uses. The existing renewable energy park sub-station, control building and biomass facility building are situated immediately to the south east. Beyond those and to other directions, there are wind turbines and solar arrays. The site is flat and comprises of poor quality agricultural land which is used for grazing.

2.2 The site is immediately to the north of the approved B2 manufacturing building permitted under 15/02271/FUL, although development has not commenced.

2.3 A series of public rights of way traverse the energy park and the closest of these to the proposed development is footpath MM17 running north west to south east approximately 240m south of the site.

2.4 The closest residential properties lie at Chelston Rise some 1.2km to the south west of the site and Manor Farm, some 1km to the south east.

3. Proposal

3.1 The application proposes the construction of a building to serve as a 20MW energy storage facility incorporating battery storage and associated transformers, security fencing, and hardstanding.
3.2 The proposed building would be constructed of self coloured concrete blocks with pre-fabricated concrete sectional roof panels finished externally in steel. The building would be 43.6m by 43.1m with a height of 6m to the ridge (4.8m to eaves). An area of hardstanding around the building would accommodate 4 external transformers (within 3.2m high fenced compounds) and 4 parking spaces. The entire perimeter would be enclosed by security fencing.

3.3 The energy storage facility would import/export electricity directly to the electricity network, assisting in balancing the supply and demand requirements. To enable this, the storage facility would under normal operation be maintained at 50% of the full (20MW) capacity. The facility would operate independently from the renewable energy developments at the CREP, however at times when the renewable energy developments are producing electricity not immediately required, then this could be used to charge the batteries if necessary and providing the energy storage facility was not providing a different service at that time.

4. Policy Considerations

4.1 National Planning Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

4.2 Joint Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 (JCS):
Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy 2 – Historic Environment
Policy 3 – Landscape Character
Policy 4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy 5 – Water Environment, Resources and Flood Risk Management
Policy 6 – Development on Brownfield and Land Affected by Contamination
Policy 8 – North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles
Policy 9 – Sustainable Buildings
Policy 11 – The Network of Urban and Rural Areas
Policy 26 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

4.3 Chelveston cum Caldecott Neighbourhood plan (March 2017):
REN 1 – Chelveston Airfield

4.4 Supplementary Planning Documents:
Parking (NCC)
Sustainable Design (NNJPU)
Planning Out Crime in Northamptonshire (NCC)
Biodiversity SPD (NNJPU)

4.5 Other Documents
Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, October 2014

5. Relevant Planning History

5.1 There is extensive planning history at the site. The following applications are considered most relevant:

- 08/00003/WAS – permission granted by NCC for a biomass anaerobic digestion plant.
- 08/00451/FUL – Change of use of redundant MOD buildings for electricity generation and switching room construction and use of ancillary plant and equipment (allowed on appeal).
- 10/00415/FUL (ENC) and 10/00484/MAR (Bedford Borough Council) – Permission for nine 125m high wind turbines granted on appeal.
- Permissions for solar arrays including ENC – 12/01993/FUL, 14/00414/FUL, 14/01177/FUL and 15/00489/FUL), Bedford Borough Council – 12/02408/MAF, 14/00469/MAF, 14/01499/EIA and 15/00454/EIA.
- 15/02271/FUL – Construction of B2 manufacturing building with ancillary storage/office/facilities accommodation (B1), staff parking and associated hardstanding /HGV parking/turning area (permitted).

6. Consultations and Representations

6.1 Neighbours: None received.

6.2 Parish Council: The Chelveston-cum-Caldecott Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) successfully passed the Referendum stage on Thursday 4th May. Accordingly, although not formally “made” by ENC, by virtue of s3 Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, it now has the status of forming part of the development plan for the area.

- The Council has considered the application in light of the NPPF and policy REN1 of the NDP. The Council considers the application is generally in conformity, recognising the safety and security requirements for the fencing around the transformers outweighs policy REN1 part vii all fencing is of a form appropriate for a rural environment. The Council requests the colour of the fencing is chosen not to highlight its presence to users of the ROW to the south. Reason – to protect the amenity and visual enjoyment of the area.

- The Council notes the proposed works to the water catchment balancing pond, and requests this is made a condition. Reason – to protect downstream properties from flooding.

- The Council notes the proposed hours for construction works, and requests this is made a condition. Reason – to protect amenity of nearby residents.

- The Council notes the proposed HGV use during the construction stage, and requests that all HGV movement follow the NCC Highways Routing Agreement for the CREP site (Route B) and that this is made a condition. Reason – to protect amenity of nearby residents and other road users.

- The Council notes the reference to screening planting from previous applications in the submitted Design and Access Statement – figure 5.1 shows the implement/approved planting. The Council would like to see the remaining outstanding planting undertaken at the next appropriate planting season, ideally by condition. Reason – to ensure the visual amenity mitigation measures of the earlier consents relied upon by this application are actually carried out.

As per s2 Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, should the application be granted and subsequent changes agreed by ENC, the Council confirms it wishes to be notified per s2(3).

6.3 Northamptonshire Police: Northamptonshire Police has no formal objection, but makes the following recommendations:
- All openings, Doors/windows/Louvers/Pressure Panels, should be certified to secure standards and have third party certification. The windows may require additional internal security grilles installed. A minimum security rating of LPS 1175 SR3 should be utilised.
- Any glazing must be Laminated to BS EN 356:2000 class P2A
- The perimeter security fencing should be supplied and installed to a min of BS 1722-14 Cat 2/LPS 1175 SR2. Weld mesh fencing of the correct specification is widely accepted as being a more secure option to the specified palisade. It is also more discreet and aesthetically pleasing.
• The Building should have an intruder alarm installed to the requirements of BS PD 6662 which can either be monitored locally or at the alarm companies monitoring station.

6.4 Badger Group: The Group would welcome any consent to be conditional upon compliance with the safeguarding criteria set out in the Ecological Assessment by Aspect Ecology paragraph 6.1.2. Otherwise the Group has no objection to the proposal.

6.5 Environment Agency: No comments

6.6 Bedford Borough Council: No objection – The proposed development will be located within a cluster structures and appreciated as part of the Renewable Energy Park complex. Due to the scale, location of the proposed development within the site and the existing built form and associated works as well as the degree of separation, views of the proposed development will be limited. Therefore the proposal is considered to preserve the significance of the setting of the grade I listed St Marys Church, Yelden, the grade II residential assets within Yelden and the Grade I listed St Marys Church, Shelton and will not harm the setting of the Yelden Motte and Bailey. The proposal is therefore considered to be inline with s.66 of the Planning, (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6.7 Highway Authority: No objection

6.8 Lead Local Flood Authority (NCC): Provided the scheme is constructed according to the Flood Risk Assessment and documents referenced, the impacts of surface water drainage have been adequately addressed.

6.9 NCC Ecologist: In my view the ecological report is fine; should the mitigation measures outlined in section 6 be followed I am satisfied that there should be negligible biodiversity impact at most.

6.10 ENC Environmental Protection (Contamination): In essence the facility will be an energy storage facility allied to the differing renewable energy systems already on site. The facility will be housed in a single large structure and will be mostly automated. The site was previously a military airfield and as such contamination may be present which could pose a significant risk to the proposed development. However, the various reports reviewed under different planning permissions supplemented by the Geo-environmental Report demonstrates the site is suitable for use without any remediation. As such, no further investigation or remediation is considered necessary. However, because of the previous use it would be prudent to place a condition on the planning permission to deal with any previously unidentified contamination. Provided this is done I would have no objection to the proposed development on the grounds of contamination.

6.11 ENC Environmental Protection (Noise): A predictive noise assessment has been carried out and noise levels have been assessed at the nearest noise-sensitive receptor, Manor Farm which is approximately 900m to the east of the development. From the information provided Environmental Protection has no objection to this development on the grounds of noise. In the Design and Access Statement construction hours are quoted as taking place between 07:00 and 19:00 on weekdays; we would recommend the following condition should you be minded to grant permission: No demolition or construction work (including deliveries to or from the site) that causes noise to be audible outside the site boundary shall take place on the site outside the hours of 0800 and 1800 Mondays to Fridays and 0800 and 1300 on Saturdays, and at no times on Sundays or Bank Holidays unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority.

7. Evaluation

7.1 The following considerations are relevant to the determination of this application:
7.2 Principle of Development

7.3 The submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement provides a detailed justification for the proposed facility with reference to the increasing need for flexibility in the UK electricity system, as a result of increasing reliance on variable renewable and inflexible nuclear generation.

7.4 The application states that National Grid has predicted capacity shortfalls over the next 5 years in primary and secondary frequency response and reserve services. Primary and secondary response services provide automatic increases in generation (or reduction of demand) when the frequency of supply is below 50Hz. Primary response is delivered within 10 seconds and Secondary response within 30 seconds. Reserve services are required where there is an increase in demand for energy from users. They are required to respond quickly at peak times but over relatively short periods. The proposed battery storage facility would contribute towards capacity for these balancing services.

7.5 There are currently no specific planning policies relating to energy storage, however both national and local planning policies clearly support the transition to a low carbon future (e.g. NPPF paras 17, 93 and 98 and JCS Policy 1). Whilst the proposed facility is not considered to be a renewable energy development, it would assist in the reduction of CO₂ emissions from other generating systems, by helping to balance supply and reducing wastage. It would also play a part in contributing to the security and quality of UK electricity supply and as such there are associated social and economic benefits.

7.6 JCS Policy 26 relates to proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation. Whilst strictly the proposal is not generating energy, it is considered to be a low carbon development and therefore the policy could be said to have some relevance. Policy 26 permits development subject to a number of criteria, summarised as:

- the landscape impact of development is minimised and mitigated against;
- the development links to a specific demand through decentralised energy or if this is not possible provides power to the National Grid;
- the siting avoids harm to heritage assets;
- the siting protects amenity;
- the development does not adversely impact on the highway network or rights of way;
- measures are included to mitigate impacts e.g. from construction, operation and decommissioning;
- the development does not have a significant adverse cumulative impact with other developments;
- the development retains and enhances biodiversity.

7.7 Policy REN1 of the Chelveston cum Caldecott Neighbourhood Plan is particularly relevant to the site and states:

'A. Developments on the site should protect or enhance the amenity value of the Rights of Way network.

B. The site to the north of footpaths MM16 is allocated for further renewable energy installations and activities, provided that:

i. no new permanent buildings are erected on the green-field areas beyond those already permitted, so as to minimise the cumulative impact on the rural landscape;
ii. new structures newly permitted do not exceed the height of the currently permitted buildings (12.36m), so as to minimise the cumulative impact on the rural landscape;
iii. all temporary structures newly permitted are screened with planting and painted to minimise their impact on the rural landscape when viewed from the B645 and the Rights of Way;
iv. all temporary structures are maintained during their life and are removed from the site when no longer required or fit for use;
v. the impact of additional HGV traffic on residents at Chelston Rise and the users of the Rights of Way network is effectively mitigated;
vi. developments protect or enhance the amenity value of the Rights of Way on the former Chelveston airfield;
seventh all fencing is of a form appropriate for a rural environment.'

7.8 Overall, it is considered that the principle of this development is supported by the aims and objectives of relevant planning policies. Compliance with the specific criteria detailed above is discussed in the report below, along with other relevant planning considerations.

7.9 Design, Layout and Impact on the Character of the Area

7.10 The proposed building, would have a relatively large footprint (circa 1875m²), however would be of a modest 6m in height. It would be sited adjacent to existing and permitted buildings of varying sizes and including up to 15m in height. As such, it would be seen in the context of the existing buildings and surrounding turbines and solar arrays and would not therefore appear to visually extend the energy park site. It is noted that Policy REN1 detailed above is seeking to prevent new permanent buildings, however a more temporary installation (such as a series of containers for example) could potentially have a more significant visual impact. From the north and west, the development would be well screened by existing woodland.

7.11 It is proposed to construct the building of self coloured concrete blockwork and whilst initially it might seem more appropriate to use materials more typical of agricultural buildings, the agent has advised: 'Various building designs were considered, which included containerised and "barn" style structures, but none offered the same containment benefits of the proposed brick building construction.' The nearby biomass facility building is clad with 'goosewing grey' cladding to the upper section, to assimilate it into the skyline as much as possible. The blockwork for the proposed building would be of a similar colour and given the distance from the nearest public right of way (approx. 240m), Officers consider that it would have a similar appearance to the cladding. It therefore seems unnecessary to insist that the building be clad externally with another material. Planting adjacent to footpath MM17 has recently taken place in relation to another permission and in time, this will help to screen the collection of buildings (including the application building) from users of the footpath. Similar planting has/is to be installed adjacent to the west perimeter of the site and to the east; adjacent Bridleway MM18 which traverses the site north east to south west. A condition is recommended to ensure that the planting is carried out and subsequently maintained.

7.12 The proposed palisade fencing whilst industrial in nature, would be justified to ensure security and given the context would not be considered to cause significant harm. A condition is recommended to agree the final design and finish of the fencing.

7.13 Overall, it is considered that there would be only limited effects on landscape character and limited views of the development. In those views, the development would be seen in the context of the existing buildings, solar arrays and turbines and as such the proposal would not significantly harm the character and visual amenity of the landscape.

7.14 Heritage

7.15 No designated or non-designated heritage assets would be directly affected by the proposal and having regard to the design of the development, its context within the energy park, the existence of other buildings in the vicinity and the degree of separation, it is not considered that the setting of such assets in the locality would be harmed.

7.16 The applicant submits that the site is located in an area of low archaeological potential. No comments to the contrary or otherwise have been received from the County Archaeologist and therefore the applicant's proposal to: 'maintain an archaeological presence
on site during development to implement ‘A Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording’ structured as Strip, Map and Sample’ is considered acceptable. A condition is recommended to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the ‘Archaeology Desk Based Assessment’ (CgMs, April 2017).

7.17 Highway Issues

7.18 It is proposed that the site would be accessed via the existing access to the CREP and the private roads already established within it. Operational traffic would be very low as the facility would be largely automated. As such, only 4 parking spaces are proposed to serve the development.

7.19 The applicant has submitted a ‘Construction Traffic Management Plan’ (Savills, April 2017) which details a construction traffic route and other measures to minimise the impact of construction traffic on the highway network and local residents. A condition is recommended to ensure the plan is implemented.

7.20 The Highway Authority has considered the application and raises no objection. It is therefore not considered that the proposal would give rise to any significant highway safety or capacity issues.

7.21 Flood Risk and Drainage

7.22 The site is not located in a particular flood risk area. The submitted Drainage Strategy (Rolton Group Ltd. March 2017) explains that infiltration drainage methods are unsuitable on this site and therefore surface water would be piped to an existing balancing pond which would be adapted to store the additional quantity of water. Water would subsequently be discharged at a controlled rate to the airfield drainage system. The lead local flood authority has confirmed it is content with the information submitted and a condition will ensure the drainage proposals are implemented and satisfactorily maintained.

7.23 Residential Amenity

7.24 Given the distance from the proposed development to the nearest residential properties, it is not considered that there would be any significant harm to residential amenity. Noise is considered at paragraph 7.32.

7.25 Ecology

7.26 The site is not subject to any statutory or local wildlife designations and given the nature of the development and distance to designated sites, is not likely to impact on them.

7.27 The development would result in the loss of an area of semi-improved grass land and a dry ditch. In ecological terms, this is considered to be of negligible significance.

7.28 The Ecological Appraisal submitted with the application (Aspect Ecology, April 2017) confirms that protected species are unlikely to be impacted on by the proposal, however the report recommends:

- standard construction mitigation measures should be employed to protect Badgers;
- safeguards are recommended to protect nesting birds;
- the site should be managed in its current state (intensively grazed) to avoid grassland becoming more suitable for Great Crested Newts/amphibians and reptiles.

7.29 Both the local Badger Group and County Ecologist are satisfied with the level of ecological information submitted and recommend that the mitigation measure set out in the ecological appraisal are secured by condition. Condition 7 addresses this.
7.30 Environmental Issues

Contamination
7.31 The Council’s Environmental Protection Team are satisfied that remediation of contamination should not be required, however as a precaution, a planning condition is recommended to deal with any previously unidentified contamination.

Noise
7.32 The applicant has provided a noise assessment (Ion Acoustics Ltd. April 2017) which advises that the batteries within the facility generate no noise themselves, however noise would be generated by the associated heating/cooling equipment and electrical components. The report considers the impact of noise on the nearest residential receptor (Manor Farm) and concludes there would be no adverse impact. It also indicates that noise would reduce to an acceptable level before it reaches the public rights of way. The Council’s Environmental Protection Team has considered the assessment and has no objection, although they recommend a condition to restrict construction hours.

Pollution/Safety
7.33 Upon request from the Parish Council, the applicant provided additional information to demonstrate that the safety of the facility has been considered:

‘In the very unlikely event of a battery cell combusting, an automated fire suppression system would be activated to quickly suppress the fire. Typically, the louvres would close as part of this system to further limit oxygen fuelling the fire, which would also minimise the escape of fumes resulting from a fire....The building design has the added benefit of allowing any spillage to be contained entirely within the building before being appropriately cleaned up. Impermeable membranes built into the structure would ensure that no discharge from the batteries would contaminate the soil or drainage ponds.’

7.34 Having regard to the above information, it is considered that suitable pollution prevention measures have been considered, however it is not necessary to condition such controls as other legislation is in place to deal with health and safety and pollution issues.

Lighting
7.35 The application states that no permanent external lighting will be provided (other than emergency door lighting).

7.36 Sustainability

7.37 JCS Policy 9 requires that non residential developments over 1000m², should comply with BREAAM very good (or equivalent). The applicant contends that given the nature of the proposed use, the energy and cooling requirements and water use etc. are not attributable to BREAAM assessment standards and therefore it is not appropriate to meet a very good standard in this instance. This is accepted by Officers and therefore a less onerous condition is recommended to secure practical sustainability measures.

7.38 Crime and Security

7.39 Northamptonshire Police have made a number of suggestions which could assist in reducing the incidence of crime e.g. doors, windows and security fencing to specified standards etc. The applicant has confirmed they are willing to comply with the requirements and a condition is recommended to secure this.

8. Other Issues
8.1 Environmental Impact Assessment - ENC screened the proposal as not requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment.

8.2 Northamptonshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan - Policy 34 seeks to prevent new development from adversely affecting the continued operation of, or prejudice the use of waste disposal sites. Given the committed biomass anaerobic digestion plant, consideration would need to be given to this issue. The applicant has provided a 'Statement of compliance with Policy 34 of the NCC Minerals and Waste Local Plan' which addresses issues such as environmental pollution, traffic and flood risk. It is considered that this satisfactorily demonstrates that the proposal is compatible with the biomass facility.

9. Conclusion

9.1 The site is allocated for renewable energy installations and activities and whilst the proposed energy storage building would not strictly fall within this definition, it would support the transition to a low carbon future by helping to balance electricity supply and reducing wastage. As such, it is considered to be a compatible form of development and given the context, design of the proposed building and its limited visibility, the proposal would not have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside. The benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh the harm and accordingly the proposal is recommended for approval.

10. Recommendation

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
   Reason: To ensure compliance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The building hereby permitted shall only be used as an energy storage facility (maximum 20MW) and for no other purpose whatsoever.
   Reason: The development has been assessed on this basis and other uses would need to be considered having regard to their impact on the surrounding area.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, a schedule of external materials shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. The development shall thereafter be constructed in accordance with the agreed details.
   Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

4. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, a landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme for landscaping the site shall include:

   (i) details of the proposed tree and shrub planting including their species, number, sizes and positions, together with any grass seeded/turfed areas;
   (ii) details of the existing trees and hedgerows to be retained as well as those to be felled;
   (iii) timescales for implementation of soft landscaping and details of how the planting will be managed/maintained in perpetuity.

   Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area, to ensure the creation of a pleasant environment for the development.
5. Prior to the commencement of development, details (including the location, design and finish) of all fencing and any other boundary treatments to be installed at the site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. Thereafter, the fencing/boundary treatments shall be installed in accordance with the agreed details and thereafter retained.
Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

6. There shall be no external lighting installed at the site unless the details are first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. External lighting shall only be installed in accordance with the details so agreed.
Reason: In the interests of amenity, ecology and to prevent unnecessary light pollution.

7. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in the Ecological Appraisal (Aspect Ecology, April 2017).
Reason: In the interests of wildlife and nature conservation.

8. Prior to the commencement of development, a Sustainability Strategy shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. The Strategy shall set out measures which are to be incorporated into the design and construction of the building to minimise the impact of the development on the environment and shall include but not be limited to;

i) the use of renewable/sustainable construction materials;
ii) the minimisation of waste;
iii) measures to reduce as far as practicable, the use of resources during the operation of the facility (electricity/water etc.).
Reason: In the interests of sustainability and reducing the impacts of climate change.

9. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved.
Reason: To ensure that any unforeseen contamination encountered during development is dealt with in an appropriate manner to protect controlled waters.

10. Prior to the first use of the building hereby permitted, the drainage scheme shall be constructed (and thereafter maintained in perpetuity) in accordance with the 'Proposed Drainage Strategy for Proposed Battery Storage Facility at Chelveston Renewable Energy Park’, rev 2.0 ref 17-0225 (including Appendix B) prepared by Rolton Group Ltd dated 30th March 2017.
Reason: To prevent flooding.

11. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings; FEL1113B and FEL1112A.
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

12. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the measures (including routing agreement) detailed in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (Savills, April 2017).
Reason: To prevent unnecessary environmental and amenity impacts.

13. Prior to the development hereby approved first coming into operational use:
i) all openings, doors/windows/louvers/pressure panels, should be certified to secure standards and have third party certification with a minimum security rating of LPS 1175 SR3;
ii) any glazing must be Laminated to BS EN 356:2000 class P2A;
iii) perimeter security fencing should be supplied and installed to a min of BS 1722-14 Cat 2/LPS 1175 SR2;
iv) an intruder alarm shall be installed to the requirements of BS PD 6662.

Reason: In the interests of reducing crime and/or anti-social behaviour, and public safety.

14. No demolition or construction work (including deliveries to or from the site) that causes noise to be audible outside the site boundary shall take place on the site outside the hours of 0800 and 1800 Mondays to Fridays and 0800 and 1300 on Saturdays, and at no times on Sundays or Bank Holidays unless otherwise agreed with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the protection of the local amenity throughout construction work.

15. No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 141.

Informatives

1. This application has been determined in accordance with 186 and 187 of the NPPF.

2. The details pursuant to conditions 3, 4, 5, 8 and 15 are required prior to the commencement of development, because they are critical to the material considerations of the scheme. The development would not be acceptable without these details being first approved.

3. In relation to condition 4 (landscaping), it will not be necessary to provide additional landscaping over and above the already approved schemes relating to earlier consents, however the details submitted pursuant to the condition will need to satisfy the LPA that the planting will be implemented within an appropriate timescale and thereafter suitably maintained.

4. The applicant is reminded that the works required to increase drainage capacity will involve work outside of the site boundary (red line). Should planning permission be required for those works, then it must be first obtained by the applicant.
Committee Report

Case Officer: Rosalind Hair

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date received</th>
<th>Date valid</th>
<th>Overall Expiry</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Parish</th>
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<td>28 June 2017</td>
<td>Lower Nene</td>
<td>Warmington</td>
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Applicant: Elton Estates Company Ltd

Agent: DK Planning And Development Ltd - Mr D Keyte

Location: Davys Lodge Morborne Road Warmington Peterborough Northamptonshire PE8 6UP

Proposal: The demolition of the existing dwelling and the construction of a replacement dwelling as well as the conversion of an adjoining range of rural buildings to form one single dwellinghouse

This application is reported to the Planning Management Committee as it has been called in by Ward Cllr David Brackenbury.

1. Summary of Recommendation

1.1 That planning permission be REFUSED.

2. The Proposal

2.1 This application proposes the demolition of an existing dwelling and domestic outbuildings and the construction of a replacement dwelling as well as the conversion of an adjoining range of agricultural buildings to form one single dwellinghouse.

2.2 The existing dwelling; a two storey cottage is attached at the south western end of the main range of agricultural barns.

2.3 The proposed replacement dwelling would sit approximately in the location of the existing dwelling, albeit on a larger footprint. It would consist of a substantial late 19th century inspired building (12.3m by 17.25m with a height of 9.73m) with a contrasting parapet roof link section (5.6m by 6.8m with a height of 8.33m) adjoining the agricultural buildings which would be converted.

2.4 It is proposed that the new building would be constructed in lime render, with limestone dressings, welsh slate roof and timber doors and windows.

2.5 An altered domestic curtilage is proposed as part of the scheme.

2.6 The application explains (Planning Statement) that the development is required to provide a base for the applicant to oversee and administer the running of Home Farm which forms part of the Elton Estate.
3. **The Site and Surroundings**

3.1 Davy's Lodge (or Davy's Farm) is located to the north of Morborne Road, approximately 1.5km east of the outer edge of Warmington. The site is a working farm, forming part of the Elton Estate. The existing buildings are predominantly stone with a variety of roof coverings and are understood to be used in association with game keeping. The buildings on site are not listed, but are considered to be 'non-designated heritage assets'.

3.2 Adjacent to the buildings lies an area of hardstanding, the garden to the cottage and agricultural land. There are tree belts to the north-west and south-west of the site and a further tree group to the north-east.

3.3 The existing dwelling is currently occupied by one of the Estate's employees.

4. **Policy Considerations**

4.1 National Planning Policy:
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

4.2 North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011 – 2031 (JCS):
- Policy 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- Policy 2 – Historic Environment
- Policy 3 – Landscape Character
- Policy 4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Policy 8 – North Northamptonshire Place Shaping Principles
- Policy 9 – Sustainable Buildings
- Policy 11 – The Network of Urban and Rural Areas
- Policy 25 – Rural Economic Development and Diversification
- Policy 29 – Distribution of New Homes
- Policy 30 – Housing Mix and Tenure

4.3 Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan 2011:
- Policy 6 – Residential Parking Standards
- Policy 23 – Rural Buildings General Approach
- Policy 24 – Replacement Dwellings in the open Countryside

4.4 Other:

5. **Relevant Planning History**

5.1 There is no planning history on record which relates to the site, however the Council did enter into pre-application discussions with the applicant and the planning application details the evolution of the design as a result of this.

6. **Consultations and Representations**

6.1 Neighbours: No comments received.

6.2 Parish Council: None received
6.3 ENC Environmental Protection: Having carried out a walk over survey, accompanied by the applicant, it is my opinion the risk from contamination is minimal/negligible and as such this requires no further investigation. Therefore, I have no objection on the grounds of contamination.

6.4 Highway Authority: Vehicular accesses that are or will be shared with a Public Right of Way, (PRoW) must take account of the legal width for that PRoW and must not be reduced. A single dwelling access needs to be at least 3.3m wide to include pedestrian access. The access needs a hard bound surface for the first 5 metres from the highway boundary. The site plan needs to show the location of the 8 car parking spaces.

6.5 NCC Archaeologist: The applicant has provided an impact assessment which covers the history and development of the site and provides a photographic survey of most of the buildings, with the exception of the interior of the Estate Workers’ Cottage which is proposed for demolition. The assessment concludes that the barn is the earliest element of the complex and was constructed c.1775, with the rest of the farmyard developing piecemeal over the following hundred or so years. Evidence for the development and use of the building will be altered, concealed or lost during demolition. This does not however represent an overriding constraint on the development provided that adequate provision is made for the investigation and recording of any remains that are affected, and the results added to the assessment report along with a number of additional elements [refer to detailed comments online]. In order to secure this, please attach a condition for an archaeological programme of works.

6.6 NCC Ecologist: I’ve reviewed the ecology report and based on the findings I support the ecologist’s recommendations. In particular:

- Works must not take place outside the bird nesting season. Once the current nesting season is over, alternative tree sparrow and swallow nest sites should be provided and the existing nests covered with net to prevent the birds from recolonising them.
- Pond P1 should be fenced off during site works

Provided the ecology report recommendations are followed I am satisfied that the proposal will mitigate any biodiversity impacts and – through the orchard planting – deliver a net biodiversity gain.

7. Evaluation

7.1 The following considerations are relevant to the determination of this application:

7.2 Principle of the Development

7.3 The proposal is for a replacement dwelling and the conversion of traditional agricultural buildings to form part of that dwelling. As such, RNOTP Policies 23 (Rural Buildings General Approach) and 24 (Replacement Dwellings in the Open Countryside) are of particular relevance.

7.4 Subject to certain criteria (including that the character of any building of historic interest is conserved; that buildings for conversion are substantially intact; and that permitted development rights are withdrawn where appropriate), RNOTP Policy 23 permits: ‘the adaptation or re-use of buildings in the countryside for employment generating or tourism, including tourist accommodation, or residential use, where the location or building is more
appropriate for such a use.' In this case, given that the accommodation would form part of the single dwelling on site, the conversion to residential use is considered acceptable in principle.

7.5 RNOTP Policy 24 states:

'Proposals for replacement dwellings in the open countryside will be granted on a one for one basis where:

a) The original dwelling has not been abandoned or allowed to fall into a state of dereliction and disrepair, so that any replacement would in effect be treated as a 'new' dwelling;
b) The original dwelling is not a temporary or mobile structure;
c) The replacement dwelling is located within the site boundary of the original dwelling; and
d) The replacement is of a size, scale and massing similar to the original dwelling.'

7.6 It is clear from the submission and from having visited the site, that criteria a, b and c (above) are satisfied, therefore it is considered that the principle of a replacement dwelling can be supported. Criterion d of RNOTP Policy 24 (above) and criteria stipulated in RNOTP Policy 23 (as summarised previously) are considered in the remainder of the report along with other relevant planning considerations:

7.7 Whilst the proposed dwelling would be occupied in relation to a farming enterprise, it is not being considered against JCS Policy 13 (Rural Exceptions) - which is applicable to rural workers dwellings - given that this application is for a replacement dwelling and as there is currently no agricultural tie in place.

7.8 Design and Layout

Replacement Dwelling – Including the Size, Scale and Massing

7.9 RNOTP Policy 24 requires that replacement dwellings are of 'a size, scale and massing similar to the original dwelling.' The applicant contends in their Planning Statement that an increase of 40% in building footprint and floorspace should be considered 'similar'. In concluding this, they assume an allowance for extensions under permitted development rights and make reference to the following decisions by East Northamptonshire Council permitting replacement dwellings:

- 14/01935/OUT, Ivy Cottages, Station Road, Raunds;

7.10 The first of these applications (Ivy Cottages) is not within the RNOTP area and was not therefore subject to consideration against the relevant policy. As such, it is not considered a suitable comparison and is not discussed further.

7.11 The second application is more relevant and relates to the replacement of a bungalow with a two storey dwelling. Whilst in that case an increase of floorspace of circa 43% was considered to be 'similar,' this was considered in the round with a proposed slight reduction in footprint (by 2sqm). Notably that dwelling is located in close relationship with the village of Warmington, in contrast to Davy's Lodge which is remote and the officer at that time
considered that the new dwelling at High Reaches would be ‘a vast improvement on the appearance of the existing bungalow’ which weighed in favour of the scheme.

7.12 An modest allowance for permitted development extensions, could be accepted, providing the carrying out of such extensions would be a likely fall back position. As the existing dwelling appears to have been occupied in its current form for many years, it is not considered there is a compelling fall back position in this case.

7.13 For the above reasons, Officer’s do not consider that past decisions have set a precedent to accept a 40% increase in footprint and floorspace as being ‘similar’ and it is important to recognise that each case must be considered on its own merits. That said, a comparison between the existing dwelling at Davy’s Lodge and its proposed replacement (refer to table 1 below) indicates that what is actually being proposed here is an increase in footprint by approximately 30% and an increase in floorspace by approximately 84%. The most substantial increase though would be to the buildings massing; an increase of approximately 155% (as illustrated by volume).

**Table 1 – Comparison between Existing and Proposed Dwelling (approx. figures)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing Dwelling and Residential Outbuildings</th>
<th>New Dwelling</th>
<th>% Increase/Decrease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Footprint (GEA)</td>
<td>192 sqm</td>
<td>250 sqm</td>
<td>+ 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floorspace (GEA)</td>
<td>268 sqm</td>
<td>493 sqm</td>
<td>+ 84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Ridge Height</td>
<td>8.3 m</td>
<td>9.8 m</td>
<td>+ 18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Max. Length</td>
<td>22.62 m</td>
<td>17.9 m</td>
<td>- 21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Width</td>
<td>14.06 m</td>
<td>17.3 m</td>
<td>+ 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>855 m³</td>
<td>2181 m³</td>
<td>+ 155%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.14 Having regard also to the resulting appearance of the proposed dwelling, as illustrated by the submitted drawings, it is considered that the proposed dwelling would have a substantially greater presence and dominance than the existing dwelling and Officers do not consider that the replacement dwelling could be argued to be ‘similar’. The development is therefore contrary to RNOTP Policy 24. The fact that substantial additional accommodation is to be provided within the converted outbuildings (approx. 410 sqm) does little to justify the need for such a large dwelling in planning terms.

7.15 It is recognised that considerable thought has been paid to the design of the proposed dwelling and it is noted that the applicant has tried to simplify its appearance in response to pre-application advice (e.g. removing detailing such as a veranda and crenellations), however the dwelling remains of unusually grand appearance, primarily as a result of its scale. As such, it is considered that it would appear at odds with the adjoining range of more modest traditional agricultural buildings.

**Buildings to Be Converted**

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1 Members should note that the residential accommodation to be provided within the converted barns is excluded from the figures in table 1 on the basis that the conversion of the buildings is acceptable in principle under a separate policy. Conversely, part of the existing dwelling falls within a part conversion of the main barn and this is counted in the figures in table 1.
7.16 A structural survey has been provided and this identifies that some remedial works would be required to the various buildings. On the whole, the buildings appear in relatively good structural condition and it is considered that the survey results satisfy RNOTP Policy 23 criterion b, which requires that buildings to be converted are substantially intact.

7.17 Save for a small link extension, the conversion would respect the existing form of the agricultural buildings and would partially reverse an insensitive part conversion of the main barn. New openings in the conversion have been minimised and the applicant has also sought to follow pre-application advice regarding the setting of new walls behind existing support posts in the cart shed and retention of existing fabric. Overall, the conversion element of the scheme is considered of a suitable design and layout, subject to conditions to agree details such as windows and materials.

7.18 Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Countryside

7.19 The applicant has helpfully provided a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment with their submission and this notes the existence of: footpath PD24 leading north-west from the site access; Bridlepath PD5 crossing north-south approximately 500 m to the west of the site; and footpath PD12 leading west from this.

7.20 The applicant’s assessment concludes that whilst the site is on relatively high ground, the proposal would not be prominent in longer distance views, given the screening provided by the existing tree belts and the mature hedge along Morborne Road.

7.21 The applicant’s assessment identifies that the new dwelling would be visible from a number of localised viewpoints along the aforementioned rights of way and from the point of access. Officer’s consider that the proposed replacement dwelling by virtue of its size, scale, mass and appearance would have a significantly greater presence in these views than the existing dwelling and as previously stated, the dwelling would be considered to appear at odds with the more modest range of converted agricultural buildings. As a result, the proposal would be considered to have an adverse visual impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, which RNOTP Policy 24 (and relevant parts of JCS Policy 3 and 8) are seeking to prevent.

7.22 The proposed inclusion of a kitchen garden and enclosed yard are considered modest and well related to the buildings on site, however the application site as denoted by the red line, is extensive and would represent a significant addition to the residential curtilage if it were all to form part of it. If the application were to be approved, it would therefore be desirable to include a planning condition to agree/define a suitable residential curtilage.

7.23 Heritage

7.24 The subject buildings are considered to be non-designated heritage assets and as such NPPF para 135 is of particular relevance. This states that:

'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'
JCS Policy 2 is also relevant and this seeks to ensure that proposals conserve and where possible enhance the heritage significance and setting of an asset and complement their surrounding historic environment through form, scale, design and materials.

The proposal involves the demolition of the existing dwelling and associated outbuildings. The submitted Heritage Report (Paul Stamper Heritage, March 2017) estimates the dwelling to have been constructed in the 19th century, however it has been subject to some insensitive additions and alterations in the mid-late 20th century which have caused harm to its character. As a result of this, it is considered that on balance, the replacement of the dwelling could be accepted in terms of heritage impact, however a planning condition would need to ensure appropriate recording.

The proposals for the remaining buildings which are to be converted are considered to be sufficiently sensitive such that they would not cause significant harm to the significance of the assets when weighed with the benefits of preserving the buildings for the long term. As described previously though, there are concerns about the relationship of the new dwelling with the building range and as such it is considered that the setting of the non-designated heritage assets and thereby their significance would be harmed by that element of the scheme, contrary to the aims of the aforementioned policies.

**Highways**

The application does not propose to change the existing access arrangements whereby the dwelling is accessed via a private track from Morborne Road. The supporting information does however indicate that the track would be gravelled. Existing hard standing would remain to serve as parking.

The Highway Officer has commented that as the access is shared with a Public Right of Way (PRoW) it must take account of the legal width and not be reduced. She also comments that: *‘A single dwelling access needs to be at least 3.3m wide to include pedestrian access. The access needs a hard bound surface for the first 5 metres from the highway boundary. The site plan needs to show the location of the 8 car parking spaces.’*

Given that there is no net increase in the number of dwellings, it is not considered reasonable to require improvements to the access, however as the applicant is proposing to resurface the access, it would be necessary to (if the application were to be approved) add a planning condition to ensure a hard bound surface for the first 5 metres back from the highway, in the interests of safety.

Having paid a visit to the site, it is clear that there is sufficient parking already in existence to serve the development and therefore it is not necessary for the applicant to demonstrate this on a plan.

If the application were to be approved, a note to applicant would be recommended to advise about the requirements for the PRoW.

Subject to the condition and note detailed above, the proposal would not raise Highway safety or parking issues.

**Ecology**
7.36 The application is accompanied by an Ecological Survey (Conservation Constructions, June 2016), which identifies that the site lies within the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area (NIA). The report confirms that Bats and Owls do not inhabit the buildings on site, however nesting birds were noted, including house sparrow which is a Priority Action Plan species. Ponds in the vicinity of the buildings were confirmed as unsuitable for Great Crested Newts.

7.37 The report includes the following recommendations which would help the development to meet ecological aims of the NIA:
- Conversion of the buildings would need to commence outside the bird breeding season with alternative nest sites provided;
- Pond (P1) should be retained and fenced off during demolition and construction;
- Creation of an orchard to the east of the dwelling would act as a new habitat to encourage birds and invertebrates;
- External lighting should be directional and on a timer.

7.38 The County Ecologist has assessed the submitted report and is satisfied with the proposal subject to a planning condition to secure the recommended actions. She comments that overall, with the addition of an orchard (proposed beyond the site boundary on land under the applicant’s control) a net gain in biodiversity would be achieved. This weighs in favour of the proposal.

7.39 Residential Amenity

7.40 The proposal would not adversely affect neighbouring residential amenity given that the closest neighbouring property is located approximately 150m away.

8. Other Issues

8.1 Sustainability – the proposal is considered to address the requirement of JCS Policy 9 e.g. the Design and Access Statement advises that energy efficient construction methods would be used and local materials sourced where possible.

8.2 Economic Considerations – Planning policy supports economic growth in rural areas (e.g. NPPF para 28) and the proposal is being sought so as to provide a base for the applicant to administer and oversee Home Farm (Planning Statement). It is also stated that there is an intention to build up the estate woodlands as a sustainable resource to be able to sell firewood, wood chips and timber to the local market, which would create one full time job. Whilst these points are noted, given that there is already a habitable dwelling on site, it is not considered that any significant weight can be afforded to these considerations.

8.3 Drainage – The site is not at particular risk from flooding and therefore the Building Regulations are considered sufficient to address drainage issues.

8.4 Trees – The trees adjacent the buildings are considered of sufficient distance away such that they would not be harmed.
9. Conclusion

9.1 The replacement dwelling would be contrary to RNOTP Policy 24 as a result of its size, scale and massing. This, coupled with its grand appearance would lead to it seeming at odds with the setting of the adjacent building range. This would be readily appreciated from public viewpoints where the dwelling would also hold significantly more prominence in views. Whilst this harm would be localised, it is not considered to be outweighed by the benefits of the proposal and as such, the application is recommended for refusal.

10. Recommendation

That the application be REFUSED for the following reason:

Reasons

1. By virtue of its size, scale and massing, the replacement dwelling would not be ‘similar’ to the original dwelling, contrary to RNOTP Policy 24 d). As a result and also having regards to its design and appearance, the new dwelling would harm the character and visual appearance of the countryside and the significance of the farmyard setting, contrary to JCS Policies: 2 a) and b), 3 a), 8 di) and the aims and objectives of NPPF paras. 17, 58, 61 and 135.

Notes to Applicant

1. This application has been determined in accordance with 186 and 187 of the NPPF. This decision does not prejudice a revised scheme addressing the highlighted concerns.