

10 January 2020

Mr Vincent Pearce
Senior Planning Officer
Mid Suffolk District Council
Endeavour House, 8 Russell Rd,
Ipswich, IP1 2BX

Dear Mr Pearce,

**Planning application ref: DC/19/05956 Outline planning application (all matters reserved) -
Erection of up to 18No dwellings and associated new roads, infrastructure and open space.**

Land off Post Mill Lane, Fressingfield

I am writing on behalf of the Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) to object the above outline planning application for the erection of up to 18 dwellings on a greenfield site on the western edge of the village. This is a revised application DC/17/01648 for 24 dwellings with associated infrastructure which was refused in November 2018 and later dismissed at appeal. SPS objected to the previous application due to the unsustainable location, the disproportionate scale of the development (taken together with other large scale housing schemes) and the impact on the setting of heritage assets.

We note the reasons for refusal and Inspector's decision with regard to the setting of Ladymeade Cottage, a grade II listed building. We welcome the revised proposals and acknowledge that they have had regard to the comments made by both council officers and the Planning Inspector in respect of heritage assets. However we are disappointed that there are now no affordable units included which limits the public benefit provided by the scheme. Notwithstanding the reduction in the scale of the proposed development and the revised layout the SPS continues to object on the following grounds.

Firstly, the emerging Joint Local Plan Preferred Options (July 2019) downgrades Fressingfield from a Primary to a Hinterland Village requiring a lesser quantum of development, recognising that it is fundamentally an unsustainable location which does not enjoy a high level of services or facilities necessary to support a substantial increase in housing growth. Accordingly the evolving policy position in the Joint Local Plan Preferred Options (July 2019) shows a minimum housing requirement for Fressingfield of 56 dwellings over the plan period.

Secondly, Mid Suffolk, as of 3.09.19 (Mid Suffolk District Council Housing Land Supply Position Statement 2019/20 – 2023/24) asserts that the council can demonstrate a 5 year housing

land supply. Therefore, the “tilted balance” presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply and applications should be determined according to the development plan.

Finally, the Fressingfield Neighbourhood Plan (FNP) is at an advanced stage, having been through Examination and is about to go to Referendum in the coming weeks (January 2020). The FNP policy FNP1 allows for 60 dwellings, 51 of which have already been consented. The FNP does not allocate this site for development. The Examiner in her report, at paragraph 53 having considered the proposed site allocations stated that *“I do not consider it necessary for inclusion of additional sites”*. The Neighbourhood Plan has been carefully considered and independently assessed. The views of the parish have been clearly made. Therefore, the policies within the plan must be given considerable weight in the consideration of this case.

Conclusion

In summary, SPS welcomes the reduction in the scale of development to address the harm caused by the development to the setting of Ladymeade Cottage and acknowledges the contribution made by the proposal to housing need generally and the public benefit of no.6 affordable units. However, we remain concerned that the proposal remains disproportionate, relative to the level of growth allocated and planned for in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. If this proposal were to be approved it would prejudice the policy making process by undermining the plan-led approach. Secondly, granting planning permission would undermine community confidence in the plan making process after successful Examination but in advance of a Referendum on that Plan.

The community, through the neighbourhood plan process, has clearly rejected this site for development whilst setting out alternative sites that are capable of contributing towards the housing need in the district. SPS considers that to approve this application would seriously undermine the neighbourhood planning process and we therefore urge that the proposals are yet again refused.

We trust that you will find these comments helpful in the consideration of this application.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Cairns RTPI IHBC
Director

Cc: Fressingfield Parish Council
Phil Butler, SPS Mid Suffolk District
David Burn, Portfolio Holder, Planning
John Castro, Chair SAFE