

Planning Services

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATION NO: 3/2012/0334

FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

Outline application for the erection of nine dwellings with all matters

reserved

NAME OF APPLICANT: Church Commissioners for England

Address: Land off Primrose Hill, Newfield, Bishop Auckland, DL14 8BQ

ELECTORAL DIVISION: Coundon

CASE OFFICER: Paul Hopper, Planning Officer

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DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND PROPOSALS

The Site

1. The application site is a predominantly rectangular parcel of land covering an area of 0.3 hectares situated immediately to the east of Primrose Hill, Newfield. The site is currently open farmland and forms part of a larger field. Residential properties at Stonebank Terrace and Primrose Hill are located to the south and west respectively with open fields and grazing to the east and a cemetery to the north. Boundary treatment comprises a mix of natural stone wall, fence and hedgerow.

The Proposal

- 2. Outline planning permission is sought for the erection of 9 dwellings on the site with all matters reserved. While indicative layout and elevation plans details have been provided showing 3 storey town houses with a height of 9 metres to the ridgeline (5.5 metres to the eaves) all matters are reserved including access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale.
- 3. The application is being reported to the South West Area Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Taylor in order that the committee can properly assess the potential impact of the proposal regarding overlooking of properties in Primrose Hill.

PLANNING HISTORY

4. No planning history exists relevant to the site.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY

- 5. In March 2012 the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The framework is based on the policy of sustainable development and establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Three main dimensions to sustainable development are described; economic, social and environmental factors. The presumption is detailed as being a golden thread running through both the plan-making and decision-taking process. This means that where local plans are absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or there are policies in the Framework which indicate that development should be restricted.
- 6. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes are cancelled as a result of the NPPF coming into force.
- 7. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 17 contains the 12 core land-use principles that planning should underpin decision-taking. These include:
 - be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings;
 - proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
 - always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
 - take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas;
 - encouraging the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed, provided it is not of high environmental value;
 - promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use
 of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform
 many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon
 storage, or food production);
 - conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations;
 - actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and,
 - take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

- 8. The North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) July 2008, sets out the broad spatial development strategy for the North East region for the period of 2004 to 2021. The RSS sets out the region's housing provision and the priorities in economic development, retail growth, transport investment, the environment, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. Some policies have an end date of 2021 but the overall vision, strategy, and general policies will guide development over a longer timescale.
- 9. In July 2010 the Local Government Secretary signalled his intention to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies with immediate effect, and that this was to be treated as a material consideration in subsequent planning decisions. This position was challenged through the courts and the Court of Appeal ruled in May 2011 that the proposed abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies can be regarded as a material consideration when deciding planning applications. The following policies are considered relevant.
- 10. Policy 2 (Sustainable Development) seeks to embed sustainable criteria through out the development process and influence the way in which people take about where to live and work; how to travel; how to dispose of waste; and how to use energy and other natural resources efficiently.
- 11. Policy 3 (Climate Change) The RSS recognises that climate change is the single most significant issue that affects global society in the 21st century. Policy 3 will seek to ensure that the location of development, encouraging sustainable forms of transport, encouraging and supporting use of renewable energy sources, and waste management all aids in the reduction of climate change.
- 12. Policy 4 (Sequential Approach to Development) seeks to adopt a sequential approach to the identification of land for development to give priority to previously developed land and buildings in the most sustainable locations.
- 13. Policy 7 (Connectivity and Accessibility) seeks to promote the need to reduce the impact of travel demand particularly by promoting public transport, travel plans, cycling and walking, as well as the need to reduce long distance travel, particularly by private car, by focusing development in urban areas with good access to public transport.
- 14. Policy 8 (Protecting and Enhancing the Environment) seeks to promote measures such as high quality design in all development and redevelopment and promoting development that is sympathetic to its surroundings.
- 15. Policy 24 (Delivering Sustainable Communities) refers to the need to concentrate the majority of the Region's new development within the defined urban areas, and the need to utilise previously developed land wherever possible.
- 16. Policy 54 (Parking and Travel Plans) seeks to support the delivery of improved public transport throughout the Region, the promotion of travel plans and the provision and pricing of parking will be essential. Key elements include the marketing of public transport, cycling, walking and car sharing in trying to influence travel behaviour.

LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

- 17. The following policies of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007 are relevant in the determination of this application:
- 18. Policy GD1 (General Development Criteria): All new development and redevelopment within the District should be designed and built to a high standard and should contribute to the quality and built environment of the surrounding area.
- 19. Policy H3 (Distribution of Development): New development will be directed to those owns and villages best able to support it. Within the limits to development of towns and villages, as shown on the Proposals Map, development will be allowed provided to meets the criteria set down in Policy GD1 and conforms to the other policies of this plan.
- 20. Policy H24 (Residential Design Criteria): New residential developments and/or redevelopments will be approved provided they accord with the design criteria set out in the local plan.
- 21. Policy T1 (General Policy Highways): All developments which generate additional traffic will be required to fulfil Policy GD1 and, provide adequate access to the developments; not exceed the capacity of the local road network; and, be capable of access by public transport networks.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant in the Development Plan the full text, criteria, and justifications of each may be accessed at http://www.cartoplus.co.uk/durham/text/00cont.htm.

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

- 22. Environment Agency initially objected to the application but this was removed upon receipt of further information from the applicant. No objections are offered subject to the inclusion of a condition requiring a survey of landfill gas being undertaken at the site to determine any risk of gas migration to the proposed development area. In addition, informatives are also advised drawing the applicant's attention to the risk management framework for contaminated land, and standing advice in relation to surface water.
- 23. Northumbrian Water Limited notes the need to ensure that the discharge of surface water from the site complies with the Hierarchy of Preference contained within Revised Part H of the Building Regulations 2010. In this regard the inclusion of a condition is advised relating to the submission and agreement of a detailed scheme for the disposal of surface water from the development.
- 24. Highway Authority notes that the application is for outline permission and that all matters are reserved with the submitted site layout and dwelling elevation plans being 'indicative' and not for determination at this time. They note that the number of dwellings is modest and the existing highway can satisfactorily serve such development and that an adoptable standard access junction can be created with Primrose Hill. It is advised that it will be possible to accommodate an acceptable number of parking spaces consistent with 9 dwellings on the site as part of any reserved matter application. Having said this it is acknowledged that parking supply is, with all other matters reserved, not being determined at this time.

25. Coal Authority has no objections subject to the inclusion of an appropriate condition requiring intrusive investigation works described in the submitted Mining Risk Assessment and subsequent remedial and mitigation measures if appropriate.

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

- 26. *Ecology Section* has no objections to the proposals and does not require a phase 1 ecological survey based on the assumption that the hedges would be retained. If this position changes than some limited ecological assessment may be required.
- 27. Landscape Section has not commented on the application.
- 28. Spatial Policy Section has not commented on the application but provided comments at pre application stage noting that the site lies within the defined settlement limit to Newfield as identified in Policy H3 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan. Development would therefore accord with the development plan in principle.
- 29. Flooding and Coastal Protection Section has advised that advice should be sought from Northumbrian Water Limited as to the acceptability or otherwise of connecting to the existing combined sewage network which serves Newfield.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

- 30. The application has been advertised on site and neighbour notification letters sent to surrounding properties.
- 31. Nine letters of objection have been received from local residents of which three are pro-former letters and one which was submitted anonymously. The reasons for objection can be summarised as follows.
- 32. Residential Amenity: The site levels are such that residential development of the site would result in unacceptable loss of privacy to existing properties, particularly those at Primrose Hill. The proposal would result in unacceptable impact to surrounding residential properties in terms of loss of daylight and sunlight.
- 33. Visual Impact: The properties are not of a sympathetic design.
- 34. Highways and Access: Insufficient parking provision would be provided and the proposal would have an adverse impact upon the surrounding road network. During the winter Primrose Hill is unassailable in winter due to snow and ice, and a new access would only create further problems. Existing roads are in an appalling condition.
- 35. Flooding and Drainage: The area around the site has a history of flooding as a result of insufficient drainage with a number of houses flooding recently. Proposed areas of hardstanding would increase the volume of surface water flowing down to those residential properties to the south.
- 36. Need and Sustainability: The site is an unsustainable location as there are no services available in Newfield. The village no longer has a school, shop, post office, church and only a limited bus services. No demand for additional housing in Newfield and existing houses have been vacant for several months or experience a high turn over of occupants. Unsuitable design which does not relate well to existing properties in Newfield.

- 37. Other Issues: The proposal would have an adverse impact upon ecology. Some houses along Primrose Hill have solid fuel burners and the smoke from these would generate complaints from residents of the new properties. The village has only recently escaped from the monstrosity of the former Premier Waste Landfill site to the west of the site.
- 38. Newfield Community Association represents local residents and has raised concerns in relation to existing drainage issues and that the proposal could exacerbate the issues and the incremental traffic and parking the development would bring.

APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

- 39. The site is in a sustainable location within the development limits of Newfield and has been subject to detailed pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority. The proposal complies with national and local planning policy and guidance and is therefore considered to be a suitable site for new residential development.
- 40. The site in question is contained within the defined settlement limits of Newfield, as identified in Policy H3 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan. Development is therefore in accordance with this element of the development plan.
- 41. The scheme fully addresses highway safety, as accepted by the Highways Officers during the pre application discussions, and at 30 dwellings per hectare, the scale and density of the proposals are wholly appropriate in this location.
- 42. Overlooking: Design Guidance requires a minimum of 21 metres between windows in the new scheme and those on Primrose Hill. There is significantly more than that on the site and it is therefore considered that there are no overlooking issues onto (or from) the exiting properties on Primrose Hill.
- 43. Parking: Parking provision of 14 no. hardstanding spaces for 9 dwellings is acceptable and this has been agreed at pre-application stage and during the consultation process.
- 44. Ecology / Landscaping: The site is not an area of high ecology importance. Development as proposed will have no impact on local ecology. The scheme, apart from the proposed access, will not have any adverse impact on the existing hedging / boundary treatment.
- 45. Flooding: The site does not fall within an identified area of flood risk.
- 46. Landfill / Coal Mining: We consider that these issues have been addressed by the Coal Mining Risk Assessment which was submitted with the application and we are satisfied with the proposed conditions set by the Coal Authority which requires site investigations works to take place prior to the commencement of any development.
- 47. Amendment: We acknowledge the comments submitted relating to the school which has closed down. Although we accept that this was a factual error in the planning application supporting documents, we do not consider this to have any impact on the outcome of this application.

48. On the basis of the information set out above, we would urge that the application be approved.

The above represents a summary of the comments received on this application. The full written text is available for inspection on the application file.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

49. Having regard to the requirements of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 development plan policies and relevant guidance, and all other material planning considerations, including representations received, it is considered that the main planning issues in this instance relate to the principle of development, impact on residential amenity, visual impact, ecology, highway issues and drainage.

Principle of development

- 50. This application proposes the residential development of land to the east of Primrose Hill, Newfield which is within the settlement limits for Newfield as defined by the Wear Valley District Local Plan.
- 51. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Governments overarching objectives for the planning system, promoting sustainable development as a key objective. It is noted that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making, constituting guidance for Local Planning Authorities and decision-makers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications.
- 52. Paragraph 49 of the NPPF explains how housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Furthermore, Paragraph 111 of the NPPF explains how planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land through the re-use of land that has been previously developed, providing it is not of high environmental value.
- 53. In planning policy terms the application site lies within the settlement limits of Newfield and its redevelopment for housing would therefore accord with Policy H3 of the Local Plan which seeks to direct those towns and villages best able to support it and would broadly achieve the aims set out in the NPPF. Residents have raised objection to the scheme and do not consider Newfield able to support additional housing, and highlighting the lack of facilities available. Whilst it is acknowledged that the settlement has few facilities, there is a direct bus service to Bishop Auckland, while a public house and working men's club are provide din the village. Therefore, while this is not a location where a large scale new residential development could be supported, a relatively small number of dwellings, as proposed, can be accommodated in this location.
- 54. For the above reasons it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle and in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and the requirements of Policy H3 of the Local Plan.

Residential amenity

55. Concerns have been raised by local residents in relation to the impact of the proposal on residential amenity, particularly loss of privacy, sunlight and daylight. While it is noted that the placement of windows and means of enclosure are not matters to be determined at this stage, it is considered that the proposal in its outline form demonstrates that adequate separation distances could be achieved between

the nearest residential properties along Primrose Hill and proposed dwellings. Notwithstanding this, it is noted that this distance as shown on the indicative layout plan would be marginally less than the 21 metres advised as a guide in Policy H24 of the Local Plan. However, this can be controlled at the reserved matters stage. In addition sufficient amenity space could be achieved to the front and rear of the properties in accordance with other relevant guidance contained in this policy.

Visual Impact

- 56. Concerns have been raised by local residents who consider the indicative designs to be unsympathetic to the surrounding area. While details of appearance is not a matter for consideration as part of this application, it is noted that the proposed layout would have a linear form which is mainly dictated by the shape and size of the site and would generally reflect the existing terrace arrangement along Primrose Hill to the west. Although the final design, appearance and scale of the properties is reserved for future consideration, the illustrative plans show three storey properties of a modern design that would relate satisfactorily to neighbouring properties and not appear out of keeping within the surrounding street scene.
- 57. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its visual impact, such that a scheme can be achieved which would be in keeping with the surrounding area and therefore in accordance with Policy GD1 of the Local Plan.

Highway Issues

- 58. Concerns have been received by local residents in relation to parking provision, access and the impact of the proposal upon highway safety.
- 59. Submitted plans show an indicative access from Primrose Hill to the west of the site and three blocks of four car parking spaces to serve the nine dwellings proposed. It is noted that the existing electricity pole situated to the northern corner of the site would need to be relocated in order to provide the proposed access and the applicant has confirmed that the appropriate agreement is in place to secure this.
- 60. The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposal and confirmed that an adoptable standard access junction can be created with Primrose Hill. While details of layout and access are reserved for future consideration, it is considered that, in principle, the access, internal road layout and car parking provision for the site are considered acceptable. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would satisfy the requirements of Policies GD1 and T1 of the Local Plan.

Ecology

61. The application site forms part of a larger area of farmland, the boundaries of which appear not to have been subject to any management regime and as such appear to have vegetated naturally over time. Overall the site is of little ecological value and is not subject to any nature conservation designation. The Ecology Section therefore offers no objections to the proposals based on the assumption that the existing hedgerows would be retained. The indicative access proposed onto Primrose Hill would, however, require the removal of a section of hedgerow along the western boundary of the site, and as such, some limited ecological assessment may be required in relation to breeding birds and this could be ensured through the imposition of an appropriate planning condition. The proposed development is

therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of the potential impact upon ecology and as such accords with the requirements of Policy GD1 of the Local Plan.

Drainage

62. Surrounding residents have noted problems of drainage and flooding which have previously affected adjacent residential properties given the position of the site on an incline to the north east of the village. The applicant has advised that it would be their intention for both foul sewage and surface water to make use of the existing combined sewage network serving Newfield. The Environment Agency raises no objection to the principle of foul sewage being disposed of using the existing mains sewer. Similarly, Northumbrian Water Limited has been consulted and offered no objection to the application subject to the inclusion of an appropriate condition requiring the agreement of the means of surface water disposal, since they are encouraging of alternative means of surface water disposal including soakaways. Such matters can be adequately controlled through inclusion of an appropriate planning condition.

Other Matters

- 63. Most of the concerns raised by objectors have been covered in the sections above.
- 64. In addition to the points covered above local residents have also raised concerns regarding the proximity of the former Toddhills landfill site which is located 17 metres to the north of the proposed development. Concerns relate specifically to landfill gas generated by this site and associated issues of residential amenity. The Environment Agency notes the position of the former landfill and that perimeter borehole monitoring points are installed between this and the application site. With this in mind the Environment Agency recommend undertaking a landfill gas survey to determine the risk of gas migration to the proposed development. This can be adequately ensured through appropriate planning condition to which the applicant has agreed.
- 65. In addition it is noted that the application site is located within an area where unrecorded coal mining activity is likely to have taken place at shallow depth. The Coal Authority have therefore recommended that intrusive investigation works be undertaken to confirm coal mining conditions and to enable the design of any necessary mitigation measures prior to the commencement of development.

CONCLUSION

- 66. The proposed housing site is located within the settlement limits to development of Newfield and would therefore accord with the requirements of Policy H3 of the Local Plan, and would broadly accord with the aims of the recently published NPPF which includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 67. From a more detailed perspective, the layout, while indicative and not subject to detailed consideration at this stage, demonstrates that adequate separation distances could be achieved between properties and as a result the residential amenity of existing and prospective occupiers can be adequately safeguarded. Similarly, while the appearance of the development will be considered at a later stage, it is considered that a form of development can be accommodated on the site that would be in keeping with the character of the area.

68. Access to an adoptable standard could be provided onto Primrose Hill to the west with no adverse impact to highway safety as a result.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

 Application for approval of reserved matters shall be made to the Local planning authority before the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission and the development must be begun not later than the expiration of two years from the final approval of the reserved matters, or in the case of approval on different dates, the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Approval of the details of access, appearance, layout, landscaping and scale (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained in writing from the Local planning authority before any development is commenced.

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan received 02 August 2012.

Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained.

4. Notwithstanding any details of materials submitted with the application no development shall commence until details of the make, colour and texture of all walling and roofing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area and to comply with policy GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

5. Prior to the commencement of the development details of the surface treatment and construction of all hardsurfaced areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the appearance of the area and to comply with policy GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

6. No development shall commence until site investigation works comprising of rotary drilling to assess the depth to rockhead and the amount of rock and drift cover above the seam, including the installation of standpipes with boreholes to determine the concentration of hazardous gasses at the site. The findings of the site investigation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and any

remedial works required and any other mitigation measures required shall be undertaken prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interests of land stability in accordance with Paragraph 121 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Any on site vegetation clearance should avoid the bird breeding season (March to end of August), unless the project ecologist undertakes a checking survey immediately prior to clearance and confirms that no breeding birds are present. The survey shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the removal of vegetation during the bird breeding season.

Reason: In order to ensure ecological interests are safeguarded in accordance with policy GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

8. Prior to the commencement of development details of means of enclosure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The enclosures shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to comply with policy GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

9. No development shall commence until details of a scheme for foul and surface water drainage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning authority. The development thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure proper drainage of the site in accordance with Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

10. Construction works; including excavations, deliveries, ground works; on the site shall be restricted to the hours of 08:00 hrs to 18:00 hrs Monday to Fridays and 08:00 hrs to 13:00 hrs Saturdays. Construction works; including excavations, deliveries, ground works; shall not be undertaken on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of nearby residents in accordance with policy GD1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007.

REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 1. The proposal is acceptable in relation to policies GD1, H22, H24 and T1 of the Wear Valley District Local Plan as amended by Saved and Expired Policies September 2007 and guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2. In particular, the development is considered acceptable in principle, while the amenity of existing and prospective occupiers would not be significantly adversely affected and there would be no detriment o highway safety.
- 3. In arriving at this recommendation, the public consultation responses received have been considered, however, on balance, the issues raised are not considered sufficient to warrant refusal of the application, and matters can be considered further

both through the submission of subsequent reserved matters and through the imposition of planning conditions.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- -Submitted Application Forms and Plans
- -Design and Access Statement
- -National Planning Policy Framework
- -North East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021 (RSS) July 2008
- -Wear Valley District Local Plan
- -Circular 11/95: Use of conditions in planning permission
- -Responses from Highway Authority, Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water Limited, and Coal Authority
- -Internal responses from Spatial Policy, Ecology Section and Flooding and Coastal Protection Section
- -Public Consultation Responses





Planning Services

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Comments

Date 18 October 2012