

Ref: 23/02650/FP – Land off Lodge Court, Turnpike Lane, Ickleford.

Dear Members,

Apologies we cannot be attending in person this evening, but holiday plans got in the way and we didn't want to delay the presence of this application on a committee meeting.

We are BBR design, Architectural Designers working on behalf of our clients Foxberry Developments, who look to build high-quality homes around the Herts and Beds areas.

Our clients purchased the site in mid-2022, after the original consent was won at appeal. We always felt that the approved design was a little plain, and always felt its architectural appearance could be significantly improved upon.

We therefore submitted an application for a revised contemporary design for 5 homes, which this committee approved in October 2022.



CGI of 2021 approval.



CGI of 2022 approval.

As you'll see in the above, the architectural appearance of the properties is significantly enhanced, and creating high-quality bespoke homes is something our clients always wish to achieve.

Within every historical application on the site there had been a call for smaller sized homes, as opposed to providing only 4 & 5-bed units. Our clients heard this call and elected in late 2023 to commission a revised application to be submitted. This is therefore the scheme in front of members tonight, a revised design for eight houses, six of which are 3-bedroom in size, with the remaining two being smaller 4-bedroom.

Parish Council Objection

In response to the Parish Council objections, we would note the following points:

- The site is not overdevelopment. The development amount constitutes to around 17 dwellings per hectare, which is a low figure in the context of housing developments. For reference, the now under construction Cala Homes site on Bedford Road is around 20 dwellings per hectare.
- The previous approval of the scheme for 5 houses is accounted for in the districts housing projections, and the addition of 3 homes on a sustainable site cannot be dismissed due to hypothetical developments potentially coming forward on the Bowmans Mill site.

- The proposed parking on the site is fully in accordance with Adopted NHDC Parking Policies including visitor provision.
- Highways are satisfied with the access arrangements in terms of safety, use, and traffic generation, and a new footpath will be installed to improve access by foot to the site and existing houses on Lodge Court.
- Surface water run off is dealt with on site via soakaways and will not be put down the sewers.
- The site was cleared last year for archaeological testing and contamination surveys.
- The loss of the Lime Tree is already permitted under extant permissions and its removal is compensated for with new planting across the site, providing a net gain to biodiversity levels.
- Plot 8 is identical to Plot 5 on the previous approval and has no greater impact to the immediate neighbours on Manor Close than that which this committee has already approved.

The scheme does not create any additional gross internal area, and proposes the same or less built mass on the site than previous approvals. The only difference is the increase in plot numbers where smaller family homes have been introduced.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan has been quoted in several objections from local residents, but as the case officer advises in their report, this is not yet an adopted plan and so only limited weight can be afforded to it. That being said, we have always felt that this development complies with the policies and ethos of this plan.

The key of which is the housing needs of Ickleford, the report for which identified a need for 1-3 bedroom homes.

The previous approval for the site did not provide this, whereas this new application offers 6no 3-bedroom family homes.

The site is located within the settlement boundary where the neighbourhood plan supports development.

Summary

We trust that members will agree with the recommendation of their planning officers and approve this development.

