

Observations on the Post Mill Lane Appeal AAP/W3520/W/19/3227159

Introduction

I live in Fressingfield and object to the proposed extension of the Post Mill site (21 houses) by a further 24 dwellings. This would create a housing estate of 45 houses.

I have looked critically at the Appellant's Statement of Case and 2 new appendices and have made, what I hope are objective comment in the light of my local knowledge and my limited knowledge of the planning process.

Appellant's Statement of Case

Para 2.8

" Fressingfield is a Primary Village".

Under the current adopted Local Plan a " Primary" Village is deemed capable of modest increases in housing. The " allocation" to primary villages in Mid Suffolk is around 5 houses a year for each of the 11 primary villages. Fressingfield has exceeded this target year on year. There are 51 houses in the village with Outline Approval, but not yet built.

The draft NDP supports these figures and confirmation has been received from Mid Suffolk District Council that the houses approved, but not yet built can be included within the NDP planning targets. When the NDP is approved we can demonstrate we have met our housing targets for the next 20 years.

Para 8.Position Regarding Housing Land Supply

The current position of MSDC is that they have slightly in excess of a 5 year land supply.

Para 9.1.1

" Proposes 24 new homes 8 of which will be affordable".

Throughout the Appellant's case a significant benefit is deemed to be the provision of affordable homes. Currently there 8 families with local connections waiting for "affordable Housing" The developments already approved include 15 affordable homes. Local need is therefore more than met. To exceed the target even further will require bringing families from out of area, to an isolated village with one bus a week, almost no employment, no secondary school, no green credentials.

Para 9.1.3

"The village is growing – with facilities responding to this growth"

The report then cites the proposed new scout hut and Baptist chapel as the new facilities responding to growth. Both of these facilities are replacements for existing provision. A significant number of the Baptist congregation come from outside the village and 70% of the scouts do not live in Fressingfield. These replacement provisions are not responding to growth in the village.

Many community activities take place at the Sancoft Hall and the Social and Sports club. It is difficult therefore to make the connection between more houses and the replacement facilities mentioned.

Para 9.1.4

" Fressingfield is a successful rural village".

Agree that Fressingfield is a successful village, but the limitations in its facilities and isolated position are serious considerations when deciding how much new housing can be sustained. The nearest A road is 4 miles away; there are only 58 whole time equivalent local jobs. 24 of these require a degree level qualification e.g. teachers, nurses, doctors. The nearest hospital is 26 miles away; the village shop has only one till and is not a "super market" in the conventional sense.

With only one bus **a week** and no cycle routes the working population leave the village by car to go to work.

Para 9.1.10

" No manner in which a proposal for 24 new homes can be considered a significant increase in the context of the village. "

It is recognised that MSDC made an error in stating that there 1080 homes in the village. It is correct that the figure of 1080 relates to the population figure for the Parish. Fressingfield is a physically large Parish with 450 homes within the physical boundary. It is estimated that there are around 350 houses in the core area of the village. 24 new houses would represent an increase of 7% or more importantly the total of the Post Mill development including those already built (21homes) would result in the Post Mill housing estate representing 13% of the houses within the village core. This, one could argue, is a highly significant figure. This will be a large scale urban development out of character within a rural village.

Para.9.2.5

"In order to refuse the application a decision maker must be satisfied that the harms significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits"

I hope that my responses later in this report will confirm support to the LPA contention that the harms of this proposed development do significantly outweigh the benefits.

In Fressingfield in April 2017 a scientifically organised petition was undertaken. Every street and house in the village was visited, there was no selectivity. 93.8% signed objecting to large scale housing development mentioning specifically the Post Mill development. This was an overwhelming result. The results of this petition were formally noted at the Planning Committee when the Post Mill Application was considered.

Para 9.3.8

"Crash Map Data"

The use of Crash map data is notoriously misleading as only accidents involving personal injury are recorded. There are numerous examples of damage to vehicles being hit in New Street. Additionally there have been two fatalities from car accidents in Fressingfield. These are not mentioned as they did not occur in New Street. It should be recognised that Post Mill will generate more cars using the Fressingfield roads and thereby increase the percentage risk of accidents.

Para 9.3.9

"Traffic flows during peak hours were low."

This hardly surprising. If I, as non professional in this field, were asked how to ensure that the **minimal trip rates** were recorded in New Street I would pick the Methodist Chapel as the monitoring point.

Monitoring at the Methodist Chapel would **not** pick up many of the trips to the shop as people coming to the shop from the east of the village turn around in the couple cul de sacs **before** the Methodist Chapel. Additionally people



attending the surgery from the west would not go as far as the Methodist Chapel so a very large number of trip rates have not been recorded. These data on which the computer generated modelling is based are false data.

Traffic volumes in New Street vary enormously dependent on time of day/ school holidays and agricultural activity. This is evidenced by the pictures of New Street in the Transport Appendices submitted by the Appellant compared to that seen above.

Para 9.3.17

" four pedestrian routes are identified as being "unsafe""

Despite the mitigation proposed it is very difficult to see how this will improve the position. Excess speed in New Street has never been a problem. The proposed mitigation measures will do nothing to improve the position of pedestrians walking in the road. It is impossible to speed in New Street it is just too narrow! However this is looked at there are long stretches of very narrow road with no pavement and a considerable amount of pedestrian movement due to the shop, surgery, scout hut and Methodist chapel all being located on New Street.

Para 9.4.4

"The development will not cause detriment to the capacity of the sewer system"

As Anglian Water have stated the sewer has spare capacity, but why do the manholes "pop" if there is not an issue? Anglian Water have met their legal requirement under the Water Industry Act 1991 as the sewer, under normal conditions has capacity. BUT at a meeting held in October 2018 between the LPA, Anglian Water and myself, as well as other residents, Anglian Water confirmed that the issue revolves around historical surface water connections discharging into the closed foul sewer. At times of heavy



rainfall the sewer is overloaded and the manholes lift. Anglian Water confirmed that this cannot be solved as a larger sewer would result in the flows being too slow under normal conditions, resulting in odour and blockages. 24 new houses will discharge into the system thereby increasing the amount of sewage and reducing the capacity for the surface water rain. The sewage in the system will be more concentrated and therefore more polluting.

Para 9.5.5

"Surface water is discharged into a ditch and ultimately into a small stream."

The "small stream " happens to be the Beck running through Low Road where there is a significant flooding issue. On 8th May 2018 the Senior Suffolk County Council Flood and Water Engineer issued a holding objection stating " there is not sufficient evidence of the right to discharge surface water into this watercourse as it is outside the redline boundary of the applicant. The applicant also needs to demonstrate that the water course has a positive flow and a discharge point".



As flooding is already an issue as a resident I am keen that the position is not worsened. Last year John Lewis refused to quote for my house insurance as they identified my home as being in a flood zone.

Para 9.6.4

"It is unclear why this site, within the village and immediately adjacent to the development boundary is considered an inappropriate location for housing development, when two other, similar- sized sites both located in the village and adjacent to the settlement boundary were only recently considered appropriate locations for new residential development."

It is correct that two sites were approved for residential development, totalling 46 houses. Application 3872/16- a new chapel and 18 houses has run into considerable difficulty in designing a suitable surface water drainage system. The soil is heavy clay making sustainable drainage systems impracticable. The chapel scheme was approved on 4th July 2018. The Planning Condition relating to the

surface water drainage strategy has yet to be discharged. The senior flood and drainage officer wrote on the 16 April 2018 about this scheme " there is a significant risk to worsening the existing flood risk in Fressingfield ". It would therefore be incorrect to imply that there has been no concern around the two Applications already approved.

Para 9.7.8

When discussing the sewerage issue - "*In attempting to assess the nature and scale of the existing problem, and the extent to which the proposed development would impact on this situation, it is instructive to consider responses to other development proposals in the village.*"

The report then examines in great detail the public responses to the two schemes approved, but not yet built highlighting the fact that there had been almost no public comment relating to flooding/ foul water. I would comment that this is completely irrelevant for the following reasons:-

- Public consultation on these schemes was in 2016. Whilst flooding and sewage egress has been a long standing problem it has become far more acute in the last 3 years.

- Until the meeting held with Anglian Water in October 2018 there was no clear understanding, or agreement as to the cause of the problems. Until that time we were told by Anglian that there were various problems ranging from pump failure to fat balls.

At the time of the public consultation on the scout hut and chapel schemes there was no proven correlation between more houses exacerbating flooding/ sewage egress, therefore, why would it be a major plank of objection if there were no such proven link?

Para 9.8.6

When discussing heritage/listed buildings -"*the purpose of Visiting is to protect the character of the building and its setting, not to frustrate any development on neighbouring land*".

The proposed development is immediately behind Ladymede Cottage, a grade 2 Listed Building. The building is very "open " and highly visible from New Street. The development will" frame "the flint and render cottage with modern urban pitched roofs. (none of the development includes bungalows.) This development would therefore be very detrimental as it would destroy, not protect the listed building's setting.

The Appellant does not address the visual impact of this proposed development on entering the village from Weybread. The view across the fields will be compromised, especially in winter when the trees are not in leaf. The draft NDP specifically highlights this vista as one requiring protection.



One point interesting point was raised at the Planning Committee by one of the members (who is a farmer) concerning the 2 fields on which the development would be built. He was convinced that the fields formed part of ancient field patterns and should be preserved. This point has not been highlighted in any documentation, but is worthy of note.

Para 9.8.11

" boost to village vitality and support for local services which arise from a mixed housing development. "

There is absolutely no evidence to support this contention. Since 1995 there have been approximately 90 new homes built in Fressingfield, many in mixed developments. In the same period we have lost a shop; a dedicated post office; petrol station; antique restorer. More houses do not equate to more services.

Conclusion

I believe that this proposed development fails the test of sustainability on all counts. NO green credentials; little employment; no public transport; isolated location; no cycle routes; dangerous roads; lack of pavements; a sewerage system not fit for purpose. Additionally there is no unmet local need for affordable housing as those on the waiting list can be accommodated in the provision already approved.

The Planning Committee unanimously rejected the Application and the development does not have the support of 94% of the villagers in Fressingfield.