

HOLT - PM/19/0981 - Erection of 66 bed, 3 storey care home for older people (Use Class C2) with associated parking, access and landscaping (reserved matters for: access, appearance, layout and scale) pursuant to outline permission PO/16/0253; Land off Nightjar Road, Holt, Norfolk for LNT Care Developments

Major Development

- Target Date: 11 October 2019

Case Officer: Miss S Hinchcliffe

Reserved Matters

CONSTRAINTS

Mixed Use Allocation

LDF - Countryside

LDF - Principal Routes

A Road

Section 106 Planning Obligations

Development within 60m of Class A road

Mineral Safeguarding Area

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PM/18/2211 PM

Land off Nightjar Road, Holt, Norfolk

Erection of 66 bed, 3 storey care home for older people (Use Class C2) with associated parking, access and landscaping (Reserved Matters for: access, appearance, layout and scale, pursuant to outline permission PO/16/0253)

Refused 29/04/2019

PO/16/0253 PO

Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU

Erection of up to 215 dwellings, employment land (A3, A4, B1, B2, B8, C1, C2, D1 and D2 class uses), public open space and provision of roundabout and vehicular link road from Cromer Road (A148) to Heath Drive with associated landscaping and infrastructure (Outline application)

Approved 16/08/2016

CDA/16/0253 CD

Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Holt

Discharge of conditions 6, 7, 8,10,11,14,16 (highways),19 (landscaping),20 (ecological surveys), 21 (CEMP), 22 (LEMP), 23 (surface water drainage), 24 (foul drainage), 26 (ground gas) & 27 (renewables) of planning permission PO/16/0253

Condition Discharge Reply 11/04/2018

CDB/16/0253 CD

Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt

Discharge of condition 18 (Residential Travel Plan) of planning permission PO/16/0253 - submission relating to residential development only

Condition Discharge Reply 04/04/2018

PM/16/1204 PM

Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU

Reserved matters submission of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale; for erection of 213 dwellings, public open space, highway and other infrastructure, in respect of outline planning application PO/16/0253

Approved 16/03/2017

NMA1/16/1204 NMA

Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU
Non-material amendment to change dwelling materials, structure & features
Approved 24/05/2017

NMA2/16/1204 NMA

Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt
Non-Material Amendment for planning permission PM/16/1204 for design revisions
Approved 29/06/2018

PO/13/1306 PO

Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6JU
Residential and employment (A3, A4, B1, B2, B8, C1, C2, D1 and D2 Class Uses)
development including provision of public open space, roundabout and vehicular link road
Approved 11/09/2014

PF/17/0464 PF

Land South of Holt bypass, Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6ES
Erection of temporary marketing suite with associated parking, creation of new vehicle and pedestrian access, erection of 1.8m fence and landscaping
Approved 13/06/2017

ADV/17/0465 AI

Land South of Holt bypass, Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6ES
Display of non-illuminated signs
Approved 13/06/2017

PF/18/0999 PF

Land South of Holt Bypass, Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6ES
Retention of temporary marketing suite with associated parking, vehicular and pedestrian access, fencing and landscaping for extended period
Approved 16/08/2018

THE APPLICATION

The application is for the erection of a 66 bed, three storey care home for older people, with associated parking, access and landscaping. This is a reserved matters application which seeks approval of matters of access, appearance, layout and scale but not landscaping. Landscaping is reserved for subsequent determination. The application site which measures approximately 0.5 hectares is located to the south east of the roundabout on the A148 which provides access to the new Heath Farm development. The site is part of a former agricultural field. On part of the site there is currently a temporary marketing suite for the adjacent residential development.

The application is a resubmission of previous planning application PM/18/2211, which was refused by officers under delegated powers on 29 April 2019 for reasons relating to the impact that the proposed development would have on the surrounding landscape, due to the scale and massing of the proposed building, with insufficient space available to accommodate meaningful landscaping.

This application differs from the previously refused proposals in that the application site is slightly larger (approximately 350 square metres), with the building located further from the roundabout and the design of the building has also been modified in an attempt to overcome the previously identified reasons for refusal.

REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

At the request of the local ward member Councillor Baker to allow consideration by members of the economic benefits that a care home could bring to Holt.

TOWN COUNCIL

Holt Town Council – Objection. Although it is agreed that Holt needs a care home, councillors felt that the current proposed location is inappropriate. The location is out of town making access to essential facilities difficult for the less able. The proposed site is on a roundabout adjacent to a busy road which would be noisy for residents. The care home would create an unattractive gateway to the town. Residents would benefit from a much quieter location with good access to nearby facilities and would ask the applicant to re-consider the location of the proposed care home.

REPRESENTATIONS

None.

CONSULTATIONS

NNDC Environmental Health

Noise

In terms of noise, the expectation is that the windows will need to be non-opening on the north, south and west elevation. In terms of noise control, ventilation can be via acoustically attenuating trickle vents or in wall vents or a ducted MVHR system or central ventilation system. These type of measures are common and have been included as part of similar schemes in some locations. Various noise control specifications exist for glazing and ventilation in terms on the amount of attenuation they can give. I would expect that a suitable specification can be found to achieve an acceptable noise environment indoors.

Regarding outdoor amenity, I would not expect noise levels in gardens or balconies to be acceptable on the north, south and west elevations.

Contamination

Give the absence of made ground within the proposed boundary of the site and favourable results derived from soil screening, there is no requirement to undertake further investigation of the site.

Air Quality

According to air quality validation requirements, the applicant has provided sufficient material to assess the nature of the site. In regards to air quality the development is classed as medium impact site, and thus requires a Travel Plan, low level mitigation and some practical consideration of local air quality impacts. In regards to the travel plan and mitigation proposals the applicant has provided sufficient documentation to meet these requirements.

In general the size of the development negates the need for a detailed air quality assessment, but considerations need to be made regarding opening windows and positions of ventilation on the road facing elevation. Any opening windows or assisted forms of ventilation on this elevation need to account for potential sources from roadside vehicular emissions and migration of any sources of impacted air to the internal environment of each apartment.

Norfolk County Council (Highways) - The application assumes that staff will be found within a 3 mile radius of the site and that parking demand would therefore be lower, however I can find no evidence that this could be fulfilled locally and with consideration of the numerous care home staff vacancies currently advertised, would indicate that staff may need to come from further afield to meet the staffing requirements, as such, I would seek to ensure that parking in accordance with current adopted standards is provided.

Anglian Water - We have reviewed the applicant's submitted foul drainage information and consider that the impacts on the public foul sewerage network have been adequately addressed at this stage. We request that we are consulted on any forthcoming application to discharge Condition 10 or 24 of the outline planning application PO/16/0253 to which this Reserved Matters application relates, which requires the submission and approval of detailed foul drainage information.

The proposed method of surface water management does not relate to Anglian Water operated assets.

The development site is within 15 metres of a sewage pumping station. The site layout should take this into account and accommodate this infrastructure type through a necessary 'cordon sanitaire' through public space or highway infrastructure to ensure that there is no development within 15 metres of the sewage pumping station boundary (to the south) if potentially sensitive to noise, odour or general disruption from maintenance work caused by the normal operation of the pumping station.

National Grid (now Cadent Gas Ltd) – No objection in principle. Note the presence of an intermediate pressure gas pipeline in close proximity to the proposed development, the pipeline has a 6m wide easement in operation, no buildings may be sited within the easement. Landscaping with the easement must have formal written approval from Cadent Gas before commencing. Tree planting must comply with National Grid tree planting on pipelines guidance. (Within 3 metres restricted to hedge planting only where necessary for screening or field boundary purposes, plus shallow rooting hedge plants and shrubs).

Norfolk County Council Flood & Water Management (LLFA) – no objection, subject to securing a detailed drainage design by condition.

NNDC Conservation and Design – Objection. Whilst acknowledging that the design amendments have added some visual interest, it is difficult to see how the design conclusion can be any different as this resubmission provides for largely the same scheme. Fundamentally, it is still considered that the development would create a rather monolithic wall of development which would both be extremely visible and out of scale with its site and surroundings. With the design also still driven principally by function and an established formula there is no sense that the building would accord with the Government's current Beautiful Buildings agenda or offer real local distinctiveness.

NNDC Landscape – Objection. The development still presents a large block form that remains out of context with the surrounding new built form and wider open landscape setting. There are some minor alterations to the indicative landscape layout, none of which demonstrate any form of proportional landscape mitigation. The ratio of external space to building form remains the same. This proposal would be contrary to Core Strategy Policy EN 2 on the grounds that it would not protect, conserve or enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area. It would also not be compliant with Policy EN 4 on two stated counts, as it is not considered to be suitably designed for the context within which it is set and the scale and massing of the building is not considered to relate sympathetically to the surrounding area.

NNDC Strategic Housing – In principle support for residential care in Holt. There is a demonstrable need for specialist/supported housing for older people in the District. There will be a need for enhanced care homes and nursing homes in line with older population growth. By 2028 it is estimated that there will be a need to build an additional 263 care and nursing homes in the North Norfolk district.

NNDC Economic Growth Officer - it is recognised that there are potential economic benefits that would be derived by such a proposal, in particular the employment generation of up to 60 jobs. We would therefore be keen to support this application.

Norfolk County Council Adult Social Care in conjunction with NHS England East -

We in particular would want any new home to cater for people with dementia which requires careful consideration of the built environment or nursing, whilst there is capacity in North Norfolk generally there is in fact a shortage of beds in this location.

In general terms we would support design and access to the site which reduces overall individual car use and supports low emission vehicles and public transport (NICE Guidance 70 2017 and NICE Quality Standard February 2019). For this particular group of residents supporting active travel away from the care home may be of less direct relevance than for the wider population. However if public transport pick up and set down can be safely accommodated within the scheme this may encourage some to be able to use this without navigating busy roads. More generally the ability of staff, visitors and other professionals to access the site by active, public and / or low emission means is to be encouraged. Therefore consideration of provision, for example, for electric vehicle charging or car sharing parking could be encouraged and anti-idling signage for vehicles at or close to the home would also be supported, given the potentially increased level of vulnerability of older people and those located for long periods of time at home.

We would also want to ensure that consideration is given to possible impacts of excessive warm weather on a vulnerable population e.g. south facing glass fronted rooms, use of suitable and safe blue and green infrastructure and that adequate ventilation does not also draw in external air pollutants.

Norfolk Fire Service - Based on the location and infrastructure already in place and the type of building proposed, there is a minimum requirement for 1 fire hydrant capable of delivering a minimum of 20 litres per second of water.

Norfolk Constabulary Architectural Liaison/Crime Prevention Officer – No objection to the layout and scale of the application. Boundary treatments should be robust enough to stop casual intrusions and prevent harm to residents. Some ground floor bedrooms have doors opening out onto the grounds and non-residents should be prevented from entering through these apertures.

With a 24 hour manned reception and surveillance from the main/office areas, together with appropriate lighting, there are no concerns over the car park area and pathways.

Lighting is an important factor in deterring intruders and reducing the fear of crime. It should comply with BS 5489-1:2013.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the proposed development may raise issues relevant to

Article 8: The Right to respect for private and family life.

Article 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Having considered the likely impact on an individual's Human Rights, and the general interest of the public, refusal of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17

The application raises no significant crime and disorder issues.

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy – particularly but not exclusively paragraphs 80

Section 9 – Promoting sustainable transport - particularly but not exclusively paragraphs 102, 108, 110

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places – particularly but not exclusively paragraphs 124, 127, 130

Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – particularly but not exclusively paragraphs 170, 180, 182.

North Norfolk Core Strategy Policies (Adopted September 2008):

Policy SS 1: Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk (*specifies the settlement hierarchy and distribution of development in the District*).

Policy SS 3: Housing (*strategic approach to housing issues*).

Policy SS 5: Economy (*strategic approach to economic issues*).

Policy SS 6: Access and Infrastructure (*strategic approach to access and infrastructure issues*).

Policy SS 9: Holt (*identifies strategic development requirements*).

Policy HO 1: Dwelling mix and type (*specifies type and mix of dwellings for new housing developments*).

Policy EN 2: Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character (*specifies criteria that proposals should have regard to, including the Landscape Character Assessment*).

Policy EN 4: Design (*specifies criteria that proposals should have regard to, including the North Norfolk Design Guide and sustainable construction*).

Policy EN 6: Sustainable construction and energy efficiency (*specifies sustainability and energy efficiency requirements for new developments*).

Policy EN 10: Development and Flood risk (*prevents inappropriate development in flood risk areas*).

Policy EN 13: Pollution and hazard prevention and minimisation (*minimises pollution and provides guidance on contaminated land and Major Hazard Zones*).

Policy CT 2: Development contributions (*specifies criteria for requiring developer contributions*).

Policy CT 5: The transport impact on new development (*specifies criteria to ensure reduction of need to travel and promotion of sustainable forms of transport*).

Policy CT 6: Parking Provision (*requires compliance with the Council's car parking standards other than in exceptional circumstances*).

North Norfolk Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (Adopted February 2011)

Policy H09 - Land at Heath Farm / Hempstead Road:

Land amounting to approximately 15 hectares is allocated for a mixed use development including approximately 200 dwellings, not less than 5 hectares of land in employment generating uses of which not less than 3.5 hectares shall comprise serviced industrial land, public open space, and community facilities. Development will be subject to compliance with adopted Core Strategy policies including on-site provision of the required proportion of affordable housing (currently 45%) and contributions towards infrastructure, services, and other community needs as required and:

a. The prior approval of a Development Brief to address access (to be from the A148) and sustainable transport, layout, phasing, including the phased provision of serviced employment land, and conceptual appearance;

b. retention and enhancement of perimeter hedgerows and trees;

- c. provision of significant internal open spaces, hedgerow and tree planting within the site and a landscape buffer to the A148 and the adjacent County Wildlife Site;*
- d. prior approval of an agreement to secure contributions towards management of the adjacent County Wildlife Site;*
- e. investigation and remediation of any land contamination;*
- f. provision of a direct pedestrian / cycleway connection to Hempstead Road underpass;*
- g. prior approval of a scheme of mitigation to minimise potential impacts on the North Norfolk Coast SPA / SAC and Ramsar site arising as a result of increased visitor pressure, and on-going monitoring of such measures; and,*
- h. demonstration that there is adequate capacity in sewage treatment works and the foul sewerage network and that proposals have regard to Water Framework Directive objectives. Retail development, other than that serving the needs of the proposed development, will not be permitted.*

Material Considerations

- Development Brief – Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt – Approved July 2013
- North Norfolk Design Guide SPD 2008
- Evidence Base - North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (November 2018)

MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Principle
- Design
- Landscape
- Residential Amenity
- Highways
- Economic Benefits
- Flooding Risk - Drainage

APPRAISAL

Principle:

The application site falls within an area of land which is included as mixed use site allocation H09 within the North Norfolk Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) 2011.

In accordance with the requirements of Site Allocations Policy H09 a Development Brief was approved in July 2013 for the area covered by the outline planning application. The Development Brief should be used as a guide to inform all applications on the site.

Subsequently outline planning permission was approved for the erection of up to 215 dwellings, employment land (A3, A4, B1, B2, B8, C1, C2, D1 and D2 class uses), public open space and provision of roundabout and vehicular link road from Cromer Road (A148) to Heath Drive with associated landscaping and infrastructure, in August 2016.

This reserved matters application for a 66 bed care home use falls within an area identified for mixed use employment and complies with the expectations set out in the Development Brief which states that employment generating development which could require a street presence such as a care home is considered appropriate on land to the eastern side of the new link road. In addition a care home as proposed falls within the C2 residential institution use class, a use accepted in principle in the grant of planning permission in outline. The application seeks approval of matters of access, appearance, layout and scale but not landscaping.

Any planning application associated with an 'allocated site' should be determined in accordance with the policies of the adopted Core Strategy together with this site specific policy within the Site Allocations DPD.

Core Strategy Policy HO 1 states that purpose built or specialist accommodation for the elderly, in appropriate locations within selected settlements in accordance with Policy SS 1, and well served by public transport and local services, will be supported provided that it does not detract from the character of the surrounding area. It is also acknowledged by Norfolk County Council, Adult Social Care and the Councils Strategic Housing section that at this time there is a need for additional residential and dementia care in the district. In this context Holt is a Principal Settlement and the application site is part of a mixed use allocation with the benefit of outline planning permission and therefore the principle of the use in this location is accepted. However, consideration as to whether detailed proposals detract from the character of the surrounding area need to be considered alongside relevant Development Management policies such as policies EN 2 and EN 4 and relevant sections of the NPPF.

Design:

The site sits directly adjacent to the roundabout and spine road (Nightjar Road) constructed on the A148, approved as part of the outline planning approval and subsequent full and reserved matters approvals for such development. This visually prominent site will be accessed from a newly formed access drive from Nightjar Road.

The applicant agrees that the site is a prominent, gateway site to the new development and consider a building of significant scale and presence and which addresses the roundabout will result in a landmark building.

It is appreciated that the applicant has specific requirements of the building to deliver for economies of scale, staffing ratios and viability, which result in the need for the development to consist of 66 bedrooms, across three full floors of accommodation. They are also required to meet with Care Quality Commission requirements in terms of layout, facilities, natural light, and amenity areas etc. and as such the building needs to be a functional residential institution which is fit for purpose. The scheme is understood to be of a configuration which can provide for both general residential and residential dementia care.

The proposals involve one single building consisting of three floors of accommodation with two wings hinged from a central section in an angular crescent type form. The accommodation sits under a dual pitched roof with minor variances in ridge height. The building will be located on the northern and western part of the site and follows the curve of the adjacent road network. Secure landscaped gardens are indicated to the front (west) of the building to the roadside elevation with further areas of landscaped gardens indicated to the rear of the building along with the main access to the building itself and the car and cycle parking, bin storage and small plant room/garden store building for the development.

Although the site is located well outside the Holt Conservation Area, the site in question is nonetheless an important one given its prominent position on the junction of the A148 and Nightjar Road. With it also affectively acting as a gateway into the new Heath Farm residential development behind, it is a location which demands a high quality development which employs good design and is compatible with its surroundings.

The Heath Farm Development Brief states that 'the entrance to the Heath Farm development site 'should have the feel of a gateway into an estate with residential buildings to the western side and commercial buildings to the eastern side set back from the roundabout behind a landscaped buffer'.

The Development Brief goes on to say that 'Highlight buildings should be placed at key focal points to define gateways ... , they should have heightened architectural status, achieved through increased scale and mass, larger and more detailed fenestration, increased complexity of detailing and dressings. Primary materials could include cream Gault bricks,

flintwork panels dressed with brickwork quoins in the traditional manner and render in traditional pastel colours as a contrast'.

Scale and massing

Measuring nearly 80 metres long (end to end), 14-15 metres deep and 12 -13 metres high and extending across the entire site frontage (with the exception of a small access road to the south) fronting directly on to the roundabout, the building would be an immense structure which would appear far more suited to a city centre or a more truly urban location. It is difficult to see how the proposed development would find any real resonance in a rural market town like Holt where the buildings are entirely of more modest scale.

In recognition of its size and scale, the building features a number of breaks or steps in its elevations. Whilst these changes of plane provide a degree of articulation and modelling, they would be relatively modest in practice and would certainly not prevent the building being perceived and viewed as one monolithic wall of development which would rise abruptly out of the adjacent countryside.

The applicant has explained that the form of the building is commanded by the internal layout and as a result alternative options for provision of a care home within a building of alternative form and scale have not been forthcoming. Suggestion was made that the applicant should consider alternative sites within the commercial parts of the Heath Farm development and investigate the feasibility of acquiring a site further south along the new spine road in a less visually prominent location. Although it is understood that other land may be available the applicant is insistent that the application site is their preferred location as it best suits their business needs as it overlooks the roundabout, providing a more interesting outlook for residents and also due to the likely health needs of the residents (preventing unaccompanied trips) the development would not require a more central location as the Town Council suggests.

The proposed development on this site is however considered to comprise a significantly oversized building which would have an unduly urbanising impact upon the outskirts of the town and is therefore not considered to relate sympathetically to and indeed detracts from the character of the surrounding area, contrary to policies HO 1 and EN 4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.

Design & Materials

The building's elevations are largely symmetrical in form and that characteristic is carried through into the design detailing. Hence, out of the central hub, each of the two arms would comprise three near-identical building blocks with repeating bays and fenestration. Whilst these reflect the internal layout, there is a disappointing sameness and regularity about the resultant external appearance.

In addition, because the majority of the windows would line through across all of the individual elements, they tend to emphasise the horizontal mass of the development rather than the verticality of the individual blocks. Whilst the regular changes in facing material attempt to counteract this effect, the relatively straight ridgeline and the consistently oriented roofslopes would largely undermine their impact.

Since their earlier submission the applicant has made revisions to the design in an attempt to address the concerns raised in the previous refusal. As a result the contemporary design now incorporates greater variety to the materials to reflect the local vernacular, introducing flintwork and vertical brick piers to some of the walls, in addition to the brick and render. The design now proposes both red and grey roof tiles and use of finials to break the mass of the roof and add interest, reflecting the variety of materials in use within the new residential development adjacent. Greater interest and articulation to the elevations has been achieved through the

use of more domestic scale fenestration, along with arched brick heads and artstone cills and a canopy above the ground floor windows and doors within the north facing part of the central hub. Together these design changes have added greater visual interest to the proposed development and secured some improvements since the previous refusal, but do not unfortunately have a significant bearing on the scale and massing issues identified in the previous submission.

The development still proposes rather everyday architectural detailing, there remains little to commend the building as an exemplar. The feel is rather the opposite, i.e this is a standard formulaic composition which would be lacking in visual interest and quality. Given the prominence of the site, it is considered the building is not of an acceptable design quality to justify this location.

The Government through publication of revisions to the NPPF reinforced good design as being a key aspect of sustainable development and have continued to tackle the challenge of poor-quality design by commissioning an independent body, the 'Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission' to advise how to promote and increase the use of high quality design for new buildings and neighbourhoods. The Council through its current Development Plan, including detailed design policies within the Core Strategy, having regard to the North Norfolk Design Guide and through emerging revisions to the Design Guide aimed at raising the standard of design across the District, is and continues to be clear of the design expectations of new development as paragraph 124 of the NPPF promotes. Against this context and the requirement to create high quality buildings and places, it is considered that this development falls short of what should be achieved.

Landscape:

The site forms part of a new development located on the edge of town adjacent to both new residential development, land allocated for employment purposes and beyond this open countryside. Although landscaping is not a matter for determination in this application the basic indications that have been provided as part of this application as to how landscaping will be used to provide adequate screening and visual interest to the site have been considered. The applicants submission states that soft landscaping will comprise trees, shrubs, flower beds and lawns, but provides no further detail as to how much, of what species and where, other than a basic indication on a general site plan.

The context of the location as set out previously is that this is an extremely prominent showcase site on a busy tourist route around Holt at the entrance to a new mixed development, at the transition between the built form of Holt and the arable and wooded countryside that forms the town's setting. It therefore warrants a high quality design that is compatible with this sensitive location.

Landscape Design

The submitted proposal presents a large three storey building with over 60 windows on the main west elevation to the roundabout. The minimal changes in angle and height of the different sections do not dilute the extensive solid mass of the form. The large mass and height are out of context with the surrounding new built form and the building is incompatible with its landscape setting.

Immediately east of the site is a relatively open landscape comprising arable fields and a farmstead, before dense woodland planting becomes the dominant land cover. Due to its large height and form, the proposal would be incongruous, not only from this aspect, but also in relation to its location on the A148 Holt by-pass where there are no other developments of this scale. The road follows the route of a former railway line and is contained and characterised by tall woodland edge planting on either side of the road, the verges becoming

steeper to the west of the roundabout. The development as proposed would be highly visible and at odds with this setting.

The site layout contains a distinct lack of meaningful quality outside space that could be enjoyed by the residents and staff at the care home. The space to the east of the building will gain the most sun due to lack of building shading, yet much of this space is taken up with car parking. The layout plan denotes secure landscaped gardens to the west of the building, enclosed by fencing understood to comprise of black scalloped railings of 1.8 metre height at the highest point. This is the less optimal, shadier and noisier external space, being close to the road and roundabout. There is limited capacity here to create functional spaces. Due to the scale of the building and the amount of space it occupies on the plot, the scope for landscape mitigation that is actually effective in assimilating such a large form into its open setting is very limited. Added to this planting restrictions relevant to the existence of an intermediate pressure gas pipeline running east/west along the northern edge of the site is likely to give rise to limitations on planting types (preventing the use of some larger tree species) along a 37 metre length of the site frontage adjacent to the A148.

Landscape Context

The site lies within the Wooded with Parkland Landscape Type (WP2 Holt Cromer Area), as defined within the North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, SPD 2009. High woodland presence is relatively rare in Norfolk and is a distinct feature of this landscape type. Mixed woodland planting gives a distinct setting to Holt.

The Council have published a new North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment (November 2018) to provide an up-to-date evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. This document has been published in final form and represents the most up-to-date and accurate assessment of landscape character, based on current best practice and in line with the requirements of the latest NPPF. Public consultation has taken place on this document, with adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) planned for Autumn 2019. It is the view of the Council that the baseline environment needs to take account of this new resource to help inform the management of future change and to ensure consistency with the NPPF.

In accordance with the new Landscape Character Assessment, the site is located within a Landscape Type called Wooded Glacial Ridge. The dominant landform and predominantly wooded land cover provide a distinctive setting to Holt, which is the main settlement within the Type. The historic and cultural interest of Holt is a defined Valued Feature of this landscape due to the distinct and cohesive late Georgian and early Victorian character of the town. Whilst not located in the core of the settlement, this proposal could not be said to reinforce this key quality.

The night-time impact of the development also merits consideration. There are no street lights along the A148 in the vicinity of the site. The inordinate amount of windows proposed on all elevations will incur significant light spill in what is an area of relatively dark skies. The applicant suggests that internal and external lighting will operate on sensors which will turn the lights off when not in use, with external lighting consisting of low level bollard lighting or down lighters to minimise light pollution. Given the range of uses permitted in principle in this area, suitable lighting arrangements which minimise light spill could be secured by planning condition if necessary.

This proposal would be contrary to Core Strategy Policy EN 2 as it would not protect, conserve or enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area and as it is considered to detract from the character of the surrounding area is also contrary to Policy HO 1 of the Core Strategy. It would also not be compliant with Core Strategy Policy EN 4 on two stated counts, as it is not considered to be suitably designed for the context within which it is set and

the scale and massing of the building is not considered to relate sympathetically to the surrounding area.

Residential Amenity:

The application site is located directly adjacent to the A148, a Principal Route and main tourist route and a new roundabout on this road which gives access to Nightjar Road which will serve as the main access to the existing Hempstead Road Industrial Estate. The roundabout and new spine/link road has been designed accordingly. The application was supported by a noise assessment which considered the noise from the A148 and local highway network on the proposed development and suggested appropriate noise mitigation measures where necessary.

Low to medium risks of adverse effects from noise have been identified to the north-west façade of the building (affecting just over 50% of the bedrooms and large areas of lounge and dining space). However, with good acoustic design measures to mitigate and minimise adverse impacts of noise such as appropriate glazing specifications and ventilation via acoustically attenuating trickle vents or in wall vents or a ducted MVHR system or central ventilation system to this façade, it is technically possible to achieve internal target noise levels as set out in BS8233 and WHO guidelines in all residential rooms and residents of the proposed development should not be significantly adversely impacted by noise from road traffic.

The applicant has confirmed however that the windows will not be non-opening, giving residents an element of choice to allow windows to be opened to provide natural ventilation. However, any opening windows or assisted forms of ventilation on this elevation need to account for potential sources from roadside vehicular emissions and migration of any sources of impacted air to the internal environment of each habitable room. In such instances those residents are likely to be subject to adverse noise and air quality impacts from road traffic for periods when windows are opened depending on the time of day.

It has not been demonstrated that the design of the development has considered possible impacts of excessive warm weather on a vulnerable population e.g. south facing glass fronted rooms, use of suitable and safe blue and green infrastructure and that adequate ventilation does not also draw in external air pollutants. However given the orientation of the building the south facing elevations face away from the A148 and therefore it is likely that mitigation of such excessive heating issues could be more easily achieved on elevations facing away from the A148 without giving rise to resultant air pollution impacts within effected areas of the building.

In terms of the external amenity areas identified, due to acoustic screening provided by the building the average daytime noise levels in external amenity areas to the east (rear) of the building are reported to not be expected to exceed 50dB (ProPG guideline values). The report however appears silent in relation to the amenity areas to the north, south and west elevations or external balconies in these locations. Therefore it is assumed that noise levels in these areas falls short of the required standards.

Therefore, although not ideal, it is feasibly possible to mitigate the adverse impacts of existing noise from the adjacent highway network through mitigation measures within the building where necessary and indeed some parts of the development will not be effected so. However, the proximity to the road and associated noise and air quality impacts are likely to have some impacts on residential amenity in terms of the associated quality of the outside amenity space provided for use by the residents and the quality of environment achievable to habitable space within a significant proportion of the building with windows opened. Although not perhaps at levels and to an extent which would amount to a reason for refusal of the application the reduced quality of inside and outside amenity areas and habitable rooms should be acknowledged if only as a consequence of poor design and layout of the proposed

development created to some extent by the confined extent of the site located in close proximity to the A148 and roundabout.

Highways:

The site is part of a large mixed use allocation and located just over 1km from the town centre. The introduction of a mix of residential and employment uses in this location and associated new footpath and cycle links through to existing development and facilities all contribute to achieving sustainable development in a sustainable location. Although currently access to public transport is over 400 metres from the site, contributions already secured from the development towards a Hopper Bus service which would hope to serve the new development will help to further improve access to public transport for staff and visitors.

The layout proposes 27 car parking spaces including 2 disabled parking spaces and 8 covered cycle parking spaces. Commitment has also been made to provide an electric vehicle charging point. The car parking provision falls short of the 28 spaces required by the Councils parking standards and North Norfolk Core Strategy Policy CT 6. The applicant points out that the parking standards are a maximum standard and their evidence shows that similar sized care homes in similar situations elsewhere operate with similar or less car parking provision and therefore consider that the parking proposed is more than adequate for the scale of development proposed. In addition a commitment to make a Travel Plan contribution was secured at outline application stage, to be used towards implementing and reviewing a Travel Plan for the employment land. Therefore, on balance the accessibility, parking and servicing provision across the site is considered broadly compliant with Core Strategy policies CT5 and CT 6 and NPPF paragraphs 102, 108 and 110.

The new access drive is considered suitable to serve the development proposed only and has not been considered on the basis of serving any further development from this access. The development is therefore acceptable in terms of highway safety and parking considerations and complies with Core Strategy policies CT 5 and CT 6.

Economic Benefits:

As an employment generating proposal on a mixed use development a care home use is accepted in principle and is stated to be needed in this part of the district by both the applicant and relevant consultees. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity. The applicant promotes the benefits of the scheme being construction based employment (a relatively short term benefit) and investment and benefits to the local economy of employment generation of up to 60 full time equivalent jobs ranging from Home Manager, care workers, catering and domestic assistants. It is also recognised that there could be associated additional employment opportunities in the wider health sector in terms of visiting health professionals and service industry professionals (hairdresser, entertainers etc.)

It is also acknowledged that the positive introduction of development on the commercial elements of the Heath Farm site could serve to kick start interest in commercial opportunities on the remainder of the site and encourage investment in further much welcomed employment opportunities to Holt.

These benefits are acknowledged and welcomed, however they need to be considered as a part of the planning balance alongside other identified benefits and any adverse impacts of the development proposals.

Flooding Risk - Drainage:

The site extends to less than 1 hectare in size and is located within Flood Zone 1 of the Environment Agency flood risk classification and is not identified as being at risk of flooding from other local sources. A very basic level Drainage Strategy has been provided which

considered sustainable drainage methods such as infiltration, permeable paving and attenuation. Ground investigations carried out to date would seem to suggest that infiltration would be feasible on a site consisting mainly of sand and gravels. Therefore there appears no reason why detailed drainage proposals cannot be secured by planning condition.

Conclusion – Planning Balance

The benefits of the proposed care home for older people both in terms of meeting an identified need for such accommodation and also the identified economic benefits in terms of employment generation are recognised as attracting weight in favour of the proposed development. However, the significant identified harm that would result in terms of the scale, massing and design of the building not being suitable for the context within which it is set, and subsequent failure of the proposals to protect, conserve or enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area are considered to significantly outweigh the benefits, resulting in an officer recommendation of refusal as set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:

The District Council adopted the North Norfolk Core Strategy on the 24th September 2008 and the North Norfolk Site Allocations Development Plan in February 2011. The latest revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in February 2019. Collectively these provide the context for the determination of planning applications in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004.

The Core Strategy includes the following applicable policies:

HO 1 - Dwelling mix and type

EN 2 – Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character

EN 4 – Design

Although the principle of a care home use in this location is accepted through mixed use site allocation H09 within the North Norfolk Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) 2011 and associated Heath Farm Development Brief July 2013 and outline planning permission reference PO/16/0253, the details of the reserved matters application are also required to comply with relevant detailed Development Management Policies.

The site occupies an important and prominent location on a busy tourist route around Holt at the gateway entrance to a new mixed development. The site forms the transition between the built form of Holt and the arable and wooded countryside that forms the town's setting, which warrants a high quality design that is compatible with this sensitive location and surrounding new development.

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority:

1. The development proposed by reason of its scale and massing would have an undue urbanising impact in this location. The proposal would be highly visible and would fail to relate sympathetically to the surrounding area, contrary to the aims of Policy EN 4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy.
2. Furthermore the formulaic composition of the building, lack of visual interest, together with the large mass and height of the building is considered out of context with the surrounding new built form, contrary to the aims of Core Strategy Policy EN 4 and paragraphs 127 and 130 of the NPPF.
3. In addition, insufficient space has been provided within the site to secure meaningful amounts of landscape planting which are vital to help to assimilate the development into the surrounding landscape and provide meaningful quality private amenity space

for the vulnerable residents living on the site, contrary to North Norfolk Core Strategy Policy EN 4 and paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

4. In the absence of a well planned development and limited opportunity for meaningful landscaping the development would detract from the character of the surrounding area contrary to the aims of Core Strategy Policy HO 1 and furthermore would not protect, conserve or enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area, contrary to North Norfolk Core Strategy Policy EN 2.

The proposal is contrary to the provisions of the adopted Development Plan, and it has been concluded that there are no material considerations which should be afforded sufficient weight to justify the departures from adopted policies.