

Breckland Local Plan Call Regulation 18 Consultation Statement

Site: Land at The Gables, 7 The Green, North Lopham, Norfolk

Clients: The Brock Family



Report prepared by TK

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
2. Comparison of Sites	2
3. Conclusions	5

Appendices

Appendix A – Call for Site Assessment – The Gables

Appendix B – Call for Site Assessment – Primrose Lane (Allocated)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of our client the Brock Family whom have submitted a suitable site to be included in the Local Plan (Land north of The Gables, The Green, North Lopham, Norfolk). This is submitted to add further detail to that already submitted with particular regard to the stage 1 and 2 assessments. The site as previously demonstrated and as indicated by the Council's own analysis is the most suitable site for allocation in the village of North Lopham. The site is free from constraints unlike the site which is identified as the preferred allocation for residential development in the village.

2 Comparison of Allocated Site and Alternative Site

- 2.1 The copies of the Site Assessment for both our clients land and that that has been identified as a preferred option in Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan are shown in Appendices A and B.
- 2.2 **Accessibility** - As can be seen by a comparison of these both our client's site and the Allocated Site both have an Amber rating for 'Broad Accessibility'.
- 2.3 **Heritage** – Again both sites have very similar proximity and constraints rating in terms of heritage assets and implications.
- 2.4 **Natural Environment** – Similarly both sites have very similar proximity and constraints rating in terms of potential implications on protected wildlife sites, protected and priority habitats, agricultural land etc.

- 2.5 **Water** – The LLFA note the presence of an area of pooling along the existing access to the site and adjacent dwellings. This is understandable given that this part of the site is currently hard standing as it provides the access to existing property's, and their parking and turning area. This is an isolated and small area of pooling because it is constructed with a sealed surface and of impermeable construction. There is no surface water flow path or other such feature affecting any of the site.
- 2.4 We can confirm as suggested by the LLFA that land owner would be willing to upgrade the construction of the site access to allow for rainwater to drain and prevent this pooling. In terms of the input from Consultees, our clients site has been identified with no potential issues from the Water Management Alliance and Anglian Water.
- 2.5 There are also no other negative comments from other consultees in relation to the site at The Gables. With reference to those made by the Parish Council, as we have previously set out the outcome of the planning appeal solely turned on how the proposal related to the current strategy for housing in the BLP, and the appeal Inspector found the site suitable in all other regards.
- 2.6 In contrast the proposed Allocated Site has an Amber RAG warning with respect to potential impacts on the historic environment.
- 2.7 Our clients site has been proven through the application and appeal to have suitable and safe access to the site. However, in contrast the allocated site has not been subject to such rigorous assessment and nor has it been demonstrated to have a suitable and safe access. Indeed, there are no comments within the Site Assessment that considers the actual suitability of the access in terms of highway safety and

actual feasibility of providing the necessary access to the site. Importantly there appear to be no comments from the Highways Authority. This is fundamental to the suitability and achievability of the site for housing development. Therefore, we would strongly question the reliance on an allocated site within the Breckland Local Plan that has not been subject to any detailed assessment in terms of access and therefore not been demonstrated to be achievable.

- 2.8 In this instance we'd highlight the comments of the Parish Council whom state *"The owners of the site 054 adjacent to Primrose Lane have previously approached the Parish Council regarding development and our view then, and now, is that the site is inappropriate for development due to poor access at the junction of Primrose Lane, The Street and Church Road."*
- 2.9 As can be seen from Figure 1 below, the proposed Allocated Housing site is reliant on a shared access point that acts as both a parking area and access for the St Andrew's Pre-School at the front (red area), and also the access to the Primary School behind (blue cross). It is clear that the junction and access track would need significant improvements to provide a safe and suitable access for a development of 20 new homes as allocated. Not only would it would be necessary to provide a widened carriageway of sufficient width that enables vehicles to pass one another in each direction. It will also need a widened junction on to the bend of Church Road in order to enable traffic to both enter and leave Church Road. Given the standard dimensions required by Norfolk County Council Highways Authority we contend that such a necessary and safe access is not achievable.
- 2.10 Not only would it appear this key access would not be achievable, we would also question the ability to provide the necessary carriageway width along Primrose Lane to achieve safe access to the site, whilst also retaining access to the school, and the adjacent private dwelling. Even if sufficient width would be achievable for the access

and footpath, this would negatively impact on the daily operation of the Pre-School and Primary School. The number of parking spaces would be reduced to avoid vehicular conflict detrimentally affecting the functioning of these important community assets. In addition, such an access would bring vehicles parking at the Pre-School into conflict with the additional traffic having to access and leave the proposed site, and vice versa. With the potential for such vehicles to then effect the free flow of traffic along Church Road, a key route to the A1066 to the south. Therefore, we content that this site can not provide safe access and is not suitable and achievable.

Figure 1: Allocated Housing Site Access



3 Conclusions

- 3.1 The site at The Gables, North Lopham meets all the criteria for suitable growth site on the edge of and well related to the designated settlement of North Lopham for the purposes of the identifying suitable sites for housing within the emerging Breckland Local Plan. As stated above the land promoters and owners would provide improvements to the access construction to enable the small area of rainwater pooling to be avoided and rainfall to drain appropriately. The RAG rating therefore reduces down to Green upon delivery of the site.
- 3.2 In contrast to our client site which has proven through Appeal and confirmed by an Inspector to have safe and suitable access, for the above reasons we contend that the indicated Allocated Site is not accessible and is therefore not achievable and suitable for allocation.
- 3.3 Our clients site at the Gables meets the requirements for Allocation and should be included to give the LPA and the District a robust housing strategy that does not rely on sites such as that allocated that we contend have not been proven to be achievable and accessible. For all the above reasons we therefore respectfully request that the site at The Gables be allocated in the emerging Local Plan, either on its own, or in addition to that at Primrose Lane.
- 3.4 The allocation of our client site would give the LPA a safety allowance within its allocations and housing growth strategy, where sites such as that proposed for allocation will struggle to actually deliver new housing. This would give the Updated Local Plan more resilience to challenge both now and during its lifetime. Meanwhile the additional allocation of a small additional number of units (5) would not compromise the growth strategy and growth of the village and Parish.

3.4 It is hoped this assists Breckland Council in preparing its emerging Local Plan and allocating sufficient sites to meet its need for housing up to 2042.

APPENDIX A – The Gables, North Lopham- Alternative
Attached Separately

APPENDIX B – Primrose Lane, North Lopham- Allocation

Attached Separately