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Barrowden Parish Council

16 September 2020

FAO. **Nick Hodgett** Principal Planning Officer

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

Barrowden Village Hall, Wakerley Road, Barrowden, Rutland, LE15 8EP

2020/0891/FUL

PROPOSAL: Replacement of the existing Village Hall, Community Shop and Doctors Surgery, with new and improved facilities on their existing site in Barrowden, including car parking and new landscaping to improve access.

Dear Mr Hodgett,

We are writing in response to your letter of 25th August 2010 which invites comment on the subject planning application.

The planning application was submitted by Barrowden Parish Council (BPC), acting in an administrative capacity) on behalf of the Barrowden Village Development Group(BVHDG). BPC is making comments now acting in its planning capacity.

Neighbour and village resident consultation and issues

There were a number of comments made to BVHDG by direct neighbours and other village residents earlier this year at the preplanning stage, after a request by BPC these were made available to us. Some direct neighbours had made comments about the details of design causing noise, nuisance and overlooking issues. None of these objections objected to the redevelopment concept in itself. In fact, there is strong support for a redevelopment in the proposed location. Some residents have commented on the appearance, choice of materials and landscaping but generally are still supportive of a redevelopment on the proposed site. We understand that the direct neighbour specific comments have been addressed, apart from one which relates to noise from early morning deliveries to the shop. This latter point is not specific to the new development and is being handled separately

Barrowden and Wakerley Neighbourhood Plan (BWNP) related issues.

We have looked at the Design and Access Statement and note that in the client brief and throughout the document there is no clear reference to the design being consistent with the Neighbourhood plan.

The design and access statement has, amongst its aims, “to be committed to sustainable, high quality, future proofed design that blends into its setting and respects the environment”

We have looked at relevant policy statements in the BWNP and tested these against the design

BW1 Landscape character and important views

- 1. Development shall conserve and enhance positive characteristics and features of the local landscape outlined in the Barrowden and Wakerley Landscape and Character Assessment. Proposals will be supported where these do not detract from, or have adverse impact on the landscape.*
- 2. Views important to Barrowden and Wakerley are set out on the map in figure 4. Development proposals shall safeguard and if possible enhance these views into and out of the villages and should use sensitive layout, design and mitigation measures to minimize any adverse impact on the landscape. (Note: the view from the North toward the site is identified at number 5 on Fig 4)*

BPC Comment on BW1

The application does claim to be sensitive to the setting but we could find no reference to this particular BW1 point. Some resident and designer comment considers the present building as being unsightly and things could only improve. Other resident comments express concern about scale and style of the buildings. We note that the larger building in particular will be a very prominent feature when looking from the North extending farther to the West and being a much greater height than the current shop. This a point to consider in the later discussion on materials as these North and West elevations will feature prominently in the foreground of the referenced important view from the North.

BW6 Design Principles for Barrowden and Wakerley

- 1 New development, including extensions, will be expected to be of high quality and shall preserve, and enhance the positive and distinctive characteristics described in the Barrowden and Wakerley Landscape and Character Assessment.*
- 2*
 - e) Proposals shall incorporate traditional steeply pitched roofs, where appropriate, and traditional roofing materials*

g) Elevations visible from the public realm shall be in local style rubble stone with traditional architectural features and windows and doors of wooden construction.

- 5 *Modern innovative designs using contemporary materials will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the development will be of the highest quality and can be successfully integrated into the existing context.*

BPC Comment on BW6

BW6 Comparing and evaluating designs against this policy is, of course, a matter of opinion. The larger building in particular will however be very visible from the important viewpoint which shall be “safeguarded or if possible enhanced” especially in its location beside an designated Important Open Space. Hence the importance of design detail materials and landscaping discussed under BW1

BW6.1 The roofs are not steeply pitched. The architects have pointed out that to create that feature would result in a much taller structure or a much narrower floor plan, although this is not referenced in the application. The roofing material is Zinc, a material which we do not understand to be a traditional material in the context of BWNP. We note that the requirement for a steep roof pitch is qualified by “as appropriate”, with that in mind councillors considered there to be a reasonable argument for this proposed design. The alternative of a steep pitch is not practicable and would be likely to create a much taller structure, which is counter to protecting the view.

The standing seam zinc roof will be a prominent feature in the foreground of the important view especially on the Northern slope of the larger building.

Some residents and councilors have expressed concern about the use of zinc, both for aesthetic reasons and lack of compliance with the BWNP.

In the design and access statement the architects say that the zinc roof will look similar to the slate tiles found on many of the traditional buildings within Barrowden, further that it has a similar tone to the lead roofs typically found on churches. Most Councillors felt that this was stretching the point and that zinc would be more fairly viewed as a contemporary material, which would then need to be considered under BW6.5, discussed below. To consider zinc further we would like to have seen aged material samples that demonstrate the colour and patination of this type of roof and we are concerned that if this were to be a planning condition, as suggested by the applicant, that there would not be any opportunity for residents to comment on the roofing materials through a normal consultation process

BW6.2 The new building incorporates a rubble stone plinth and some stone facings, consistent with the BWNP. There are however large areas of wood cladding including areas in plain site from the public realm important view. Buildings in Barrowden do not feature wood cladding with only one notable exception, so it is difficult to regard it as a traditional material in this context.

If, for reasons of cost, timber cladding was critical to this project going ahead, we felt that the massing of this material on the larger building, West elevation and on Western end of

the North wall might be reduced and relocated onto walls less prominent when seen from the important view.

BW6.5 This requirement allows modern innovative design and contemporary materials to be used where it can be *demonstrated* that the development will be of the highest quality and can be successfully integrated into the existing context. The planning application does not directly refer to this or make a case for using this policy section.

Whilst we strongly support this redevelopment at the existing location and recognize the challenges that the constrained and sloping site presents, the choice of materials in particular is a challenge to the BWNP. We read the application as one that states, by implication, compliance with BWNP using traditional materials. We consider that the application in reality is for the use of contemporary materials where it can be *demonstrated* that the development will be of the highest quality and can be successfully integrated into the existing context. We do not consider that this demonstration has yet been made. We do understand that cost is an issue but could find nothing in the plan to address that as a reason in itself for non-compliance with the plan. We understand that the proposed structure could bear the weight of a slate roof so that would be a practicable alternative.

BW 15 Provision of new community facilities

1 This section specifically addresses the provision of new community facilities within planning limits of village and states that proposals should:

1.I Not result in unacceptable traffic movements, noise, fumes, smell or other disturbance to residential properties.

1.II Not generate a need for parking that cannot be adequately catered for

1.III Be only of a scale that is appropriate to the plan area

BPC Comment on BW15

The redevelopment of the village hall, shop and surgery in this location is specifically foreseen and supported in this section of the BWNP. Provided that the hub caters for replacing facilities for existing and future needs of residents of the plan area, this should not generate additional disruption that is not incrementally related to any population expansion in the village. The parking provision of 28 places may not meet requirements for the scale of the buildings but is materially more than the existing provision. We wholeheartedly agree that users must be encouraged to walk / cycle to the hub. Some Kings Lane residents have expressed concern about overflow parking which is currently more of an issue on Wakerley Road. We consider that the parking provision strikes a thoughtful balance between practicality, sustainability and aesthetics.

Landscaping issues

The landscaping design is generic in nature. We understand this has been done to avoid high costs at this stage of a fully worked landscaping plan. The architects have spoken about

possible community involvement in planting. Also discussed was possibility of using the southern boundary area of the paddock to the North for additional planting subject to consent. This landscaping will be especially relevant to residents to the North and East of the development and we note that some have commented on this aspect being very important to them. We are concerned that the landscaping is properly and fully implemented so would like to see a planning condition which requires the implementation of a fully developed and appropriate landscaping plan. Again we are concerned that if this were to be a planning condition, as suggested by the applicant, that there would not be any opportunity for residents to comment on the landscaping through a normal consultation process.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Brown
Chairman, Barrowden Parish Council