

# **Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan Review Examination Hearing Position Statement relating to Matter 5: Settlements and Sites: Key Rural Service Centres. Date of Hearing: April 16<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> 2024 Submitted by Castle Acre Parish Council.**

## **Introduction:**

Castle Acre Parish Council has made previous representations to the;

- Local Plan Review Consultation Pre-Submission (2021), and;
- Post submission, pre-hearing examination (March 2022 - December 2022).
- Consultation on additional evidence base documents, September 2023), and at;
- Examination Hearings Dec '22 Jan '23 and March '24

The main focus of the representations is that the character of Castle Acre is not properly considered within the Settlement Hierarchy allocations and that its capacity to accommodate more development without negative impact is not considered either and that this is and has been damaging to the village character partially due to decisions made at the planning stage. The development on Site 22.1 provides evidence that decisions made at the Planning Application Stage are not accord with Local Plan policies to minimise impact on or enhance;

- the Conservation Area,
- listed buildings,
- the rural surroundings,
- the character of the village

**Context:** Castle Acre is a historic rural village with the first Conservation Area allocation in Norfolk (1971). It also has an SSSI (the River Nar chalk stream) and a number of Scheduled Monuments and Grade 1 listed buildings which are;

- a Norman Castle and it's defences
- a Cluniac Benedictine Priory of St Mary and St Peter and St Paul
- the remains of the Cluniac Priory Gatehouse
- a Bailey Gate and;

a further 19 nationally Listed Buildings identified for their national importance by Historic England.

New houses that have been built on Site G22.1 at the edge of the village impact on views to and from the Conservation Area, especially a Grade II listed building (the Stone Barn) it is not just the buildings that affect the views, it is the visual impact of the increased number of on road parked vehicles and storage of recycling and waste bins on the grass verge opposite the Stone Barn and adjacent to the Conservation Area Boundary. The new houses are also the cause of more parking on the pavement and verges at the northern entry to the village which presents a greater risk to road users and walkers. These issues were raised by the Parish Council and discussed at the planning stages of the development and subsequently overridden in the decision making process.

## **Additional Question answers**

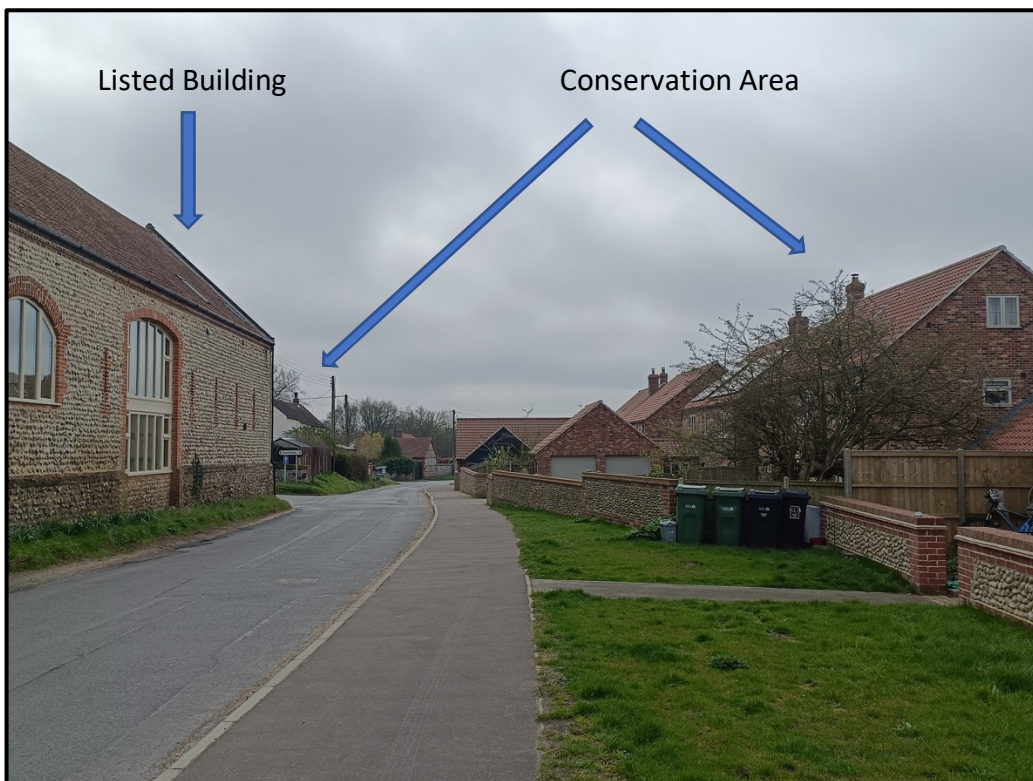
- **AQ37 Is the allocation of the site at Castle Acre justified given that 9 dwellings have been completed and, according to the latest housing trajectory [F50a], the remaining 6 dwellings should be completed by the end of March 2024?**

**Response:** The site G22.1 (Land to the West of Massingham Road) is now fully developed and should not appear in the revised plan as a future allocation

Possible reasons for its inclusion in the ongoing Plan; The protracted planning process and Local Plan Review (+ Covid) have led to date changes. Plan date was 2016-2036. The Application for G22.1 was submitted June 2015, permission granted October 2016.

**Additional responses to questions unaddressed due the suspended Hearings January 2023.**

- **Q195. Is the allocation of the site at Castle Acre – Land west of Massingham Road justified given its proximity to the Castle Acre Conservation Area and a listed building?**
  - 1) The view to and from the Conservation Area & Stone Barn is impacted upon not just by the building but also by vehicle parking on pavement and verges, rubbish bins stored outside the property on the verge opposite listed building.



- 2) The Borough’s Conservation Officer at the time visited the developed site with the Chair of the PC and a councillor in 2022 and agreed that the development was a good build but in the wrong place due to the negative impacts on the Conservation Area both visually and in terms of village character.
- 3) The development is an example of urban sprawl which is having a negative effect on the character of Castle Acre. The landowner/agent has also proposed in discussion a plan for possible further development beyond site G22.1 and the road network within the site is designed for that potential extended development. This would create a larger area of urban sprawl impacting on the village character and increase traffic risk in a potentially dangerous area on the Peddars Way/Massingham Road.

- 4) Screening to the North/  
North West is either not  
effective or not been  
fully implemented.

Conservation Area  
& Listed Building

Site 22.1. Impacting on  
listed building and  
Conservation Area and  
Rural setting.



View of the site from the north west (21/03/2024)

- 5) Evidence of Archaeological investigation not apparent on the Planning Portal.
- 6) There has been a complaint to C.A.P.C. regarding sewage smell on/from new development (2023)

• **Q197. Is the development boundary around Castle Acre justified and effective?**

- 7) The Development Boundary is generally justified but not really effective as new builds over the years, (to meet the Borough's housing need rather than the needs of the village) have increased the area of the village. Development adjacent to the boundary and the subsequent expansion of the Development Boundary leads to further opportunity for development. The historic village of Castle Acre is becoming surrounded by more modern development (urban sprawl, etc) which is affecting its rural character particularly to the North/NNW/NNE. Given the villages Historic Assets, both designated and non-designated and the Conservation Area the Parish Council believe that Castle Acre should have a protected/non growth status.
- 8) The Key Rural Service Centre allocation in the Settlement Hierarchy positively invites development adjacent to the development boundary of 10 dwellings (which favours local land owners) rather than 5 which is the allocation for Rural Villages and would be more suitable for Castle Acre.

Ref: F47 page 67 *"To help limit the impacts of such development, Policy LP02 identifies that only small-scale (up to 10 dwellings per site for Key Rural Service Centres and up to 5 dwellings per site for Rural Villages) residential development would be appropriate in these locations and that any cumulative impacts resulting from other delivered or planned developments are also considered in relation to the settlements character."*

This policy uses the Settlement Hierarchy allocation to determine the potential size of development and not the impact the development has on the character of the village, the conservation area, etc. This Policy would allow consideration of an extension to site G22.1 as the development boundary now surrounds that site and a further 10 properties could be added in the future. G22.1 currently exceeds the proposed 10 Dwellings rule for a KRSC. 15 properties were built adjacent to another development of 4 dwellings within the conservation area and bordering the site. During the Neighbourhood Plan preparation the Landowners agent expressed the desire to build a further 20-25 houses adjacent to site G22.1

- **Q198.. Is the supporting text to Policy G22.1 effective or should it be amended as proposed by the Council in its suggested Main Modifications, in order for the Plan to be sound?**

Both the supporting Text to Policy G22.1 and the Suggested Main Modification provide opportunity to consider the impact of the proposed development during the application and decision making planning stages. Unfortunately the completed development does not meet stated criteria such as ;

- Not visually intrusive in the landscape,
- Appropriate and high quality landscaping to be provided to the north-west to mitigate against the impact on the landscape,
- Without detriment to the form and character of the locality,
- Ensuring that the site makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby listed building.