

<b>Parish:</b>	<b>Dersingham</b>	
<b>Proposal:</b>	<b>Residential development of 9 houses</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Former Community Centre 74 Manor Road Dersingham Norfolk</b>	
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>The Sandringham Estate</b>	
<b>Case No:</b>	<b>17/01337/F (Full Application)</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b>	<b>Mr C Fry</b>	<b>Date for Determination: 8 September 2017 Extension of Time Expiry Date: 15 January 2018</b>

**Reason for Referral to Planning Committee** – Contrary to comments from Historic England

**Neighbourhood Plan:** No

**Case Summary**

The application site is on the junction of Manor Road and Doddshill Road, Dersingham and is contained in the Conservation Area of Dersingham which is classified as a Key Rural Service Centre.

The site comprises of a former Community Centre building and hard surfacing playground. The site is above road level and increases sharply heading in an easterly direction.

The proposal seeks consent for 9 dwellings, following the demolition of the former Community Centre building. Highway improvements are also proposed, to improve the Doddshill and Manor Road junctions.

A key issue, as per application 17/01336/OM earlier on this agenda, is the proposed demolition of the existing vacant, derelict Community Centre, which is in a prominent position on the site in the Conservation Area, to facilitate the aforementioned junction improvements.

**Key Issues**

- Principle of Development
- Impact upon the Conservation Area
- Other Form and Character Issues
- Impact upon Neighbour Amenity
- Arboricultural Matters
- Protected Species
- Impact upon European Designated Sites
- Highway Safety

Affordable housing  
Drainage  
Archaeology  
Other Matters.

**Recommendation**

**APPROVE**

**THE APPLICATION**

The application site lies on the southern side of the junction of Manor Road and Doddshill Road. The site is contained within the Conservation Area of Dersingham.

The application site measures approximately 1/3 of a hectare and contains a community centre building that has been the subject of 1960s extensions although small elements of the building date back to the C18th. The Manor Road frontage comprises of a red brick wall that steps down in height heading in a northerly direction with mesh fencing. Vehicular access to the site is provided from Manor Road almost opposite the parking area for the Public House on the western side of Manor Road.

From the north, the pitched roof gable 2 storey element of the former community building stands proud and forward of the buildings on the eastern side of Manor Road. The Community Centre is setback from the junction and a pavement runs in front of the northern elevation and turns round heading south of Manor Road.

The highest part of the site, is laid to grass and contained behind mesh fencing on Doddshill road. There are a few significant trees on this part of the site.

The application seeks total demolition of the former Community Centre, to block up the existing vehicular access from Manor Road and provide 2 new vehicular accesses from Doddshill Road to serve a development of 9 dwellings.

The most significant building proposed on the site will be a 2 ½ storey building that scales 9.4m in height that projects and turns the corner from Doddshill Road into Manor Road that replaces the Community Centre building. This provides 2 dwellings.

The other properties on the site include 3 detached properties, 2 semi-detached properties and 2 linked detached properties. The properties are constructed from coursed rubble carrstone, light red brick dressings and light red/orange pantiles with timber windows and doors. For the 7 properties accessed off the western most proposed access on Doddshill there will be a shared parking court.

A key aspect of this scheme is the improvements to the existing sub-standard access from Doddshill Road onto Manor Road. As a result of the demolition of the community centre building and the careful siting of the new development, visibility both the northerly and southerly directions will be greatly improved. Furthermore the footpath heading up Doddshill Road will be widened to 1.8m

## **SUPPORTING CASE**

The application has been supported by a suite of documents:-

- Arboricultural Report
- Ecology Report
- Phase 1 Road Safety Audit
- Supporting evidence for habitats Regulations
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage Statement

The agent's supporting statement is as follows:-

- Insufficient land has been allocated in Dersingham to meet the housing need identified in the local housing strategy. The redevelopment of this site is critical, not only to securing this windfall development of 9 houses, but also to enabling the development of 30 houses on the larger Allotment site which forms part of the allocation in the Local Plan.
- The detailed and unique design draws on traditional local forms and features and would be built in vernacular materials.
- The houses are arranged around a shared open space giving a strong sense of community. Lower garden walls, rather than excluding 6' close-boarded fences, give a friendly sense of inclusion.
- A parking courtyard reduces the dominance of the car on a constrained site.
- An architecturally distinctive corner building and carefully considered massing acknowledge the pivotal role of this site at a significant junction within the Conservation Area.
- Care has been taken in the layout of the development to retain important mature trees, most notably a fine Scots pine and weeping willow in the centre of the site, that are a feature of this part of the Conservation Area.

### **Junction improvements**

- The development provides a once-only opportunity for major improvements to the dangerous junction between Doddshill Road and Manor Road. However, these improvements require the demolition of the existing 19th century former school building (identified as an undesignated heritage asset).
- The former school (later community centre) building lease was surrendered early by the parish council as it was becoming a liability (a new improved community centre building is already under construction on the former church hall site, nearby).
- The existing building on this site is unviable due to its condition and dangerous access and is of limited architectural significance. Its significance is primarily social and even this has inevitably been eroded due to its falling out of use.
- The disused site is described as a 'detractor' in the Conservation Area statement.

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

2/96/0124/CM: Application Permitted: 17/05/96 - Installation of 3 no. floodlights

## RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

**Parish Council: APPROVE** - but wonders if there is any chance of incorporating part of the old building into the new.

**Local Highway Authority: NO OBJECTION** to the latest set of plans and have no objection to the proposed off-site highway improvements.

Originally the highways department objected to the proposal in terms of the layout of the site and requested amendments in regards to:-

- Allocated parking for plots 2, 8 and 9 are in car ports that are no of sufficient width to accommodate parked vehicles. Parking spaces located next to walls, should be increased in width to 3m, although in the double width car port for plot 2 - an acceptable width of 5.5m
- Similarly the parking spaces serving plots 3 and 5 are located adjacent to walls and should be increased in width to 3m
- The parking spaces serving plots 4 and 7 do not have 6m manoeuvring space
- The private drive serving plots 8 and 9 should have a minimum width measuring 4.1m and a maximum gradient of 1:12.
- The footway along the Manor Road frontage should be widened to match the proposed adopted visibility splays.
- To ensure the rear parking is fully utilised and to protect the improved junction visibility from on-street parking, waiting restrictions should be provided.

These issues have been subsequently addressed and conditions are to be imposed.

**Environmental Health and Housing Community Safety Neighbourhood Nuisance:** recommends changes to the floor plans in order to avoid detrimental impact upon adjoining neighbour's amenity and conditions recommended in regards to a noise protection scheme and restriction on construction hours.

Informative in regards to soakaways, removal of asbestos, noise and dust and smoke from clearing and construction work, environmental protection act 1990.

**Environmental Quality: NO OBJECTION** subject to condition

**Natural England: NO OBJECTION** subject to appropriate mitigation being secured.

- Habitat Mitigation Payment of £50 per house as in line policy DM19 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan.
- Funding level through this method and allocated for mitigation of European Sites including Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog SAC. Signage explaining the sensitive features of Dersingham Bog and suitable
- Alternatives as advised in the Supporting Evidence for Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- Visitor packs/and or leaflets that describe and promote the understanding about the sensitive nature of Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog and advises suitable alternative recreational sites.
- Implementation of site enhancement as suggested in the Ecology Report
- A construction environment plan to ensure minimal disturbance to County Wildlife Sites
- Additional bat surveys to further qualify bat use of the community centre as recommended by the Ecology Report and required by EPS License

**Historic England: OBJECTION** Not supporting of the grant of consent and recommend that the application be refused. The former village school is a prominent building in the

Conservation Area. The Heritage Statement submitted with the application describes the Victorian School as being designed in a "vernacular gothic" style of the 1850s. No date has been ascribed to the original part of the school but it appears to have been built by the 1880s. The building is architecturally simple and functional as might be expected of a modest late Victorian village school consisting of a school room with school house attached. In addition to the interest of its design, plan form and construction the building embodies an important part of the social history of Dersingham and is noted as a positive element in the conservation in the Council's appraisal.

The building is presently unused. If the Council are convinced that options for its continued use as a community asset have been exhausted we would not object in principle to construction of new dwellings on the former school playground or to the sensitive conversion of this historic building (minus the modern extensions) to residential use. However, the wholesale demolition of the historic school building would remove a significant element in the Conservation Area.

We have considered this application in terms of policy and are concerned that demolition of the historic former school would result in harm to significance of the Conservation Area in terms of the NPPF, paragraph 132. Paragraph 134, requires the Council to consider any public benefit which might be delivered by the proposals and weigh this against the harmful impact. In this instance new housing on the former school playground might deliver such a benefit, but retention and conversion of the historic parts of the school building would conserve the significance of the conservation area as well so better achieve the NPPFs overarching aim of delivering sustainable development. We would therefore not support the application as it stands but encourage the Council to seek amended plans retaining the historic school.

**Conservation Area Advisory Panel:** The Panel considered that the existing original Victorian building should be retained and converted. In principle development of the rest of the site would be acceptable as long as it was in keeping with the Victorian School and surrounding area. The Panel commented that the open character of the area to the south of the south buildings was important to the Conservation Area and if development was considered acceptable, consideration would need to be given to design and layout to reflect this. Demolition of the more modern and secondary buildings was not an issue.

**Conservation Officer:** in line with Conservation Area Advisory Panel.

**Historic Environment Service:** A revised Heritage Statement is submitted pre-determination supplying further information about the date, nature and significance of the earliest elements of the school buildings so that a fully informed planning decision can be made.

As far as potential for below-ground archaeology is concerned, three areas need addressing. Although the asphalt-surfaced former playground is terraced into the slope there is potential for below-ground remains relating to medieval occupation/activity to survive adjacent the Manor Road frontage of the site. The date, nature, and extent of the now demolished house that occupied the central-eastern part of the terraced area needs to be investigated. As noted in the Heritage Statement there is there is potential for heritage assets, buried archaeological remains of Anglo-Saxon, Medieval and post-medieval date to be present within the eastern part of proposed development area and that the significance would be adversely affected by the proposed development.

Subsequent to resolution of the outstanding issues relating to the former school buildings matters relating to the below ground archaeology can be dealt with by conditions if the

proposed scheme is granted permission. We can supply further details of suggested conditions on request.

**Arboricultural Officer: NO OBJECTION** condition in accordance with the drawings.

**Housing Enabling Officer:** I can confirm that the site area and number of dwellings proposed do not trigger the thresholds of the Council's affordable housing policy CS09 of the Council's adopted Core Strategy.

Therefore no affordable housing is required on a site of 10no or fewer units, totalling 1000m2 or less GIA. We would however request a condition be imposed limiting this site to a) 10 no or fewer dwellings; b) 1,000m2 or less GIA; and c) no development to take place within that part of the parish of Dersingham.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

**Two** letters received in **support** of the application:-

- The building are in keeping with the character of the village and includes improvements in road access and review of basic infrastructure to support the additional 9 buildings for example each building should have enough parking/room for at least 2 cars with off road parking.
- The community centre is an eyesore
- Improvements at the junction of Manor Road and Dodds Hill Road.

## **LDF CORE STRATEGY POLICIES**

**CS01** - Spatial Strategy

**CS02** - The Settlement Hierarchy

**CS06** - Development in Rural Areas

**CS08** - Sustainable Development

**CS09** - Housing Distribution

**CS10** - The Economy

**CS11** – Transport

**CS12** - Environmental Assets

## **SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN 2016**

**DM1** – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

**DM2** – Development Boundaries

**DM15** – Environment, Design and Amenity

**DM17** - Parking Provision in New Development

## **NATIONAL GUIDANCE**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)  
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

## **OTHER GUIDANCE**

Conservation Area Character Statement.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The main planning considerations in regards to the application are:-

1. Principle of Development
2. Impact upon the Conservation Area
3. Other Form and Character Issues
4. Impact upon Neighbour Amenity
5. Arboricultural Matters
6. Protected Species
7. Impact upon European Designated Sites
8. Highway Safety
9. Affordable housing
10. Drainage
11. Archaeology
12. Other Matters.

### **Principle of Development**

The application site lies within the development boundary as shown on local plan proposals maps for Dersingham. Dersingham is a Key Rural Service Centre. Key Rural Service centre can accommodate limited growth of a scale and nature appropriate to secure the sustainability of each settlement; and development will be supported within the development limits of the Key Rural Service Centres.

The site contains a building that was once used as a Community Centre. Policy CS13 of the Core Strategy states that "Development will not be permitted in cases where it would result in a loss of existing cultural facilities, unless equivalent new or improved facilities, where need justifies, can be provide within the same settlement boundary or in close proximity of the existing facility.

However it is of note that the community building has been stood empty since 2009 since the Parish Council surrendered the lease of the building from the applicant. The Parish Council now use the Church Hall for their functions. Given the length of time the community centre has been closed and the fact there are other facilities available in this large village, it is therefore considered that the retention of the site for a community use is not necessary.

### **Impact upon the Conservation Area**

The site lies within Dersingham's Conservation Area. The LPA has the duty under s.72 of the Town and Country Planning - Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of appearance of that area.

In addition, Paragraphs 126-131 of the National Planning Policy Framework refer to the need for Local Planning Authorities to take into account the need to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets. The intent of these paragraphs is to ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. Paragraph 137 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

Policy CS12 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy seeks to protect and enhance the historic environment, identifying the crucial role played by the historic environment in delivering environmental quality and well-being.

Policy DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan Document states that proposals will be assessed against their heritage impact.

The character of the Conservation Area, the south-western part, which begins just south of the junction of Manor Road with Doddshill road, at the Feathers Hotel, is described in Dersingham's Conservation Area Character Statement as "...more built up and suburban in character".

Throughout the Conservation Area, the statement refers to the fact "carstone dominates as a building material, usually combined with brick and often pantiles, which give the buildings a distinctive reddish brown colour. Heights of buildings are generally 2 storeys, with a few single storey buildings such as barns and bungalows, and the rare appearance of taller building such as Dersingham Hall and the church."

The site itself is on the corner of Doddshill Road and Manor Road and is on higher ground than Manor Road. The site contains a brick and tile building, which is the former community centre –formerly a Public Elementary School that has elements of its build dating back before the 1800s. The building also has uncomplimentary 1960s additions on the south elevation. Other features on the site include a hardsurface playground area and a grassy area above the level of the school building and playground, to the east.

Dersingham Conservation Area Character Statement makes reference to the Public Elementary School on the site stating "The school building is red brick with yellow brick detail, gables and a tiled roof which turns the corner tightly into Doddshill Road. It is built right up to the edge of the narrow pavement and has some 20th Century additions. This building is sadly unused and with its boarded up windows and overgrown tarmac playground, it is quite an eyesore in the corner of the village." The building's state is currently described as a detractor within the Conservation Area.

The applicant's heritage statement provides very little dialogue in regards to the building, however the Design and Access Statement (DAS) provides more commentary. From the DAS, it is stated that "Faden's map of 1797 identifies a building on the corner of the Manor Road and Doddshill road though the exact shape and extent of the building is less reliably depicted". The condition of the building from the DAS states "many of the internal features have been lost, and many areas have been re-roofed again in the late 20th century and although most walls are in reasonable condition, some gable parapets and chimneys are in need of repointing and are beginning to decay through vegetation growth."



The DAS offers an assessment of the heritage value of the existing buildings. It is stated that “the heritage value of the site lies in the traditional massing of the buildings, providing a visual fulcrum to the junction of Doddshill road. The most satisfying view of the existing building is that seen briefly as one approaches the building from the north along Manor Road with the NW gable providing the focus of the view... the familiar and logical presence of a recognisable village school building (characterised by Victorian architecture and large, high windows given an important visual sense of a village community particularly in combination with the pubs and nearby village hall and church. Of course, this benefit is substantially reduced when the building is no longer a school or is vacant.”

Being contained within the Conservation Area, the proposal to demolish the building would need to be considered in light of s.72 of the Town and Country Listed Building and Conservation Act 1990 as referenced earlier as well as the development plan policies, and particularly paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

In detail, the proposal involves the demolition of the community centre buildings and development within the site to provide 9 dwellings.

The 9 dwellings comprise of

Units 1 and 2 - A pair of semi-detached dwellings on the corner of the revised Doddshill road and Manor Road junction, these dwellings are facilitated by the erection of a substantial 2 ½ storey building that has a projecting pitched roof gable element facing towards Manor Road. The building will be constructed from orange clay pantiles, coursed dressed carstone, with upper floor in lime washed render. Window fenestration will be vertically dominated using a mix of sash and side hung openings. Other details include the use of parapet detailing and ornate chimneys.

Units 3, 4 and 5 are grouped around a grass area, with the gable ends of units 3 and 5 fronting Manor Road. These properties are 2 storey detached properties constructed from carrstone with brick dressings, quoin detailing, dental brick coursing and red brick stacks. The properties also have vertically emphasised windows and are of sliding sash mechanism

Unit 6 and 7 – are located towards the southern boundary of the site and are two storey semi-detached properties that have carrstone and brick dressings at ground floor and render and brick dressings at first floor. The windows are also vertically emphasised.

Other features to note on this part of the site include a communal green area to the rear of plot 4 which is overlooked by plot 7.

On the higher, grassed level of the site, units 8 and 9 are two storey linked detached properties. The properties will have hipped roofs with ornate chimneys and will use feather edge boarding at first floor level and brick at ground floor. The properties have header treatments and are mainly vertically emphasised.

Parking to plots 1-7 are provided in parking court that will be accessed to the eastern side of plot 2.

In terms of the impact upon the Conservation Area, Historic England object to the proposal, they consider that the proposal would cause harm to the significance of the Conservation Area. Historic England state that “the building is architecturally simple and functional as might be expected of a modest level Victorian village school consisting of a school room with a school house attached. The building also forms part of the social history of Dersingham and is noted as a positive element in the conservation area in the Council’s appraisal... if the council are convinced that options for its continued use as a community asset have been

exhausted we would not object in principle to construction of new dwellings on the former school playground or to the sensitive conversion of the historic building to residential use, however the wholesale demolition of the historic school building would remove a significant element in the Conservation area. In line with paragraph 134, Historic England states that the demolition of the School building results in harm to the significance of the Conservation Area in terms of the NPPF, paragraph 132. Paragraph 134 requires the council to consider any public benefit which might be delivered by the proposals and weigh this against the harmful impact. In this instance new housing on the former playground might deliver such a benefit, but retention and conversion of the historic parts of the school building would conserve the significance of the conservation area as well and so better achieve the aim of delivering sustainable development. We would therefore not support the application as it stands...”

In line with paragraph 134 of the NPPF, which states that “where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Justification for the proposal according to the agent is in the following form

- Highway improvements that the scheme brings by removing the school building(discussed later in more depth)
- Development of housing on the community centre provide 9 windfall houses which in turn the capital receipt will provide 10 houses on allocated site policy G29.2, the ability to develop G29.1 for a minimum of 20 houses (an application for 30 is also on this agenda).
- Improvement to the conservation area by removing an untidy and unattractive building,
- Economic benefits to the community be investing in local tradesmen and more residents using local services.

Investigations have taken place had with the agent and NCC Highways to provide the highway benefits associated in delivering this site and the site allocation G29.1 without the need to demolish the building, however both the agent and NCC Highways have confirmed that both the development of 9 dwellings and the allocated site, for 30 houses could not be supported in any other guise than that promoted.

The existing building has been the subject of revisions since its original construction. Only two walls of the taller element of the school building are the original C18th century walls and the building has been through extensions that are unsympathetic and the Conservation Area Character Statement does refer to the building as being a detractor to the Conservation Area. It is also worth noting that Historic England have not objected to the principle of residential development on the site and do not state that the proposal causes substantial harm. The proposal is not without its architectural merits, and the designs of the replacement building have incorporated design details that are evident in the buildings in the locality. For example the design of the surrounding buildings have parapet roof detailing, Georgian sliding sash windows, brick banding and the use of dentil coursing. The massing of built form on the corner of Manor Road and Dersingham has been carefully considered in the design of the replacement building by setting back of the gable end of the pitched roof, and it is considered to be a good quality replacement.

The economic benefits, in removing the community centre building do not just relate to the merits of this application, but also the merits of the allotment site. In total there would be 39 dwellings across the two sites, which would bring a significant number of dwellings which when occupied would sustain existing services in Dersingham.

In accordance with paragraph 134 of the NPPF, it is therefore considered that the public benefit of the proposal does in this case outweigh the harm caused to the less than substantial harm to the significance of the Conservation Area, by the loss of the building.

Conditions will be imposed in regards to the erection of a sample panel on site and 1:20 details of the window details, to ensure the finer details of the development are acceptable.

### **Other Form and Character Issues**

The design of the development, specifically the lower half of the site has been purposely designed to be a communal development, hence the buildings, whilst not having large individual amenity spaces share the greenspace in the centre. The development has its own sense of community; a sense of community is thrust upon the occupants by the detailing of low height boundary walls. Whilst having its own sense of identity the layout of the site does have interaction with the existing built form with the orientation of plot 4 and the proposed 2 ½ storey building facing into Manor Road and there being pedestrian access from Manor Road through ramps and steps. Albeit set on higher land, the set back behind plots 3 and 4 and the retention of the trees will limit the impact of the massing of plots 8 and 9. Plots 8 and 9 benefit from larger amenity spaces more akin to the amenity spaces associated with the properties on Doddshill.

In terms of designing out crime, the low height walls and the sense of communal ownership the layout portrays would provide good natural surveillance of the carpark and green areas.

### **Impact upon Neighbour Amenity**

The nearest neighbour to the west of the site is no. 73 Manor Road. This neighbour is 10m away from the flank elevations of plots 1 and 3 and is on lower land than the application site by approximately 300mm. Their private amenity space is to the north of their property. It is considered that albeit the dwellings are only 10m from their flank elevation, no windows to any habitable rooms face this neighbour from plot 3 and only a secondary window to bedroom 2 in plot 1 face towards this neighbour.

With plots 1 and 3 being to the west of this neighbour, little overshadowing will occur into their dwelling and private amenity space. There is already a sense of enclosure to this neighbour's private amenity space afforded by the existing school building being hard onto the footpath and by setting the new building back from the footpath there is an improvement in terms of this particular relationship. Plot 3 is set back beyond the neighbours private amenity space and being gable end onto this neighbour limits the overbearing presence on this neighbour.

Plots 1 and 2 (formed by one building) are to the south west of no. 75 and to the south of no. 76b Manor Road. This particular building has its ridge height 10m above ground level. The distance to no. 75 is 20m and 24m to no 76b. At these respective distances, albeit the building is 10m high and to the south, there would not a detrimental impact in terms of overlooking, overshadowing and being overbearing upon these particular neighbours.

Plots 4,5,6 and 7 either face one another, the carpark to the Feathers Pub or open countryside.

The nearest neighbour to the east of the site is the Norfolk Air Cadet building which is over 20m from units 8 and 9. This neighbour would not be detrimentally affected by the proposal.

The Environmental Health CSNN Officer has recommend a construction management plan in terms of proposed timescales and hours of construction phases including any fixed

machinery, the location and layout of the contractor compound, the location of contractor parking and proposed mitigation methods to protect residents from noise, dust and litter.

However, given the scale of the development the recommended conditions of the CSNN Officer are not considered to be reasonable.

### **Arboricultural Officer**

The application has been accompanied by an Arboricultural Report. The Arboricultural Report, T5 – Elm, T6 – Ash, T7 – Elm, T11 – Horse Chestnut, T14 – Large Ash and G177 – comprising of 4 young trees of ash and sycamore classified as a low amenity value will be removed. The most significant trees T1 (Weeping Willow) and T2 (Scots Pine) which are to the eastern side of plots 8 & 9 will be retained.

The Arboricultural Officer has no objection to the Arboricultural Report's findings and requests a condition be imposed in relation to these trees.

### **Protected Species**

Bat droppings were evident in the school building and the protected species report outlines that a second emergence survey should be conducted to inform a European Protected Species License.

Given the above the LPA is therefore required to have regard to the tests of derogation as to whether Natural England would grant an EPS Licence.

The tests are as follows

Test 1 – Overriding Public Interest – this is considered to have been met by providing 9 dwellings, plus economic benefits to contractors and suppliers, at the cost of negative ecological impacts that are considered to be minor in magnitude. Should it be approved the building will also facilitate the development of a further 30 dwellings through the nearby allocation.

Test 2 – No satisfactory alternative

There is no satisfactory alternative as the development proposal requires the demolition of the building for highways safety purposes.

Test 3 – Maintaining favourable conservation status

The brown long-eared bat is a common species, the number of bats to be hibernating is said to be low, and other local roosting sites are present in the locality. The favourable conservation status of the local bat populations are judged extremely likely to persist in spite of the proposed development, so long as there is mitigation with respect to the undertaking of the works and compensation for the lost roosts.

Mitigation and compensation measures in respect to bats outlined in the report include:-

- A method statement for carrying out the proposed demolition should be drawn up and agreed to with Natural England during the EPS License application process.
- Placing exclusion devices over identified roosts were feasible
- Blocking up known roosts prior to works commencing
- Having a licensed bat worker to provide a talk to contractors

- A licensed bat worker present to monitor specified high-risk works to safely translocate any bats
- Sensitive night lighting during construction and operational phase
- Adjacent County Wildlife Site should remain un-illuminated

It is considered that a bat mitigation plan and a timetable of works could be conditioned.

In respect to birds, it is stated within the report that any work should ideally avoid the bird nesting season, and if this isn't possible then a check should be undertaken to see if there are any active nests present in the building or trees. Again, a condition could be imposed in relation to works avoiding the bird nesting season, and if works are required to trees or buildings within this period a bird nesting survey will need to be submitted to the authority for approval, prior to such works being undertaken.

In regards to terrestrial species such as hedgehogs, All construction materials to be on hardstanding or raised off the ground (e.g. on pallets) to prevent them being used as temporary refuge and all waste materials removed is encouraged.

### **Impact upon European Designated Sites**

The site is within 900m of Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog SAC, Dersingham Bog Ramsar and within 5km the Wash SPA and The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC.

The Habitat Regulation Assessment conducted by the LPA has considered that this site either as a standalone development or in combination with the allocated sites would not cause a likely significant impact upon the European designated sites subject to the £50 per dwelling mitigation fee.

Natural England have commented that visitor packs or leaflets that describe and promote an understanding about the sensitive nature of Roydon Common and Dersingham Bog and advises suitable alternative recreational sites, including signage explaining the sensitive features of the Dersingham Bog. These particular requirements are not necessary or reasonable. Mitigation for the impact upon the European designated sites is already provided for in the £50 per dwelling contribution.

In regards to the impact upon the County Wildlife Site which is adjacent to this site "The Carr & Slash Wood CWS" which is situated adjacent to the site. The Ecology report states that direct impact upon the County Wildlife Site could occur during if construction personnel or machinery were to remove the fence and stray onto the CWS. The report states that a Construction Environment Management Plan should be put in place to ensure minimal disturbance to the CWS during the construction phase.

Enhancements in regards to the CWS are actually occupational mitigation measures. Such "enhancements" relate to the restriction of lighting adjacent to the CWS, the provision of a wall or fence along the southern boundary of the site to avoid fly tipping into the CWS.

Norfolk County Wildlife officer has no objection to the proposal provided that the mitigation and enhancements mentioned in the ecology report are carried out.

In this regard the construction management plan condition is reasonable and details in regards to the southern boundary could be conditioned, however given that the site is within a builtup area of Dersingham, the lighting condition would not be considered to be reasonable.

## **Highways Authority**

This proposal and the 30 unit site at Doddshill Road requires highway improvement works and involves not only the removal of the community centre on the corner of Doddshill Road but the realignment of Doddshill Road opposite the entrance to no.76b. By demolishing the building and re-aligning Doddshill Road, allows for the junction to be moved south of where it is at present, to allow a visibility splay at 2.4m back from the junction of 43m in a southerly direction and 30.7m in a northerly direction. The Highways Officer has no objection to these off-site highway improvements and there is no other alternative highway safety improvements including traffic calming measures that would allow the additional 9 dwellings, yet alone the allocated 30 dwelling unit site to be safely accessed.

In regards to other highway matters, the highways department initially objected to the application on the following grounds:-

- The allocated parking for plots 2, 8 and 9 are in car ports that are not sufficient width to accommodate parked vehicles.
- Parking spaces located next to walls need to be increased in width to 3m.
- Plots 3 and 5 spaces need to be increased to 3m
- Parking spaces to plots 4 and 7 do not have 6.0m manoeuvring space
- The private drive serving plots 8 and 9 should have a minimum width measuring 4.1m and a maximum gradient 1:12
- The footway along the Manor Road frontage should be widened to match the proposed visibility splay.

These issues have since been resolved to highways satisfaction.

## **Affordable housing**

Dersingham is not a designated rural area and as the development is less than 10 houses and less than 1000m<sup>2</sup> no contribution either financial or on-site is sought.

## **Drainage**

The Environmental Health and Housing – CSNN officer states that no percolation tests have been done on site, and there is no substantive evidence to say that soakaways will work effectively, as the test results are from a site further up Doddshill the ground conditions could differ.

The CSNN officer recommends that an additional surface water attenuation method be incorporated into the scheme to prevent localised surface water issues on the highway and that could be covered by way of an informative. However it is considered the given that the use of soakaways have not been categorically established as being a suitable method of drainage it is considered reasonable to impose a surface water drainage scheme condition.

Foul water will be directed to the mains sewer.

## **Archaeology**

The Historic Environment Service objects to the application on the grounds that it involves the demolition of former school building. However, they do refer to full archaeological conditions being imposed if permission is granted.

This will involve a level 1 survey (photographs of interiors) of the mid-20th Century elements of the former school buildings, level 2 survey of the 19th century elements of the building

and a level 3 analytic survey to take place before and during demolition of the pre-1800, probable 17th century elements of the building. The programme of archaeological migratory work covering the open areas of the site will commence with informative trenching.

### **Other Matters**

The Environmental Quality Officer requires full contamination conditions to be imposed. The Environmental Quality Officer comments that the EA should be consulted in regards to any potential pollution in terms of controlled waters, however the proposal is not for a waste facility or the removal of an industrial pollutant use of the site.

### **CONCLUSION**

This application seeks the demolition of the existing former community centre, and the development of 9 houses on the site. The site is within the Dersingham conservation area.

The Community Centre is simplistic in design, as expected from a Victorian School building, which has two of its external walls dating back to c18th century. However, the building has been through revisions and unsympathetic extensions and is specifically referenced as a detractor in the Conservation Area Character Statement. It is noted that Historic England and other conservation consultees have objected to the application, but do not rule out residential use of the site, and consider the loss of the building to be of less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area, so that the public benefits of a scheme can be considered under NPPF paragraph 134.

In regards to the merits of the scheme, the proposal does lead to 9 dwellings directly in total which during their construction and occupation will provide benefit to the local economy. The proposal brings significant highway improvements at a junction that falls woefully short in terms of modern day highway visibility standards and the layout of the site and the architectural features demonstrated in the design of the properties advocates a high quality design, which will overall positively enhance the site.

It is therefore considered on balance that the public benefit arising from the proposal outweighs the less than substantial harm caused to the Conservation Area through the loss of the building and paragraph 134 of the NPPF is satisfied.

The proposal is therefore recommended for approval as being in overall compliance with the Development Plan subject to the following conditions.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE** subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

- 1 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 1 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.
- 2 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:-
  - o Location Plan

- o Site Location as proposed 10.200.9 dated 26.9. 2017
  - o Units 1 & 2 proposed drawing no. 10.202A.3
  - o Units 3-5 proposed drawing no. 10.203A.2 dated April 2016
  - o Units 6 & 7 proposed drawing no. 10.204.4 dated July 2017
  - o Units 8 & 9 proposed drawing no. 10.206.4 dated October 2017
  - o Landscaping Plan proposed drawing no. 10.214.2 dated 24.10.2017
- 2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
  - 3 Condition: No development shall commence on any external surface of the dwellings hereby approved until a sample panel of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the dwellings hereby permitted has been erected on the site for the inspection and written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The sample panel shall measure at least 1 metre x 1 metre using the proposed materials, mortar type, bond and pointing technique. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.
  - 3 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
  - 4 Condition: No development shall commence on any external surface of the boundary walls until a sample panel of the materials to be used for the external surfaces of the building(s) and/or extension(s) hereby permitted has been erected on the site for the inspection and written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The sample panel shall measure at least 1 metre x 1 metre using the proposed materials, mortar type, bond and pointing technique. The development shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.
  - 4 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
  - 5 Condition: No development over or above foundations shall take place on site until full details of the window style, reveal, cill and header treatment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
  - 5 Reason: To ensure that the design and appearance of the development is appropriate in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
  - 6 Condition: No development shall take place on any external surface of the roofs to the dwellings hereby permitted until samples of the roof material to be used in the construction of the dwellings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
  - 6 Reason: To ensure a satisfactory external appearance and grouping of materials in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
  - 7 Condition: The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan, Method Statement dated October 2016.
  - 7 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to safeguard the amenities of the locality in accordance with the NPPF.



- 8 **Condition:** Prior to the commencement of groundworks, an investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, must be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. The contents of the scheme are subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be produced. The written report is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:
- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
  - (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
    - \* human health,
    - \* property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
    - \* adjoining land,
    - \* groundwaters and surface waters,
    - \* ecological systems,
    - \* archaeological sites and ancient monuments;
  - (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'.

- 8 **Reason:** To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition given the need to ensure that contamination is fully dealt with at the outset of development.
- 9 **Condition:** Prior to the commencement of groundworks, a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.
- 9 **Reason:** To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition given the need to ensure that contamination is fully dealt with at the outset of development.
- 10 **Condition:** The approved remediation scheme must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of groundworks, other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

- 10 Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.
- 11 Condition: In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition 8, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 9, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 10.

- 11 Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.
- 12 Condition: No development shall commence on site until full details of the surface water drainage arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage details shall be constructed as approved before any part of the development hereby permitted is brought into use.
- 12 Reason: To ensure that there is a satisfactory means of drainage in accordance with the NPPF.

This needs to be a pre-commencement condition as drainage is a fundamental issue that needs to be planned for and agreed at the start of the development.

- 13 Condition: No development shall take place until an archaeological written scheme of investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and 1) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording, 2) The programme for post investigation assessment, 3) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording, 4) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation, 5) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation and 6) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organization to undertake the works set out within the written scheme of investigation.
- 13 Reason: To safeguard archaeological interests in accordance with the principles of the NPPF. This needs to be a pre-commencement condition given the potential impact upon archaeological assets during groundworks/construction.

- 14 Condition: No development shall take place other than in accordance with the written scheme of investigation approved under condition 13
- 14 Reason: To safeguard archaeological interests in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 15 Condition: The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the archaeological written scheme of investigation approved under condition 13 and the provision to be made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.
- 15 Reason: To safeguard archaeological interests in accordance with the principles of the NPPF.
- 16 Condition: Any hedgerow, tree or vegetation clearance will shall take place outside of the bird nesting/breeding season between the 1st March and 31st August in any given year. Should hedgerow, tree removal or vegetation clearance is required during this period, prior to its removal a bird nesting/breeding survey shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The result of the survey shall also include any mitigation/enhancement measures appropriate to the extent of any breeding/nesting bird recorded in order to minimise the impact of such landscape feature removal upon the bird species. The mitigation/enhancement works shall be completed and maintained in accordance with the agree details and timetable other than with the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.
- 16 Reason: In order to safeguard protect species in accordance with the Wildlife Countryside Act 1981 and the National Planning Policy Framework
- 17 Condition: Prior to the commencement of development a Construction Environmental Management Plan in regards to protecting the adjacent County Wildlife Site from construction activities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include measures put in place to ensure that construction traffic, compounds and personal are directed away from the adjacent County Wildlife Site. The development shall be carried out in accordance with this plan.
- 17 Reason: In order to safeguard the interests for which the County Wildlife site is designated.
- 18 Condition: The gradient of the vehicular access shall not exceed 1:12 for the first 5 metres into the site as measured from the near channel edge of the adjacent carriageway.
- 18 Reason: In the interests of the safety of persons using the access and users of the highway.
- 19 Condition: Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a visibility splay measuring 2.0 x 33 metres shall be provided to each side of the access serving plots 8 and 9 where it meets the highway and such splays shall thereafter be maintained at all times free from any obstruction exceeding 0.600 metres above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.
- 19 Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

20 Condition: Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the proposed accesses, on-site car and cycle parking and turning areas shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.

20 Reason: To ensure the permanent availability of the parking / maneuvering area, in the interests of highway safety.

21 Condition: Development shall not commence until a scheme detailing provision for on-site parking for construction workers for the duration of the construction period has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented throughout the construction period.

21 Reason: To ensure adequate off street parking during construction in the interests of highway safety.

This also needs to be a pre-commencement condition as it deals with safeguards associated with the construction period of the development.

22 Condition: Notwithstanding the details indicated on the submitted drawings no works shall commence on site unless otherwise agreed in writing until a detailed scheme for the off-site highway improvement works as indicated on drawing number 10-213-4 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

22 Reason: To ensure that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and to protect the environment of the local highway corridor.

This also needs to be a pre-commencement condition as these fundamental details need to be properly designed at the front end of the process.

23 Condition: Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted the off-site highway improvement works referred to in condition 22 shall be completed to the written satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

23 Reason: To ensure that the highway network is adequate to cater for the development proposed.

24 Condition: No works shall commence on the site until the Traffic Regulation Order for waiting restrictions to protect junction visibility has been promoted by the Highway Authority.

24 Reason: In the interests of highway safety. This also needs to be a pre-commencement condition as this issue needs to start to be resolved at an early stage in the process.

25 Condition: Prior to the commencement of development, a bat mitigation plan shall be submitted that includes details of compensatory roosts and their locations and a timetable for their installation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The mitigation measures shall be implemented in accordance with the details agreed and shall be retained and maintained thereafter.

- 25 Reason: In the interests of protected species and in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and the Habitats Regulations 2010.