

A couple more thoughts.

South of High Street

I think that this site should include the barns on the High Street frontage that would seem to be suitable for employment use as potential workplaces for the existing and new residents. These uses preserve the character of barns better than conversion to dwellings. If co-housing is to be located on this site, one of the barns might be suitable as a 'common house' that could include community facilities (eg cafe, pre-school etc).

I attach a note on the Manor Farm appeal that would seem to be an important part of the evidence base (history, not necessarily my interpretation).

Daniel

Manor Farm

Note on planning permission (granted on appeal in March 1998) for development of 6 barn conversions and 16 houses (including 4 low-cost). A section 106 obligation (coming into effect on occupation of the first new built dwelling – but not a conversion) would require all the open land to the north of the housing development to remain open (half in public ownership and half to remain private). The obligation also provided for an open space more closely relating to the new housing (including the converted barns) and a commuted sum to pay for the maintenance of all the open space for the next 10 years.

1. At the time of both the application and the appeal the principle of development of the site had been established through a local plan with detail included in supplementary planning guidance. The reasons for refusal related to the access, the design of the housing and the open space provision being contrary to the local plan. It seems that this development utilised a slightly larger area of land for housing than that envisaged in the local plan.
2. There was a further planning application for a fewer number of houses which, was refused and dismissed on appeal due to the housing design and failure to agree to dedicate the open space or improve the access across the Green.
3. The inspector allowed the 16 dwelling development referring to enhancement to the conservation area through the removal of the farm buildings. He noted that the open space provision exceeded the 13% that was considered to be normal but found the proposal to be acceptable and seems to have relied on this generosity to some limited extent.
4. The description of the conservation area relevant to the appeal noted the rural character and paddocks. There was no suggestion that this open area would be 'prettified' in any way that could change its character.

5. The inspector also thought that the detached houses with larger gardens were most characteristic of the area.

Conclusions: The planning history indicates that the developers of this site followed the development plan process, in which the landowner was engaged, whereby part of the landholding was designated for development. It suggests that subject to careful detailing and the preservation of the open and rural character of the remaining land, some alternative form of development might be acceptable. However, neither the allowed nor dismissed appeal appears to provide any support for development covering more of the site. Indeed, having the benefit of a planning permission that would remove the unsightly agricultural buildings, this could be taken as a benchmark for the extent of new development that would be considered to have an acceptable impact on the conservation area against which a further development could be compared.

The decision also included an interesting example of where a planning obligation was being relied on that secured a community benefit (e.g. public access to a large open space) in excess of that strictly justified by current Government advice.

Reference was being made to 25% of the dwellings being affordable. The intention appears to have been for these to have been the 4 smallest dwellings and to be secured through the section 106 obligation.