

Thriplow and Heathfield Neighbourhood Plan

Development Design Brief for the 'Grainstore site', west of Lodge Road.

Policy TP15 : Additional guidance

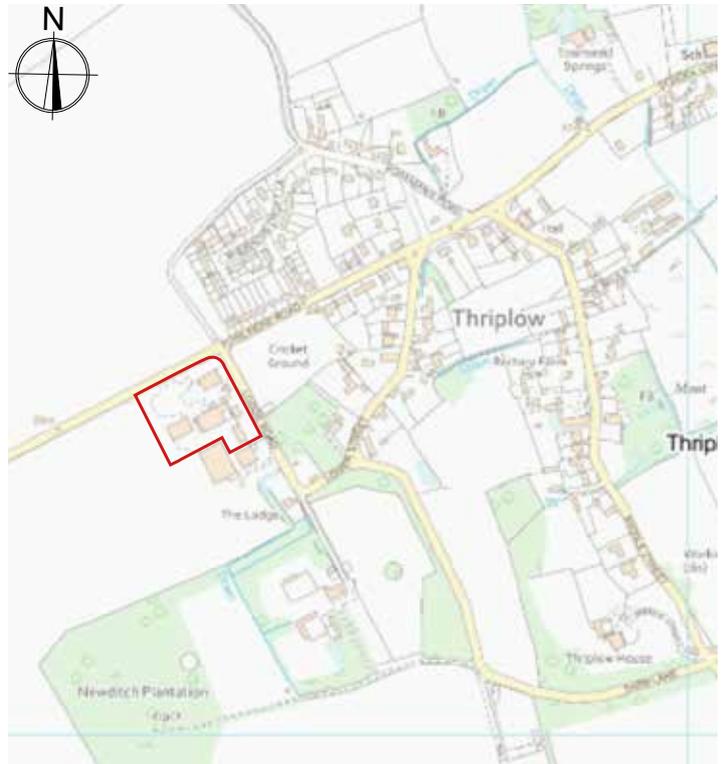
BACKGROUND

1. Thriplow and Heathfield parish is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The NPPF allows parish groups, in the drafting of their plan, to set out clear design expectations of both a general and site-specific nature. Thriplow and Heathfield parish wish to allocate a site for residential development and to set out site-specific design guidance through this Design Brief.
2. Following a "Call for sites" invitation to landowners, a total of five sites were put through a comparative site assessment in 2021. Four sites were in Thriplow village (including this site) and one was in Heathfield. After considering the results it was concluded the Grainstore site had the fewest constraints and represented the best opportunities for enhancement.
3. The site has already been the subject of an application for residential use. A proposal for 36 homes was rejected by South Cambridgeshire District Council in 2018, however the landowner remains committed to achieving development on the site.
4. Community consultation in summer 2021 confirmed conditional support for allocation, and this brief aims to shape the conditions under which development would be acceptable to the community, and provide a guide to the parish's design aspirations.
5. It is understood the specific design form or layout cannot be proposed, but the Brief intends to convey a number of principles for the development which the Parish Council will expect to be incorporated into any future design. Any development must also be in accordance with the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan, for example, Policy THP 9: Increasing parish biodiversity and delivering biodiversity net gain through development proposals.

THE SITE

6. The site lies on the western edge of Thriplow village, south of Fowlmere Road and west of Lodge Road. It covers an area of approximately 2Ha. At the time of writing it comprises a range of farm buildings, sheds, storage, silos and associated structures and hardstanding. Southeast of the site lies a shed housing 'Revivals' a local car garage whose operations are expected to continue.
7. The existing buildings and structures are getting too

Figure 1. site Location



old to meet the needs of modern farming and the landowner wishes to modernise and expand the grain storage capacity on the south side of the farmyard. A large new grain storage shed has been constructed, as shown on figure 4.

SITE ANALYSIS

8. A brief summary of the opportunities and constraints on the site are set out below. It is expected these are carefully considered in any proposed scheme.

Development constraints:

- The site is currently outside the village boundary (the development framework). This puts it in 'countryside' in planning terms.
- The western part of the site is in the Cambridge Green Belt and cannot be promoted for development through the Neighbourhood Plan.
- The site adjoins the Thriplow Conservation Area along its east boundary on Lodge Road.
- There are a number of Listed Buildings in the wider setting to which any development must be sensitive.
- The site is separated from the main village by a cricket pitch - views to the site from the direction of the settlement are therefore open and sensitive.
- The site is also visually sensitive because open countryside lies immediately to the west where large fields offer little in the way of screening.

Opportunities:

- The site is not a historic farmstead - no historically significant buildings are present.
- The site is previously developed land.
- The location is sustainable in terms of walking distance to key services - a primary school, shop, and pub.
- Relocation of the Grainstore would remove agricultural vehicles and noise from the area and offer an opportunity to improve and redefine the character of the village edge.
- Given the large scale of the buildings, metal structures and their declining state of repair, the site makes limited positive contribution to the local landscape character.
- There are no public footpaths on or adjacent to the site, but Lodge Road is a quiet lane and used by pedestrians.
- The site is partially enclosed by mature vegetation, providing a degree of screening, particularly long Fowlmere Road. There are also belts and blocks of trees to the south. These contribute positively to landscape character and must be retained.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

9. The site analysis has informed the development of an indicative layout for the site that is set out on the final page of this design brief in Figure 4.
10. The design should also meet the guidance set out in 'Building for a Healthy Life'¹ (BHL). Design in accordance with this manual, (which updates the widely known design tool - Building for Life), promotes place-making that has an approach focused on people and nature. It promotes thinking about design through 12 key considerations:
 - Natural connections
 - Walking, cycling and public transport
 - Facilities and services
 - Homes for everyone
 - Making the most of what's there
 - A memorable character
 - Well defined streets and spaces
 - Easy to find your way around
 - Healthy streets
 - Cycle and car parking
 - Green and blue infrastructure
 - Back of pavement, front of home

Figure 2. Designations and *Local Plan polices

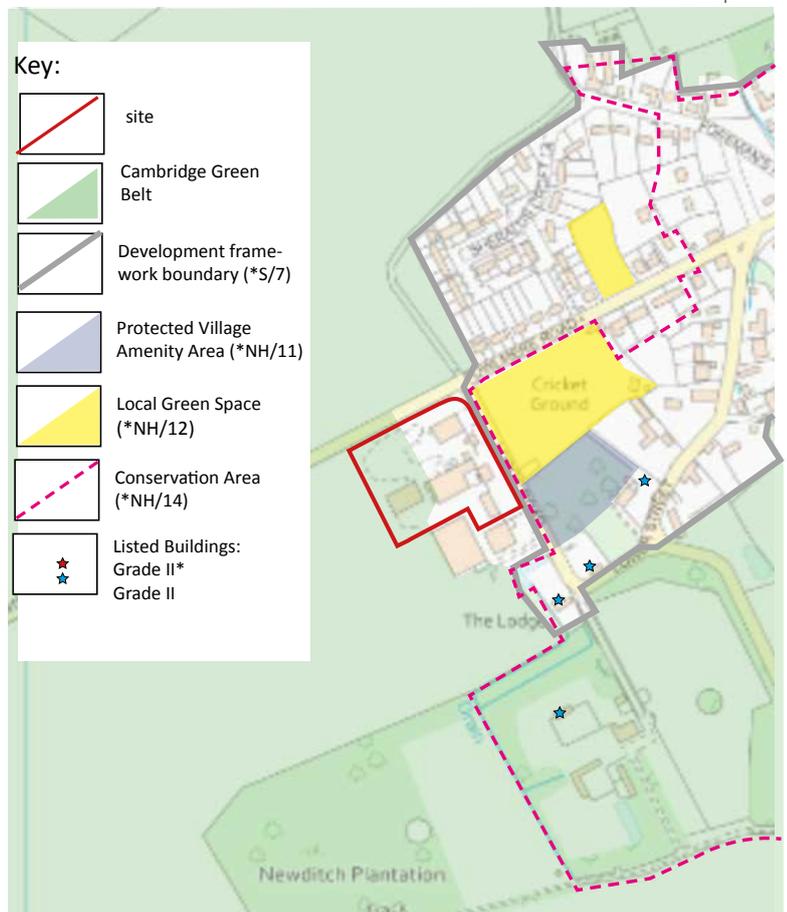


Figure 3. Aerial photo of the site



1. www.designforhomes.org/project/building-for-life/

SITE SPECIFIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES

11. The Neighbourhood Plan supports allocation of the site provided any future applicant demonstrates adherence to the following principles, which are illustrated, where possible, on figure 4. The Parish Council would welcome early engagement with any applicant wishing to develop the site.
- **Provide approximately 20 dwellings including 8 affordable units** Following assessment and consultation, the community contend the site has capacity for approximately 20 houses. The development should deliver 40% affordable houses. The affordable units should be made available, on a preferential basis, to those demonstrating a connection to Thriplow and Heathfield parish and whose needs are not met by the open market.
 - **Provide an area of Public Open Space in the Green Belt of at least 0.4ha.** Land in the Green Belt must not be developed but instead be used for public open space and surface water attenuation. The majority of the open space must be usable for informal recreation - surface water attenuation measures must not dominate, and instead they must be designed to look as natural as possible, including exploring opportunities for integration within the boundary tree belt.
 - **Enhance the gateway to the village on Fowlmere Road.** The development sits on the entrance to the village so houses fronting the main road must be of good design quality and must be vegetated with predominantly native species, that reflect the rural edge character. Houses must be outward facing - fenced rear gardens must not back onto the road. Two-way vehicular access should be provided from Fowlmere Road. It is preferred that any vehicular access to Lodge Road should be egress only.
 - **Enhance the character of Lodge Road and mitigate effects on the Conservation Area.** The quiet character of the Lane must be retained, and space for softening with hedge and trees is required. The frontage with Lodge Road must be high quality architecture that respects the adjoining Conservation Area.
 - **Provide a western tree belt.** The tree belt should be designed to provide appropriate gateway views and surveillance from the site and into the site. A hedge would be insufficient in scale. It should be designed to provide native and climate change resilient species.
 - **Harmonise with surrounding settlement character.** Ensure the scale and density of the built form is appropriate and reflects the scale and density of the adjoining settlement to the northeast, and harmonises with the rural edge / Green Belt.
 - **Retain existing vegetation.** Existing vegetation contributes to the rural edge character and provides biodiversity benefits. It also has the effect of screening and softening built form which is important given the openness of the adjacent landscape to the west. Minimise hedge removal for visual splay creation along Fowlmere Road.
 - **Architectural design: reflect the agricultural character and rural edge position of the site.** Bespoke architectural solutions that convey a sense of the site's former agricultural use are deemed appropriate. This should be reflected in terms of layout and vernacular materials seen in farmsteads. Traditional agricultural built forms would be welcomed. Generic, suburban style house types would not be acceptable in this visually sensitive location.
 - **Promote healthy lifestyles and connected neighbourhoods.** Provide pedestrian permeability through the development. Connect the new public open space on the west side with links through to Lodge Road.
 - **Promote sustainable building.** Built form should meet high standards of energy efficiency. Technologies for energy saving and generation, and grey water recycling would be welcomed.
 - **Screen the large-scale buildings to the south.** Use structural planting to screen the large shed currently housing Revivals Garage.

Thriplow and Heathfield Neighbourhood Plan

Policy THP15: Allocation of Grainstore site for residential use

Figure 4: Indicative site plan for 20 dwellings

