L O C K I N G T O N P A R I S H C O U N C I L

Comments on six planning applications by the Hotham Family Trust for a total of eight new dwellings in the Lockington Conservation Area (Refs 14/4078 to 83/PLF)

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1. This Statement is in support of the views agreed by the Parish Council at its meeting on 9 February 2015 when it resolved to object to four of the above applications and raise no objections to two of them. The Parish Council requests that all six applications are reported to the appropriate ERYC Committee together and that this Statement is put before Elected Members in its entirety - not in summarised form.
2. Lockington is a farming and residential village with a unique character. This results partly from the presence of active farms and within the village and partly from the interplay of three physical attributes – the many attractive red brick buildings , the large and small areas of agricultural ‘greenspace’ scattered throughout the village and the presence of the Bryan Mills Beck. Lockington’s special character was recognised in 1974 when the village was first made a Conservation Area and confirmed in 2009 when ERYC updated its Conservation Area Statement.
3. Because of Conservation Area status and the policies of planning authorities towards housing development in small villages over the last 40 years , new housebuilding in Lockington has been very limited. Throughout this time the Parish Council when commenting on development proposals has always sought to balance conservation of village character with the need to retain a lively community - which may require appropriate modest development to take place occasionally.
4. From 1996 to 2013 - a period of 17 years - it is understood that ERYC only granted permission for two new dwellings and two conversions for dwellings in Lockington. At the end of 2014 ERYC granted permission for two new dwellings (on the site of the disused garage on Front Street) and three dwellings in converted barns (Manor Farm). The Parish Council did not object in principle to either of these recent applications on the basis that they were ‘appropriate , ‘modest’ and ‘occasional’ and did not prejudice the conservation of the village’s character by taking agricultural greenspace (though we did object to design and layout details on the disused garage site).
5. In the light of this planning history and the two recent permissions, the Parish Council – and residents – were taken aback to see the six current applications for eight new dwellings all submitted at the same time. Together, they propose enough new houses for about 60 years at the rate of the last two decades, making a total of about 75 years-worth including the two recent permissions! The Parish Council considers this excessive in the local context and so do residents. We are aware that a substantial number of residents have written direct to ERYC with their views.

6. Nonetheless, the Parish Council has carefully considered the six applications on their individual merits in the light of planning policy as we understand it and the need to conserve the unique character of the Conservation Area. This latter need is surely a factor of ‘acknowledged importance’ in terms of the Government’s National Planning Guidelines. We are grateful to the ERYC planning department for sending an official to our 9 February 2015 meeting to help us understand the current national and local policy context and to describe how applications are processed. The rest of this Statement sets out the Parish Council’s assessment of the proposals and the reasoning behind its views.

 7. The local planning framework - both existing and proposed - limits housing development in villages like Lockington to small numbers over long time periods. While the current situation appears complicated because the new East Riding Local Plan is still going through its formal approval process, our understanding is that the Submission Strategy Document of January 2014 carries the most weight. The key policy is POLICY S4 PART B on page 46. The relevant wording states that for named small villages (including Lockington) :

 WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT LIMITS OF VILLAGES, AS DEFINED ON POLICY MAPS, THE FOLLOWING FORMS OF DEVELOPMENT WILL BE SUPPORTED WHERE IT DOES NOT DETRACT FROM THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE VILLAGE :

 1. NEW HOUSING , USUALLY COMPRISING A SINGLE DWELLING

1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

8. All six planning applications are for housing and all fall within the defined Development Limits for Lockington so Policy S4 part B applies. It is the strong contention of the Parish Council - based on local knowledge reinforced by specially undertaken site visits - that while two of the six applications pass the test set out in the underlined part of Policy S4 part B above, four clearly fail it. These four applications all propose housebuilding on significant agricultural greenspace gaps which make important contributions to the character and appearance of those parts of the Conservation Area where they are located. Each of them makes a unique visual contribution to the street scene by providing a green agricultural

break or vista. They are vital elements of Lockington’s special character which the best- designed house cannot replace. Their loss would clearly be detrimental to the village’s character and appearance.

9. Although the two applications which pass the test in the underlined part of Policy S4 do provide greenspace gaps, these are not agricultural in appearance and so make much less contribution to village character. In the Parish Council’s view their loss would not be detrimental to the appearance of the village. Housebuilding is therefore considered to be appropriate on these two sites, particularly as one of the proposals is for a pair of semi- detached houses which are likely to be more affordable for local people.

10. The Parish Council therefore raises NO OBJECTION to the granting of planning permission for the following two applications :

* 14/04081/PLF Two semi detached dwellings north of 70 Thorpe
* 14/04082/PLF Detached dwelling following demolition of store 82 Front St

 11. However THE PARISH COUNCIL OBJECTS IN THE STRONGEST TERMS TO THE FOLLOWING FOUR APPLICATIONS ON THE GROUNDS OF THEIR BEING CONTRARY TO EAST RIDING LOCAL PLAN POLICY S4 PART B AND THOSE PARTS OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING GUIDELINES WHICH PROTECT HERITAGE ASSETS LIKE CONSERVATION AREAS FROM HARM OR INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT :

* 14/4078/PLF Two detached dwellings east of Village Farm , Front Street
* 14/4079/PLF Detached dwelling south of 42 Thorpe
* 14/4080/PLF Detached dwelling east of 40 Front Street
* 14/4083/PLF Detached dwelling east of School Farm , Front Street

12. The Parish Council asks the Committee to visit the village to assess for themselves the contribution which each site makes to Lockington’s character and appearance and to then exercise the discretion allowed for Elected Members by the wording of PolicyS4 part B. The Parish Council urges the Committee to refuse the four applications listed in para 11 above and to consider recommending consequential minor adjustments to the development limit.

13. What looks like neat ‘rounding off’ or ‘infill’ on a map or survey can have a big negative impact on the ground. Once lost, these four small but significant agricultural greenspace gaps in Lockington - so vital to its unique character - can never be regained.

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