DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

AT

FORMER VICARAGE
GROBY ROAD
RATBY



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ratby Vicarage was constructed in 1904 and formed the Vicarage for the Parish until 2010 when a replacement Vicarage was bought.

The large size of the building and grounds combined with high running costs made it unsuitable for continued use as a Vicarage.

In addition, the property does not satisfy the standards laid down by the Church Commissioners for Vicarage accommodation in their 'Green Guide'.

The Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance in conjunction with the present Incumbent therefore decided to acquire a replacement property within Ratby and to dispose of the current Vicarage.

It is our view that the property offers scope for sympathetic development within the grounds to accommodate two further dwellings along with retaining the existing Vicarage.

2.0. SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 Appraisal

The former Vicarage comprises a large detached dwelling of stone construction with red brick detailing on the corners and around the windows. The roof is a pitched tiled roof including 3 impressive chimney stacks which complete the exterior to the Vicarage.

The overall former Vicarage site extends to 1.063 acres (0.430 ha) or thereabouts. The development site itself is outlined in red with the former Vicarage grounds indicated in blue.

The extensive garden is principally laid to lawn but also enjoys a private tarmacadam access track from Groby Road and parking to the east of the former Vicarage. The site is surrounded by mature trees and is effectively shielded from all neighbouring properties.

2.2. Surrounding Areas

The Vicarage lies to the North of Groby Road with private access situated half way between the M1 to the East and Markfield Road to the West. The property is adjoined to the east by modern bungalows and other houses. To the immediate west is the access track to the Oaklands School of Riding, further to the west of this is a modern bungalow and other modern houses.

2.3. Planning Context

Having studied the local planning policies we have concluded that the following policies are relevant to the application.



2.3.1 **Local Plan (2001)**

While many Local Plan policies have been superceded by those included in the Core Strategy adopted in December 2009, many have been saved and are still material considerations for current planning applications.

The following policies are still utilised in the planning process as taken from the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan (2001);

'POLICY RES1 - RESIDENTIAL PROPOSALS
PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED ANCILLARY USES ON THE FOLLOWING SITES IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP'. Page 24 of Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan

The Vicarage site in question is not allocated and therefore the following policy then applies;

POLICY RES5 - RESIDENTIAL PROPOSALS ON UNALLOCATED SITES ON SITES WHICH ARE NOT SPECIFICALLY ALLOCATED IN THE PLAN FOR HOUSING, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IF:
a THE SITE LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF AN URBAN AREA OR RURAL SETTLEMENT AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, AND

The site lies within the development boundary as indicated in the Local Plan Ratby Inset Map.

b THE SITING, DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF THE PROPOSAL DO NOT CONFLICT WITH THE RELEVANT PLAN POLICIES. **Page 41 of Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan**

The site does not conflict with any of these policies and indicates that infill plots may be suitable for development to help meet housing targets.

'It is important to allow for new development in villages where there is a clearly defined local need. Appropriate policies in the Local Plan are designed to allow for this. The definition of tight settlement boundaries and the objective of limiting the residential expansion of villages does not preclude all development. There may well be infill plots suitable for development within villages where development in line with Policy RES5, Residential Proposals on Unallocated Sites, of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan would be appropriate.' 2.13.6 Page 42 of Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan.

2.3.2 **Ratby Village Design Guide (2011)**

The Ratby Village Design Guide (VDS) indicates that Ratby can be divided up into four separate zones based on their location and history. The subject site lies with *the 'Zone D; Church Farm Estate to the east (late 20/21st century).'* 3.0 SETTLEMENT PATTERN, page 11 Ratby VDS.

According to the Ratby VDS *'The first house on Groby Road was the Vicarage (1904), a large detached building in Charnwood Stone.*' Page 8.

Detailed on page 12 of the Ratby VDS are 13 General Design Guidelines numbered 7-19 which apply to all four areas of the Ratby Village settlement.

Detailed on page 46 of the Ratby VDS are 11 specific Design Guidelines numbered 75-85 which apply to Zone D in which the subject site falls.

The majority of these general guidelines relate to how the proposed development should relate to the character of the area. They go on to say that the size, scale & design should be consistent with those in the immediate area. The development should also usually retain large gardens, mature trees & hedge lines should be retained.

These guidelines generally relate to layouts of the development in terms of access and scale which we have complied with.

Having extensively consulted with Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council throughout this development proposal we feel we have met the above criteria having reduced the scale of development to what it is now. The two proposed dwellings will be of a similar scale to that of the former Vicarage but will not be quite so large so as to visually compete with the Rectory and are situated slightly lower in terms of topography. While some trees will be lost to create a new entrance we have consulted extensively with our Highways Designer and our Arboriculturalist to come up with a scheme that while delivering an acceptable development, minimises tree loss. We believe the development will open up the green wall which surrounds the former Vicarage and allow people to see the building itself. This will create a more varied street scene and allow residents to see the former Vicarage from the Groby Road.

2.3.3 **Core Strategy (2009)**

Within page 41 of the Core Strategy Ratby has been highlighted as a Key Rural Centre relating to Leicester.

Policy 8 of the Core Strategy (page 43) relating to Ratby then goes on to list what the local council must do to ensure local people have access to a range of housing & services. These include;

- Allocate land for a minimum of 75 new homes. Developers are to demonstrate that the number, type & mix meet the local needs.
- Contribute to local facilities via off site contributions.
- Proposals must be in line with policies 15 & 16.

Policy 15 of the Core Strategy (page 57) relating to affordable housing indicates that the subject site is not of a large enough size to qualify for the affordable housing threshold. Due to the tree restrictions on site an agreement has been made that the proposed density on site is acceptable with Hinckley and Bosworth DC. The development will only be resulting in 2 additional dwellings, with the trigger point for affordable housing set at 4 dwellings or more, Policy 15 has no further bearing on this site.

Policy 16 of the Core Strategy (page 59) relating to Housing Density & Design is only applicable to developments of 10 dwellings or more.

3. CONSULTATIONS

Extensive consultation has taken place with Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council commencing on 16th April 2010 with Mr Richard Wright of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

In brief the points were that;

1. *There are concerns over the access into the site in terms of visibility and enquiries must be made with the Local Highways Officer.*
2. *The site has a significant covering of trees and the Local Planning Authority will wish to see these retained either in their entirety or in significant numbers.*
3. *Subject to the detail the LPA would be happy in principle with retention of the existing house and addition of 1 or 2 plots within the grounds*
4. *In policy terms demolition of the existing house and comprehensive redevelopment of the site would be possible, however, the LPA suspects that existence of tree covering would go against this.*
5. *An application to the west of the site for a mobile home was refused on highway grounds.*

A scheme was drawn up and submitted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site including the demolition of the former Vicarage and provision of 4 detached dwellings.

On the 13th September 2010, Eleanor Shaw of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council indicated that the loss of the Vicarage would be a shame and that the replacement building would have to be of exceptional design. Other issues included; the proximity of the proposed dwelling to the site boundaries, lack of 'usable amenity space' and also ensuring the dwellings adhered to the most recent SPG on residential development. There were also concerns about the density of the development.

We were advised to reconsider the layout and density of the proposal along with consulting an Arboriculturalist to ensure the development did not subsequently harm nearby trees as the screening of the site would be 'principle to the overall acceptability of the scheme'.

Further to these two detailed pieces of consultation we sent the enclosed revised plan for discussion with Hinckley & Bosworth Council. The revised plan includes the provision of 2 new

dwellings from a proposed new access and the retention of the existing access and dwelling forming the former Vicarage.

On 1st October 2010 Richard Wright of Hinckley & Bosworth Council indicated that the enclosed plan was agreeable in principle for; the retention of the existing former Rectory 'as is' and 2 new dwellings within the grounds accessed by the new road off Groby Road.

4.0. DESIGN

Taking the plan policies and the consultations into account, the following design solution has been arrived at : -

i. The retention of the former Vicarage with its historical access.

ii. Provision of 2 four bed detached family homes with new access of Groby Road.

5.0 ACCESS

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the former Vicarage will continue 'as is'.

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the 2 new dwellings will be via a new access road off Groby Road. Leicester County Highways Authority has been consulted extensively on this matter and has approved the enclosed junction in principle.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The overall intention of the scheme is to enable sympathetic development within the extensive grounds of the former Vicarage.

This planning application is for residential development with access as a matter for approval. All other matters are reserved. The submitted plan is purely indicative and is provided to show that two large dwellings can be achieved on site.