

Poolewe: Builders'



Chapter No:

42

- 37 - Strav and Alison McDonagh/Grove [Written Submissions]
 41 - Mr and Mrs K Redshaw [Written Submissions]

BACKGROUND

1. Poolewe is identified in the Proposals Map as lying within an area of medium sensitivity. At the north-west end of the settlement, a number of housing allocations have been included within the Settlement Development Area boundary. Relevant to this objection is that designated as AH2: Builders Yard, although this, in turn, refers to site H2. The table is set out as follows:

Reference	Location	Indicative Capacity	Requirements
H2	Builders Yard Field	5	
AH1	Cliffon Road	5	Existing outline consent
AH2	Builders Yard	8	Subject to relocation of existing building business. Should provide access into Site H2



and the Proposals Map Inset shows the following (see below left):

2. The builders' yard occupies the site shown as AH2 on the Inset Map, less the square which comprises the southernmost part of the AH2 designation, and the objection site in this case. This square includes the objectors' house and garden ground which lie to the south of the public road and its turning area. Also included in the square area is the extension of the public road as a small track, which permits access to the field to the west of the site. The builders' yard is presently separated from the adjacent residential area by a 2m high earth bund, now overgrown with grass.

← Extract from deposit draft Proposals Map Poolewe Inset, showing the north-west corner of the Settlement

Development Area.

3. Site H2 is a field currently used for grazing purposes, although extensive growth of reeds indicates that the area is water-logged.

SUMMARY OF THE OBJECTIONS

4. The **objectors** pointed out the discrepancy highlighted above, whereby one of the objectors' house and garden was shown to be within the site identified as AH2. They also pointed out that, once this area had been removed from the site, if it continued to be designated for eight affordable homes, the density would be considerably higher than that proposed on the Inset Map and should be reduced accordingly. In any case, the increase in housing in such a confined space in a small village – particularly the cumulative impact of the various sites identified – would have a detrimental impact on social, economic and environmental well-being of the existing community and undermine the character of the village.

5. In addition, there was concern over road safety. All three sites AH1, AH2 and H2 (amounting to a total of 18 houses) would be served by Clifton Place, which met the main road at a junction with very poor visibility. As a result, vehicles joining the main road were required to drive on the wrong side of the road in order to negotiate the manoeuvre. This represented a danger to all road users. An alternative access might be possible through site H1.

6. The objector who lived in the house which had been omitted from the inset map considered that the erection of new houses on site AH2 would have an unacceptable impact on the property's privacy and amenity, unless the existing bund around the builders' yard were to remain, be maintained and be planted with trees and shrubs. The other objectors' property was also protected by the bund and accordingly, they supported this view. They also objected to the possibility of two-storey houses being erected on the site, as their property would be overlooked.

SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

7. The council accepted that the boundary of site AH2 included the objectors' property and, by a modification to the plan, would be amended to exclude that area. However, the number of homes to be built on the site would be maintained at eight, as, with at least some of the houses being semi-detached it was considered that this level of development would be consistent with density levels in this part of the village, which were higher than elsewhere. The figure on the table remained indicative only.

8. In regard to road safety, a number of trees were being removed from Clifton Road, with lay-bys provided for off-street parking in association with the new housing scheme at AH1. The council's roads department had advised that all-round visibility at the road junction referred to was good and well within what was required in an urban situation. In any case, there was some doubt as to whether there would be any real increase in the use of the junction in terms of traffic generated by new housing, as against the traffic generated by the builders' operations. The council also explained that access to the site from H1 would not be possible as it would require vehicles to pass over land in the ownership of others and which had not been offered for development. It would also require to cross the existing play area.

9. The council accepted that the bund provided separation between the existing houses and the builders' yard, and its retention with landscaping might be desirable in respect of the residential amenity of the existing housing as well as for the new houses. A requirement would be

added to the allocations table on the Proposals Map Inset to this effect but the exact nature and extent of any landscaping would be the subject of a detailed planning application.

CONCLUSIONS

10. I agree with the objectors that the first matter raised by them does appear to include a house and its garden ground within the allocation for affordable housing. Whatever the intention of the allocation, the result was clearly a misunderstanding and the council proposes a modification to clarify the position. I consider this to be the sensible course for all concerned.

11. The objectors' assumption that the site for the eight houses must have included the area of the objectors' house is continued into the argument that by omitting this area, the density will be higher. The council wishes to maintain the eight houses, but it is not clear whether this is because (a) despite the house and garden being included within the allocation site, it never envisaged building over the existing garden ground; or (b) whether the extent of the site was drawn incorrectly and although the density will be higher as a result, it will still be possible to fit eight houses into the reduced area. Whatever the reason, the site is identified for affordable housing and I support the council's contention that the area to the north of the objectors' property is suitable for eight houses. It seems to me that the density of the terraced properties to the east of the north end of the site have a higher density still, and with the use of the whole site (as opposed to the remainder within the earth bund, an issue I cover below), I do not accept that the density would be out of character with this area of the village.



Photograph showing affected junction, where access to the Clifton area meets the main road

12. The junction referred to by the objectors is illustrated (right), and it appears that the council's professional advisors on roads matters accept that this junction is to standard. I agree with the objector that vision for vehicles entering the main road is limited, at the least by the garage to the right and the planting to the left, if the boundary enclosures of the fence and wall themselves

are taken to be too low to form any visual obstruction. In the circumstances, I must assume that the lack of concern over sight lines at this junction is on the basis of the limited number of vehicles it carries at any time; and, as stated by the council, that the use of the junction by cars associated with up to 18 houses would be no worse than use by heavy goods vehicles associated with the builders' yard.

13. The bund has clearly been erected to enclose and contain the visual impact of the builders' yard. When housing is substituted for the present use, I consider that there will be no need for the separation afforded by the bund. It is not usual for areas of housing to be sub-divided by

earth bunds and such a practice would reduce the area available for garden ground between and around houses, thereby also increasing the density of the proposed housing. Certainly, the landscaping of any housing layout which follows should be a matter for the planning application, but in my opinion the incorporation of the existing bund either at the roadside opposite the objectors' house or within the overall residential area would appear most incongruous. I simply do not accept that houses on the opposite side of a road – albeit the road reduces to a track at this point – are an invasion of privacy. Accordingly, I consider that the bund should not be added to the allocation tables as a requirement.

14. Finally, the objectors are concerned that the housing to be erected on the builders' yard site will be two-storey in height. I agree that, with single-storey housing all around, this would appear incongruous and an intrusion into the local environment. However, the site is allocated for affordable housing and it would be unusual for this type of housing to exceed single- or one-and-a-half-storeys, so that it seems to me to be unnecessary to impose a single-storey limit at this stage.

RECOMMENDATION

15. I therefore recommend that

- (i) the area of the allocation of AH2 be amended to exclude the objectors' house and garden ground, as proposed by the council;
- (ii) the allocation for AH2 remain at 8 houses; but

that no other changes be made to the allocations table or the inset map as a result of these objections.