

**21/01092/FUL**

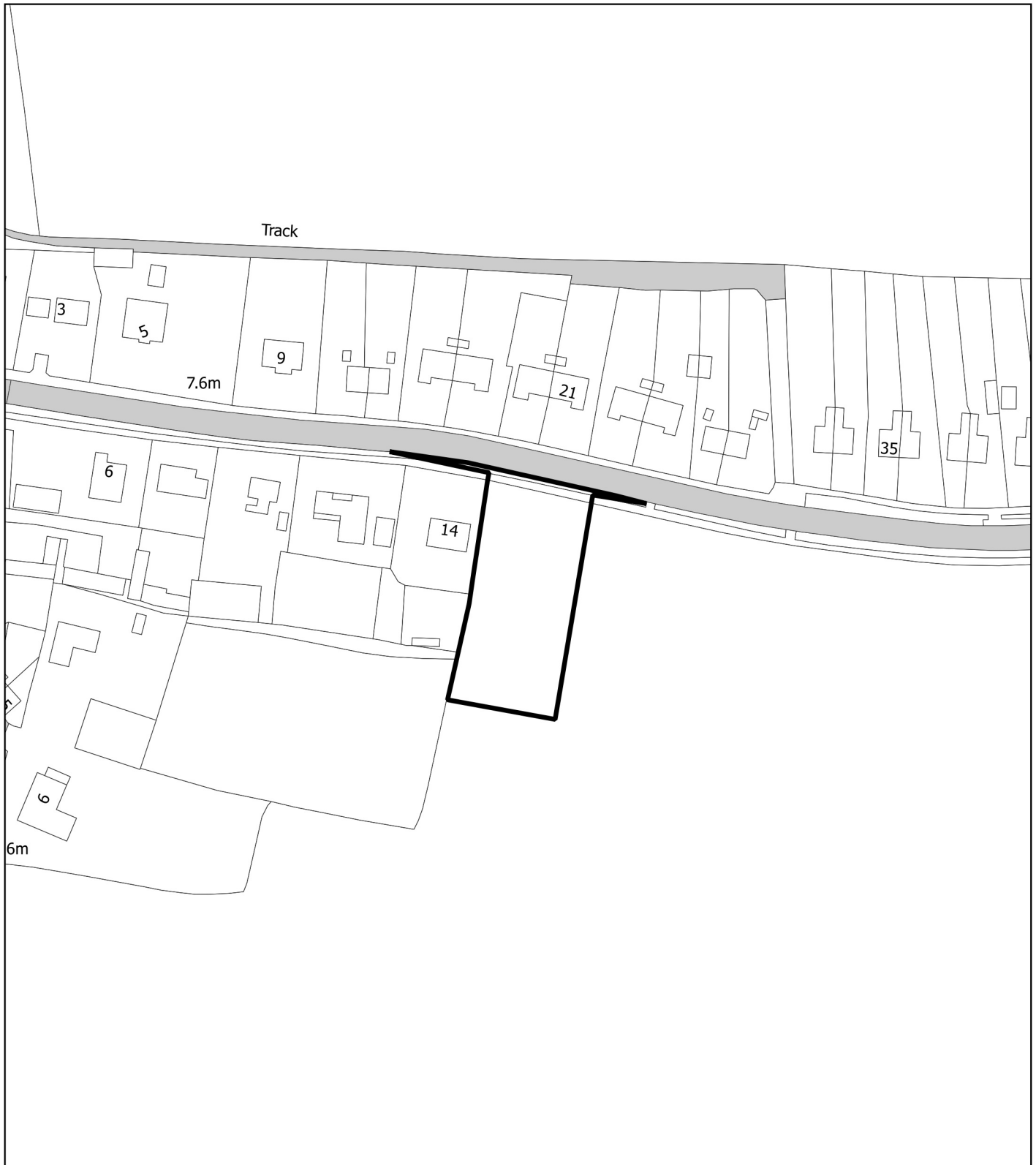
Land Adjacent To 14  
Church Road  
Wicken  
Cambridgeshire

Construction of three dwellings, garages, access and associated works  
- Plots 1-3

To view all of the public access documents relating to this application please use the following web address or scan the QR code:

<http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=QZ2JJ6GG0CT00>





21/01092/FUL

Land Adjacent To 14  
Church Road  
Wicken



East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

Date: 14/12/2021  
Scale: 1:1,500



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**MAIN CASE**

**Reference No:** 21/01092/FUL

**Proposal:** Construction of three dwellings, garages, access and associated works - Plots 1-3

**Site Address:** Land Adjacent To 14 Church Road Wicken Cambridgeshire

**Applicant:** C J Murfitt, Lads Construction & Grays Developments

**Case Officer:** Toni Hylton Senior Planning Officer

**Parish:** Wicken

**Ward:** Soham South  
Ward Councillor/s: Ian Bovingdon  
Dan Schumann

**Date Received:** 14 September 2021      **Expiry Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**Report Number W127**

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**1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Members are recommended to REFUSE the application for the following reasons:
1. The proposed development of 3 detached dwellings seeks to provide in depth development with plot 3 sitting behind Plots 1 and 2. This is in direct conflict with policy WIC2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 which seeks development to be frontage development. This application is not supported by a contextual analysis of the site; its immediate environs and the wider locality as required by the East Cambridgeshire Design Guide SPD (2012). As such, this application is unable to demonstrate in principle that the benefits of providing a dwelling within this constrained 'backland' site, located outside of the site allocation in the Local Plan would outweigh the significant potential for adverse impacts in terms of location of the development and the requirements of policies WIC2 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 and the Design Guide SPD.
  2. Plot 3 is located within open countryside and outside the development envelope for Wicken and the site allocation (Policy WIC2), it is considered that the proposal is a form of creeping development and would be an encroachment into the open countryside. This part of the site is not part of the allocation and the dwelling does not meet any of the defined exceptions stated with policy

GROWTH2 of the Local Plan. Introducing a dwelling into this location results in the proposal being considered to be visually intrusive form of development at odds with the built form of the vicinity that would cause demonstrable harm to the character of the rural landscape and its setting within the surrounding countryside, contrary to the requirements of Policy GROWTH 2, which restricts development outside of the defined development envelopes and policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.

3. The design of the proposed 3 dwellings in this edge of settlement location fails to consider the mass, scale and character of the area. Church Road is characterised by a mix of simple designs with parking provision to the side with space around the dwellings. The proposed dwellings introduce new characteristics which are not in keeping with the simple character of the immediate surroundings of the site. The proposal leads to a continual line of development with dwellings out of keeping with the mass and scale of the immediate vernacular. On this basis the proposal is considered to be contrary to policies WIC2, ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 and the Design Guide SPD.

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application proposes the erection of 3 detached dwellings along Church Road, Wicken, with an adjoining application for a further 3 dwellings application reference 21/01228/FUL. The table below provides the dimensions of the dwellings proposed for plots 1,2 and 3.

Plot	Height	Width	Depth	Floor area	Plot size
1	6.6m (21.6)	8.3m (27.2)	9.8m (35.1)	90.91 (978.4)	364 (3918)
2	7.7m (25.6)	9.1m (29.8)	7.2m (23.6)	101.12 (1087.15)	336 (3616.6)
3	4.8m (15.7)	12.8m (42)	17.3m (56.7)	138.83 (1485.4)	896 (9644.4)
			Total	330.05 (3552.6)	

\*Please note the figures in ( ) are measured in feet and inches\*

- 2.2 Each plot has 2 car parking spaces with 1 access serving all 3 dwellings from Church Road. The access is approximately 3.7m (12.1ft) wide. To the rear of the site is a 5m (16.4ft) wide planting belt with native species hedges to the boundaries.
- 2.3 The officer advised of the following concerns and requested amendments to the scheme which are listed below:
  - Site plot 1 a minimum of 10 metres (32.8ft) from no. 14 Church Road
  - Plot 3 is in a backland location
  - Potential for overlooking
- 2.4 In December amended plans were received which addressed the potential for overlooking between plots 2 and 3. A supporting statement was provided as to why the other issues raised were not addressed. In brief:

- The proposed dwelling (plot 1) is lower in height than previously approved and sited forward into the site and therefore does not directly block the neighbours window;
- Given the approval of a dwelling to the rear of 14 Church Lane there is a precedent for backland development.

2.5 Cllr Ian Bovingdon called the application into planning committee on 3rd November 2021. Cllr Bovingdon had been contacted by the applicant and was aware of the Parish Council comments and considered that the application should be discussed by members of the planning committee to be fair to both the Parish Council and the applicant.

2.6 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

21/01226/FUL	Construction of three dwellings, garages, access and associated works - Plots 4-6	To be determined	
21/00273/FUL	Residential development comprising three dwellings, garaging, parking, turning and associated site works - phased development	Withdrawn	06.05.2021
20/01393/RMA	Reserved matters of Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout & Scale of planning application 17/01945/OUT for residential development for 6no. new dwellings	Approved	04.02.2021
17/01945/OUT	Residential development for 6no. new dwellings	Approved	29.01.2019

#### Adjacent Site Planning History

19/00610/FUL	Construction of a bungalow	Approved	19.06.2019
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### 4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The application site comprises part of a larger agricultural field on the eastern edge of Wicken. There are residential dwellings located adjacent to the west of the site and on the opposite side of Church Road to the north of the site. The site has a public footway

and highway verge with a tree to the front. Part of the site is within the development envelope for Wicken, however the rear part of the site is outside the development envelope. The site at the front is allocated by Policy WIC2 of the adopted East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 for up to 5 dwellings. The land to the rear is in the open countryside.

## 5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

**Ward Councillors** – Cllr Ian Bovingdon called the application into planning committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021. Cllr Bovingdon had been contacted by the applicant and was aware of the Parish Council comments and considered that the application should be discussed by members of the planning committee to be fair to both the Parish Council and the applicant.

### **Wicken Parish – 20 December 2021**

Reiterate comments made below on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

### **Wicken Parish - 14 October 2021**

States "Wicken Parish Council strongly objects to this development.

This parcel of land was added to the Local Plan 2015 with the following statement:

Policy WIC 2: Housing allocation, land south of Church Road Approximately 0.2 hectares of land is allocated for residential development on land to the south of Church Road for up to 5 dwellings. Development proposals will be expected to:

- o Be frontage development only, to reflect the existing character along Church Road.
- o Provide an element of affordable housing (currently 30%) as required under Policy HOU 3, with priority given to people in local housing need.
- o Provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to reflect current evidence of need within Wicken.
- o Have particular regard to the layout, scale, height, design and massing of buildings, and landscaping, in order to minimise impact on the open countryside.
- o Provide appropriate evidence of the archaeological potential and significance of the site prior to the submission of a planning application; and
- o Comply with the other policies of the Local Plan.

This application does not comply with two areas of this statement.

- o Be frontage development only, to reflect the existing character along Church Road.

The bungalow on plot number 3 is situated behind the house on plot 2 and it therefore not frontage development. This gives the appearance of a cul-de-sac.

- o Provide an element of affordable housing (currently 30%) as required under Policy HOU 3, with priority given to people in local housing need.
- o The application does not provide an element of affordable housing and will not be affordable to residents of Wicken on the local average wage.
- o The application adversely affects the neighbouring property at number 14 Church Road causing loss of light. Please note that the new build bungalow at the rear on number 14 was granted permission during the period of speculative development when there was not a local plan in force.

Wicken Parish Council supports the planning application already approved for this site under reference 20/01393 and do not wish to see any deviation from this. Should the application be passed the Parish Council would like a condition applied that all work should be completed at the same time rather than individually as this will cause too much disruption to neighbouring properties and uses of the A1123.”

**Environmental Health - 5 October 2021**

**States** “Due to the proposed number of dwellings and the close proximity of existing properties I would advise that construction times and deliveries during the construction phase are restricted to the following:

07:30 - 18:00 each day Monday - Friday  
07:30 - 13:00 on Saturdays and  
None on Sundays or Bank Holidays

If it is necessary to undertake ground piling I would request that a method statement be produced and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) before work takes place. This document should include the commitment to notifying nearby properties prior to the work commencing to advise how long the works will last. This notification should also provide a contact number so that if there are any concerns while the piling is taking place they can contact the contractor. If the method of piling involves impact driving I would request a commitment to the following restricted hours specifically for piling - 09:00 - 17:00 each day Monday - Friday and None on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays.

If there is no intention to utilise ground piling then I would request this be confirmed in writing and a condition which prevents it be attached until such time as a ground piling method statement is agreed with the LPA.

No other comments to make at this time but please send out the environmental notes.”

**Environmental Health - 24 September 2021**

**States** “I have read the Envirosearch report dated 3 March 2021 and accept the findings. The site is at very low risk of land contamination and no further work is required. Due to the proposed sensitive end use of the site (residential) I recommend that standard contaminated land condition 4 (unexpected contamination) is attached to any grant of permission.”

**Local Highways Authority - 4 October 2021**

**States** “I do not object to this application. The vehicular cross-over access and internal layout and turning is appropriate for a development of this nature and scale. The internal road will not be considered for adoption by the LHA as it serves insufficient public utility.

Please append the following conditions and informative to any permission granted:  
Conditions

HW8A: No gates, fences or walls shall be erected across the approved vehicular access, as shown on 20: 153 - 11.

HW16A: Parking and turning area shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan 20: 153 - 11 and thereafter retained for that specific use.

Non-Standard Condition: Vehicular access shall be constructed to include the provision of a metalled/sealed surface for a minimum length of 5m from the existing carriageway edge.”

**Waste Strategy (ECDC) - 24 September 2021**

No objection subject to the payment towards the provision of bins

**Cambridgeshire Archaeology - 11 October 2021**

States “An archaeological evaluation of the proposed development area has previously been carried out against the condition included on prior permission ref 17/01945/OUT for development in this location. The results of the evaluation demonstrated that all six trenches contained archaeological features, consisting of ditches, gullies and pits dated to the Late Saxon to early medieval period (c. AD 1050-1350). The pottery assemblage is suggestive of domestic activity on or immediately adjacent to the site. Settlement-type activity is also strongly suggested by the recovery of charred cereals, chaff and lava quern, which may attest to on-site processing of cereals. The recovery of animal and fish bones (including eel) along with marine mollusc shell suggests the disposal of midden material. The remains are significant in terms of understanding the origins and development of the village. The most northern of the series of linear features appears to run parallel to the modern road, likely medieval in origin, linking the isolated church to the east with the historic core of the village to the west (Oxford Archaeology East report number 2336, ECB5898). In view of this evidence we recommend that further archaeological work is required in advance of construction, in mitigation of the impacts of the proposed development on the sensitive archaeological remains known to be present.

We therefore do not object to development from proceeding in this location but consider that the site should be subject to a further programme of archaeological investigation (excavation), secured through the inclusion of a negative condition.

**ECDC Trees Team - No Comments Received**

**Enforcement Section - No Comments Received**

**Infrastructure & Strategic Housing Manager - ECDC - No Comments Received**

**CCC Growth & Development - No Comments Received**

5.2 A site notice was displayed near the site on 15 October 2021.

5.3 Neighbours – 12 neighbouring properties were notified, 3 responses were received and are summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council’s website.

- Impact on the neighbours amenities with dwellings along their boundary
- Loss of view
- Disturbance during construction
- Increase in traffic



## 6.0 The Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 4	Delivery of growth
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
HOU2	Housing density
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 4	Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 9	Pollution
ENV14	Sites of archaeological interest
COM7	Transport impact
COM8	Parking provision
WIC 2	Housing allocation, land south of Church Road

### 6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations  
Design Guide  
Contaminated Land - Guidance on submitted Planning Application on land that may be contaminated  
Flood and Water  
Natural Environment SPD  
Climate Change SPD

### 6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2021

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 5 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- 11 Making effective use of land
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

## 7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

### 7.1 Background

- 7.1.1 In 2015 the Local Planning Authority adopted the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015, this site to the front was allocated as part of WIC2 for residential development, for 5 dwellings, the rear of the site is in the open countryside. In 2019 an outline application (17/01975/OUT) was approved for the provision of 6 dwellings. A reserved matters application (20/01393/RMA) was approved in February 2021. The approved scheme included a pair of semi-

detached chalet style 2 bedroom dwellings, 2 detached 3 bed dwellings and 2 detached 4 bed dwellings. The scheme was frontage development creating 4 vehicular accesses. The scheme did not include detached garages or car ports. This scheme is an extant permission and expires in February 2023.

7.1.2 The table below demonstrates the dimensions of the approved scheme.

Plot	Height	Width	Depth	Floor Area
1	7.3m	Total 13.8m (45.2)	8.9m (29.1)	122.8
2	(23.9)			(1313.2)
3	9.1m	6.8m	11.4m	77.5
4	(29.8)	(22.3)	(37.4)	(1668.4)
5	9m	10.5m	9.4m	98.7
6	(29.5)	(34.4)	(30.8)	(2120.4)
TOTAL				474.5 (5102.09)

\*Please note the figures in ( ) are measured in feet and inches\*

## 7.2 Principle of Development

7.2.1 The Local Planning Authority has accepted this site for residential development as per policy WIC2 and previous approvals for residential development 17/01945/OUT and 20/01393/RMA. However, all of the built form of the development was concentrated within the development envelope and the part of the site which was allocated. This proposal introduces a dwelling to the rear which is not only 'backland' development but development outside of the development envelope and the site allocation. The Local Planning Authority has a 5 year housing land supply of approximately 7 years and therefore does not need to consider the tilted balance in the NPPF. Any development outside of the development envelope is in the open countryside and as such contrary to policy GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 which establishes where residential development should take place.

7.2.2 The site to the front is allocated within the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan under policy WIC2 which allocates the site for development for up to 5 dwellings. The land to the rear is outside of the development. In 2019 an application was approved in outline for 6 dwellings, with a subsequent reserved matters approved in 2021. On this basis the principle of development in this location, in accordance with the extant permission (in terms of the siting of development) has been considered acceptable.

## 7.3 Residential Amenity

7.3.1 To the west of the site is 14 Church Lane and a dwelling is currently nearing completion to the rear of 14 Church Lane. Both dwellings are single storey and have windows on the east facing elevation overlooking plots 1 and 3. The boundary treatment to these dwellings is currently a mix of planting and wire mesh fencing, allowing uninterrupted views over the adjoining land. Number 14 has a window on its east elevation to a habitable room and the bungalow to the rear has windows to the living area and bedroom with a covered terrace. The land to the rear is also the private garden space for the dwelling nearing completion.

- 7.3.2 The proposed Plot 1 sits approximately 7.5 metres (24.6ft) from the east facing elevation of number 14 Church Road, which has a window to a habitable room. It is known that this window serves a habitable room, however it is not known if this is a primary or secondary window. Due to COVID rules it was considered that entering the property to determine was not acceptable. It is considered however, the introduction of a dwelling approximately 7.5 metres (24.6ft) from this window at a height of 6.6 metres (21.6ft) with a full gable end could prove detrimental to the neighbours amenities by way of access to light making the proposal overbearing on this habitable room. Following concerns raised during the course of the application, the agent has stepped the dwellings forward, closer to the road in order to try and address the impact on the adjoining neighbour. It is considered that there is still an impact on the neighbours amenities in terms of overbearing. However, it is whether this impact is considered significant enough to warrant the refusal of this application. It is accepted that the view/outlook from this window will change and in the early hours there may be a loss of light, however this is not something that will be for the whole day and as such this is not considered to cause demonstrable harm. On balance, there is harm but not demonstrable harm and whilst the case officer would prefer to see a greater set back from the boundary as required by the previous scheme to ensure the amenities of the neighbours are maintained, it is considered that the proposal will not cause demonstrable harm and as such is considered to be acceptable in terms of residential amenity.
- 7.3.3 The Design Guide SPD on page 22 states that there should be a minimum of 20 metres (65.6ft) between rear inter-visible windows. The distance between the rear elevation and the side elevation of Plot 3 is approximately 15.5 metres (50.8ft) A window to a shower room is proposed, which can be conditioned to be obscurely glazed to reduce any impact. Additional windows would not require consent, which could lead to overlooking between the dwellings and if the proposal were to be approved additional conditions could be added to remove permitted development rights. It is considered that there could be a perception of overlooking and that the proposal would affect the outlook of the dwelling currently under construction, however, the introduction of boundary treatment and restricting accommodation within the roof space and additional windows would address this issue. As such the proposal, subject to the above mentioned conditions meets the requirements of policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015.
- 7.3.4 The outlook of those dwellings located opposite the site will change if permission was granted. However, whilst those properties will have their view changed, it is not considered that the proposed dwellings will have an adverse impact in terms of overlooking or being overbearing on those existing properties.
- 7.3.5 In terms of the amenities of the future occupiers of the proposed dwellings it is considered that the proposed dwellings meet the requirements of policy ENV2 and the Design Guide SPD. The proposal achieves 3 plots all in excess of 300 square metres (3229 sqft) with gardens in excess of 50 square metres (538 sqft). The dwellings have been amended to ensure there is no overlooking by removing balconies and the adjoining scheme application 21/01226/FUL ensures the same. It is recommended that a condition is attached restricting windows on the east and west elevations to ensure all future occupiers amenities are maintained.

7.3.6 A neighbour has also raised concerns that the proposal would impact upon their view and the disturbance during construction. Under planning regulations no one has a right to a view and as such is not a reason for refusal. With regard to disturbance during construction this is a temporary issue that can be managed through a condition restricting working hours and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) as requested by the Environmental Health Officer.

#### 7.4 Visual Amenity

7.4.1 The character of Church Road is characterised by predominantly single storey dwellings to the west and 2 storey semi-detached dwellings to the north. The dwellings opposite the site are semi-detached and are a mix of render and brick. The development along Church Road is predominantly linear. There is an anomaly with the development of a single storey dwelling to the rear of 14 Church Lane, however the remaining development is linear, all having road frontage following the line of the road.

7.4.2 The proposed plots 1 and 2 sit further forward than the adjoining dwelling, 14 Church Road, however are in similar line to the property at number 12 Church Road. Plot 3 sits to the rear of the plots to the front and is out of keeping with the predominant rhythm of the street scene. The dwelling will have no street frontage and is tantamount to 'backland development' and is also situated outside the development envelope and the site allocation boundary. Page 25 of the Design Guide SPD states that "backland development will only be acceptable if supported by a contextual analysis of the locality". It is considered that 1 dwelling almost reaching completion is not a detailed contextual analysis or justification to allow plot 3 and as such the overriding character of Church Road, is linear development. On this basis the proposal is contrary to policies ENV1 and WIC2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 and the Design Guide SPD.

7.4.3 Policy WIC2, which allocates this site for development, states that any proposals should be in a linear form. Since the adoption of the policy, the criterion has had to adapt, it has been agreed that the site can accommodate 6 dwellings, rather than 5, in accordance with the extant permissions on the site. The NPPF has also been amended and states at paragraph 64 that the 'provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments', therefore affordable housing cannot be sought as part of this development as it is not a major development. However, the remaining criterion should still be met which is:

- *Be frontage development only, to reflect the existing character along Church Road.*

By virtue of providing a dwelling to the rear of plots 1 and 2 the proposal fails to meet this criterion of the policy.

- *Provide an element of affordable housing (currently 30%) as required under Policy HOU 3, with priority given to people in local housing need.*

This is no longer required as set out above.

- *Provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to reflect current evidence of need within Wicken.*

The proposal provides 2, 3 and 4 bed roomed dwellings cumulatively with the adjoining scheme application 21/01226/FUL. This proposal however, provides 1 no. 2 bed dwelling and 2 no. 3 bed dwellings. As a standalone development the mix can be considered acceptable; however with the adjoining scheme it provides a development which provides a higher proportion of large 4 bed dwellings which is not what the Parish Council consider are needed for the village. No evidence has been provided by the applicant which supports the mix of dwellings proposed and what is needed in the village.

- *Have particular regard to the layout, scale, height, design and massing of buildings, and landscaping, in order to minimise impact on the open countryside.*

By providing in depth development in this location fails on 2 counts;

1. Being outside the development envelope.
2. Fails to consider the linear nature of development along Church Road.

By providing a dwelling outside of the development envelope and the site allocation this is an incursion into the open countryside. The in depth development is considered to be out of keeping with the linear development along Church Road, tantamount to backland development. The Design Guide SPD requires that when proposing a backland development a contextual analysis of the area is undertaken. The justification for a dwelling in this backland location has been the development of the single storey dwelling to the rear of number 14 Church Road. This dwelling is an anomaly in the streetscene and should not be used to support another development. The proposed siting of a dwelling to the rear also introduces a dwelling located outside the development envelope and the site allocation, which is at odds with the previous permission on this site.

The proposal introduces 3 dwellings, closer to the road and whilst in terms of height they are lower than those approved as part of the extant permission on site, they are larger in footprint and due to their massing and siting they cover the width of the site. The dwellings opposite have space around them and to introduce almost a continual line of development will be out of keeping with this edge of settlement location, to the detriment of the visual character of the area. In reducing the space around the dwellings it is considered to be out of keeping with the rural setting and character of Church Road.

The external appearance of the dwellings uses influences from other dwellings found within the East Cambridgeshire district and they are not distinct to this location. However, the National Design Guide, asks us to look at the immediate surroundings and vernacular. These dwellings, whilst they may suit other locations in the district they are not suitable in this location, as they do not relate to the immediate surroundings. It is accepted that the indicated materials may be acceptable, the design is not. The dwellings appear overly large with protruding gable ends and are elongated in depth. This is not a feature in the immediate surroundings. Dwellings along Church Road are predominantly semi detached with 2 storey dwellings also having single storey elements, which assists in reducing the mass and scale of the dwelling. The proposed dwellings introduce internal space which is for circulation only, to appear 'grand' these

dwellings should be simple and reflect the rural nature of the area and the extant permission on this site. The proposal fails to consider the local character; space around dwellings; landscaping and to reflect the needs of the locality.

- *Provide appropriate evidence of the archaeological potential and significance of the site prior to the submission of a planning application;*  
This is currently being addressed.
- *Comply with the other policies of the Local Plan.*  
The proposal will affect the amenities of the adjoining neighbour, however, this is not considered significant enough to warrant refusal of the application on this basis and as such meets the residential amenity element of policy ENV2. However, the impact on the visual character of the area is considered to be adversely affected in direct conflict with policy ENV1 and ENV2 of the Local Plan.

It is considered that the proposed development fails to meet the criterion of WIC2 by way of proposing in depth development (that is located outside of the site allocation), which is a clear requirement of the policy. It also fails to meet policy GROWTH2 which requires all residential development to take place within defined development envelopes, unless it is one of the exceptions listed. By introducing a single storey dwelling to the rear, outside of the development envelope and outside of the site allocation this proposal is contrary to policy GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015. Other policies do also apply and are discussed further within the report.

7.4.4 The application does not provide details of the materials; however, it is indicated to be a mix of brick, cladding and render. The immediate dwellings are also a mix of brick and render with the dwelling to the rear of number 14 Church Road nearing completion being clad. The materials proposed are considered to feature in the street scene and if permission was granted a condition could be appended to seek exact details, to make sure there would be no adverse impacts.

7.4.5 The recently published National Design Code and NPPF requires development to consider the local surroundings and to raise the standards of design. The proposed development is not considered to raise the standards of design. To raise standards, the proposal would have to use high quality materials and be of a unique design, which relates to the location and it is not considered that this proposal raises the standard of design, a key requirement of the NPPF and National Design Guide. There are similar houses in the district, but not in Wicken and the mix of influences from different design eras is not acceptable when there is a clear defined character in this part of Church Road. The character of this part of Wicken is smaller simple style dwellings, with parking to the side of the dwellings with front and rear gardens. This proposal does not replicate this characteristic. Each dwelling has its own access, however the front garden is small predominantly covered with hard standing for parking and turning of vehicles. The scheme does not provide any detailed landscaping details, however there will be limited landscaping to the front due to the hardstanding and layout of the development. Landscaping will be concentrated to the rear, which will have limited positive impact on the visual amenity of Church Road.

7.4.6 The scheme approved in February 2021 under application reference 20/01393/RMA was considered acceptable, by providing a mix of materials and modern style dwellings using recent developments as a starting point. The scheme was also simple and leant itself to the edge of settlement location in a rural village. The mass and scale of the dwellings was more akin to an edge of settlement location. In comparison, the previous scheme is more in keeping with the character of the area and is an extant permission that can be implemented. This scheme fails to consider its location to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area. Whilst the heights of the dwellings are lower than what was approved, the mass being introduced and elongated depth of the dwellings increases the overall scale of the development and as such fails to reflect the character of the immediate surroundings.

7.4.7 The proposed development does not have space around the dwellings and uses a modern design more akin to an urban setting. It is considered that the proposal does not reflect the character of Church Road. The revised designs fail to consider the simple understated architecture of the locality and its edge of settlement location. It is considered that the design of the proposal fails to meet the objectives of policies WIC2, ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 and Design Guide SPD. The proposal also locates a dwelling (Plot 3) outside of the development envelope and outside of the site allocation, contrary to policy GROWTH 2.

## 7.5 Historic Environment

7.5.1 The site is not within the Conservation Area, and is approximately 300 metres (984ft) from the Grade II Listed St Lawrence Church. The site has been subject to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) and the Historic Environment Team (HET) are awaiting the results. In consultation with the HET a pre-commencement condition is required, as these results are unknown and the WSI is being completed under a different permission. To ensure all of the work is completed to the satisfaction of the HET it would require a pre-commencement condition being applied, as set out in their consultation response. This may change should the results be received prior to the planning committee meeting and Members will be updated accordingly. The proposal is considered to be acceptable and comply with policy ENV14 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 subject to a condition being applied if the proposal was approved.

## 7.6 Highways

7.6.1 Access for the 3 dwellings is via a new access from Church Road. Each plot is provided with 2 parking spaces and space in which to manoeuvre. No details of cycle parking have been provided, however this can be achieved by way of condition. No vehicles will need to reverse out onto the highway. In consultation with the Local Highway Authority no objections to the proposal have been raised subject to conditions restricting gates, walls and fences; that there shall be 5 metres (16ft) of tarmacked access from the back of the highway and there shall be a defined area for parking vehicles. As such in applying these conditions the proposal is considered to comply with policies COM7 and COM8 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015.

7.6.2 A neighbour has raised concerns with regard to the increase in traffic. Church Road is a classified road known as the A1123. It is considered that whilst there will be an increase in traffic it has already been established that this road can accommodate additional traffic from the proposed development, as there is an extant permission of the site. It is considered that the proposal complies with policy COM7 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015.

## 7.7 Ecology

7.7.1 The site was part of an arable farm; however, it would appear not to have been farmed recently. There is limited planting and no ponds within the site. The East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 and the Natural Environment SPD requires developments to provide a net gain in biodiversity. In order to achieve this additional planting and other measures not limited to bird and bat boxes will need to be provided as part of a scheme by way of condition. It is considered that the scheme can achieve a net gain in biodiversity in compliance with policy ENV7 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 and Natural Environment SPD.

## 7.8 Flood Risk and Drainage

7.8.1 The site is within flood zone 1 which is a location where you would expect vulnerable developments, such as housing to be located. The previous outline consent has a condition attached, which requires the submission of details with regard to foul and surface water (condition 6). In the event of planning permission being approved a condition for details of the foul and surface water arrangements would be required. The application is considered acceptable and complies with policy ENV8 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015 and the Flood and Water SPD.

## 7.9 Climate Change

7.9.1 In 2020 the Council adopted the Climate Change SPD and declared a Climate Emergency. The recently adopted Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document predominantly focusses on providing additional guidance to the implementation of Local Plan Policy ENV 4 – Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction. Policy ENV 4 states all proposals for new development should aim for reduced or zero carbon development in accordance with the zero carbon hierarchy: first maximising energy efficiency and then incorporating renewable or low carbon energy sources on-site as far as practicable.

7.9.2 The plan 20:153-12 revision A states that a fabric first approach will be taken to sustainability and the applicant is committed to delivering robust projects that exceed the minimum requirements of building regulations. It is considered that the scheme has satisfied the requirements of the SPD. However, this application is for 3 dwellings and is being considered in conjunction with the adjacent scheme for 3 dwellings, application 21/01226/FUL, all within the same ownership. On this basis cumulatively, it is considered that a condition requiring an Energy and Sustainability Statement would be required and this can be appended by way of condition, in order to meet the requirements of policy and the Council's SPD. The proposal is considered to comply with policy ENV4 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council



Local Plan 2015 and the Climate Change SPD, subject to the imposition of planning conditions.

7.10 Conclusion

7.10.1 As submitted the proposal is considered to be contrary to policies WIC2, ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2015. The proposal seeks in depth development in direct conflict with local plan policy, creating a backland form of development which is not in keeping with the rhythm of the existing streetscene. The dwelling to the rear intrudes beyond the development envelope and the site allocation and as the Local Planning Authority can demonstrate a 5YHLS the need to apply the NPPF tilted balance therefore does not apply and as such a new dwelling in the countryside, which does not meet any of the exceptions stated in policy, would be contrary to policy GROWTH 2. The design of the development as a whole fails to consider its rural location. On this basis the proposal is recommended for refusal.

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<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
21/01092/FUL	Toni Hylton Room No. 011 The Grange	Toni Hylton Senior Planning Officer 01353 665555 toni.hylton@eastcambs.gov.uk
21/01226/FUL 21/00273/FUL 20/01393/RMA 17/01945/OUT	Ely	

National Planning Policy Framework -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>