



Town and Country Planning Act 1990

The Town and Country Planning (Inquiries Procedure)
(England) Rules 2000

Appeals relating to land known as Church Fields

Proof of Evidence of Mr Richard Boyt MRTPI (DDC 16)

Planning Inspectorate Ref. APP/M9570/A/08/2083327

Daventry District Council LPA Ref: DA/2007/0200

Introduction

1. My name is Richard Boyt and I hold a BA (Hons) in Town and Country Planning, a MA in Urban Planning and am a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute. I have 10 years planning experience preceded by experience in the construction and civil engineering fields. I have worked for 10 local planning authorities at senior level in varying capacities and have also worked in private practice.
2. I have worked for both Northamptonshire County Council and neighbouring authorities in development control roles.
3. I am employed by Daventry District Council as a major projects officer and shall primarily present evidence in respect of the Church Fields scheme and its employment and urban design issues. Where necessary, these planning issues will be explored in relation to the Danetree schemes

Church Fields site and surroundings

4. The Church Fields appeal site consists of approximately 246 hectares of largely open agricultural land to the northeast of Daventry. The land is north of the Norton Road and Eastern Way and is bisected by the B4036 Long Buckby Road as the site reaches out almost 3 kilometres to the northeast from its closest point to the centre of Daventry. The application site extends along the Long Buckby Road to include provision for improvements with the junction of the B4036 with the A5 to the east.
5. The site is split into two planning jurisdictions due to the layout of the WNDC planning boundaries and the expansive scale of the Church Fields proposals (see Appendix 1). Therefore the bulk of the built development area to the west falls under the control of WNDC with the

last 300 to 400 metres of development to the northeast and the proposed playing field areas to the southeast closest to Norton under the control of DDC. Both planning authorities are consultees on their respective neighbouring area proposals and have been working on the planning applications as partner authorities.

6. The site's main connection to the existing built form of Daventry is at Southbrook where the proposals would face the existing housing over Eastern Way for approximately 500 metres. Further along Norton Road the site faces the 9-hole golf course that occupies the northern slopes of Borough Hill, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). Further to the east of Borough Hill and to the south is open farmland that makes up part of the Danetree proposals before one reaches the village of Norton. There is open farmland and scattered farm buildings around the eastern boundary of Church Fields before the site meets the line of the Grand Union Canal that marks the northern boundary of the site. The canal also marks the northern boundary of the Monksmoor urban extension appeal site that would, if allowed, occupy the land to the west of Church Fields towards Lang Farm. On the southern western boundary there is the prominent landform of Daventry Country Park with its extensive reservoir and dam.

7. The appeal site itself is an arrowhead-shaped piece of land with a narrow tail of land to the east encompassing the B4036 to a junction with the A5. The main bulk of the site is over 2.5 kilometres long measured from southwest to northeast. The land takes the form of a peninsula or 'dragon's head' of land with a high plateau down the centre line that slopes down and narrows in width towards the centre of Daventry. Eventually, to the west, the site narrows to nothing as it reaches between Southbrook to the south and Daventry Country Park to the north. The B4036 Long Buckby Road follows the flattened ridgeline through the centre of the site with a well-established hedgeline and occasional trees along its length. It is along Long Buckby Road that several detached houses within the site are located

along with some associated agricultural buildings, mainly closest to Southbrook at the western end of the site.

8. From the ridgeline at around 145 metres above sea level, the land falls away most dramatically to the north and northwest, to around 115 metres above sea level, giving sweeping views into the valley, to the reservoir and Country Park, Lang Farm and the potential Monksmoor Farm development, as well as further northwest to the village of Welton. On this aspect of the landform the higher land descends with a series of rounded spurs or scallops of land protruding into the valley below.
9. The principal vegetation types on the site are the well-established hedgerows that divide up the numerous, mainly arable fields. Thrupp Covert is the single wooded area on the site and the only identified area of special ecological interest. This sits in the northernmost part of the site relatively close to the Grand Union Canal and is approximately 3,000 square metres in area. A well-established hedgerow follows the line of a bridleway that runs broadly north to south 100 metres east of Thrupp Covert between the canal, Long Buckby Road and Norton to the south where the accompanying right of way briefly splits in two. Apart from the Long Buckby Road, there are no other public rights of way through the application site.
10. Other man-made interventions on the land include the electricity pylons and overhead lines that pass north to south through the site from near Thrupp Covert into Southbrook, a main sewer that runs from Daventry, past the reservoir and along the valley to the northeast and an oil pipeline that runs northwest to southeast through the centre of the site.

Appeal proposals

11. The proposal is for outline consent with only access for detailed consideration at this stage.

12. The development consists of the following:

- Residential development of up to 4,000 dwellings.
- A District Centre to encompass 8,300 m² of B1 floorspace, shops, a supermarket and other commercial uses.
- Two Local Centres to include small stores and commercial uses.
- A diversion of the B4036 some 200 metres south of its present course for a length of almost 2 kilometres.
- Accesses from numerous points off of the newly created bypass (B4036).
- Roads throughout the site.
- Drainage infrastructure.
- Footpaths and cycleways.
- Open space, play space and playing fields including an extension to Daventry Country Park.
- Landscaping and green infrastructure.
- Social and community infrastructure including one secondary school, three primary schools and a community/ medical centre.

13. The original Design and Access Statement (Core Document CD7.5) includes the following indicative illustrations supporting the principal plans:

- Land use Master Plan
- Indicative layout
- Density layout
- Access and movement framework
- Scale and parameters plan

- Green infrastructure plan
- Phasing plan
- Magnified and illustrative development layout

14. As part of the application there are a number of access plans and road layouts for the realigned B4036 showing detailed engineering designs.

15. Development is laid out between the westernmost point closest to the Eastern Way roundabout and Southbrook with residential development facing Southbrook suburb to the south and the Country Park and reservoir to the north. A new four-way highway junction would provide a principal route into the proposed urban extension and replace the roundabout at the junction of Admirals Way and Eastern Way. A primary school and commercial Local Centre are proposed within this first phase before reaching a green corridor and proposed route between Daventry Country Park and Borough Hill.

16. The next phase of development to the east goes beyond the line of the dam and the end of the neighbouring golf course with a secondary school and playing fields closely associated to a District Centre. To the north of the District Centre, residential development is proposed overlooking the valley and the Monksmoor proposal area.

17. Where the bypass route acts as a perimeter to the built development on the south side closest to Norton, it is also the approximate boundary between DDC and WNDC jurisdiction and the land in DDC's jurisdiction to the south would have been used for playing fields supported by structural landscaping. This is now relocated inside the bypass.

18. The development also incorporates a corridor for a future canal arm along the entire northern edge of the site, with numerous sustainable drainage detention basins alongside landscaping and playing fields.

Parts of these areas are allocated as an extension to the Daventry Country Park.

19. Various open spaces, through routes, footpaths, bridleways and play spaces are also spread throughout the proposals.
20. The diverted B4036 results in the Norton Road being realigned to a T-junction further east than its current course near the proposed District Centre. A total of four vehicular accesses off of the B4036 are proposed, all going north into the new urban extension.

Revised Church Fields Plans

21. The revisions to the original proposals are contained within a revised master plan, a revised scale and parameters plan, a replacement design and access statement and an Environmental Statement Addendum received in late November 2008.

22. The revisions include:

- Relocated playing fields;
- Moving built development away from the higher ridgeline to the northeast;
- Breaking up the urban edge to the north eastern extreme of the site;
- Design responses to topography;
- Widening the green corridor between Borough Hill and Daventry Country Park;
- Enhancing the street hierarchy;
- Straightening the principal internal movement corridor;
- Revised school locations;
- Separation and definition of built character areas;
- Better off site links for bikes and pedestrians;

- Changed phasing strategy;
- Reduced height scales in the outer areas;
- Revised structural landscaping;
- Redesign of linear district centre;
- A detailed response to the Southbrook/ Eastern Way boundary;
- A detailed response to Daventry Country Park boundary;
- Supermarket reduced from 2,500 square metres to 1,500 square metres.

And submitted separately:

- A waste strategy.

23. The appellant has provided 'Stage 1' Regulation 19 information as an addendum that covers policy issues, ecology, water and drainage, archaeology and heritage, soils and agriculture, social and economic issues and sustainability.

Church Fields' Development Plan Background

24. Planning 'topic papers' that identify parts of the Church Fields site were published as a precursor of the consultation draft of the Local Plan in 1992. These details are explained in detail in Appendix 2.

25. The consultation draft of the Local Plan (1992) identified 14 hectares of inner (western) Church Fields for residential development, but this allocation was deleted from the second edition of the topic papers in 1993. The deposit draft of the Local Plan of August 1993 identified Church Fields as a 'green wedge'.

26. After the Local Plan Inquiry the Inspector noted that 'he commends the site at Eastern Way (the western part of Church Fields) as a means of making good some of the shortfall in land for residential development

resulting from inadequate allocations in the Local Plan and from the recommendations in this report'. The Council did not accept these recommendations. At adoption in June 1997, the Daventry District Local Plan concluded by identifying the land as 'green wedge', with the southern part being a 'rural access area'.

Site History

27. There are a number of planning permissions associated with the site dating back to 1948. These were primarily concerned with electrical lines, rural dwellings, hedgerows, trees, and agricultural and associated activities. The planning history will be dealt with in the statement of common ground and will not be described in this proof.

Appeal proposal background

28. Developing parts of Church Fields, particularly the areas closest to the town and Southbrook, have been discussed with the appellants for approximately 15 years. As set out above, the western parts of the land were considered for residential development at the Daventry District Local Plan Inquiry in 1994/5 (see Inspector's Report – Core Document CD 3.29) although the land was not ultimately allocated in the Daventry District Local Plan 1997 for residential development.

29. Discussions between the appellant and Daventry District Council (DDC) have continued as the Daventry Core Strategy was developed around 5 years ago and ran up to the point when the Core Strategy was abandoned in 2005/6.

30. Daventry District Council and West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) received duplicate applications for their

respective areas for the Church Fields development on 2nd January 2007 and these were subsequently registered valid in March 2007.

31. DDC proceeded with WNDC taking a lead role for the purposes of expediency given that the large proportion of the sites fell within their remit and the high level of processing input required for EIA-scale applications.
32. WNDC and DDC have worked in partnership in many respects, for example sharing external expert advice for the sites as a whole where possible, but both authorities have formed independent views and taken democratic decisions where necessary.
33. Although the Danetree Village Consortium appealed in April 2008, it was still hoped that the Church Fields application could be determined in 2008. However, Croudace appealed in August 2008. Up to that point, both WNDC and DDC had been actively involved in engaging with Croudace and their agents to seek further environmental information and discussing shortcomings in the detail of the outline proposals.
34. Although the appeals forced DDC to reach a democratic decision on the schemes in early October 2008, DDC and WNDC have continued to negotiate and discuss changes with the appellant in the light of the duplicate applications that remain extant with both authorities.

Reasons for Refusal

35. The Daventry Planning Committee originally considered the appeal application on 15th October 2008. The Committee's consideration of the application was on a dual basis: (a) determining what would have been the Council's decision if it had been in a position to determine the

application within its jurisdiction; and (b) what would have been the Council's response in relation to the application within the jurisdiction of WNDC, if WNDC had been in a position to determine that application.

36. The Committee resolved the following relevant objections that will be described in this proof:

Employment

37. The application, by virtue of a paucity of employment provision and a dominance of residential development would result in an imbalance of jobs compared to residents, harming social sustainability and encouraging out-commuting to employment in the wider area, especially by car. For this reason, the proposal is considered to be contrary to PPS1 – General Principles and RSS8 Policies 1 and 22 and the Daventry Design Codes SPD 2005 that encourage sustainable employment provision and mixed communities.

Design

38. The proposals, by nature of the failure to adequately consider and incorporate the relationship between the movement structure, hierarchy of streets, massing, scale, density, layout, topography, the urban edge and site context, do not demonstrate that the parameters set out within the application masterplan would result in a satisfactory form of development or ensure that the appropriate principles are established at outline stage to ensure the detailed schemes would appropriately respond to the character and location of the site and surrounding area. As such, the proposal is contrary to PPS1, PPS3, RSS8 Policy 4, MKSM Strategic Policy 3, Northamptonshire Structure Plan 'saved' Policy GS5 and Daventry Local Plan 'saved' Policies GN2, EN42 and the Daventry Design Codes SPD 2005.

39. The application, by nature of the separated location of the area of open space and sport pitches to the south east of the realigned B4036, which would be severed from the development by the new road and isolated from residential and other uses, would result in an unsatisfactory form of development. As such, the proposal is contrary to PPS1, PPS3, RSS8 Policy 4, MKSM Strategic Policy 3, Northamptonshire Structure Plan 'saved' Policy GS5 and Daventry Local Plan 'saved' Policy EN42.
40. The following concerns relate to the part of the site entirely within the remit of WNDC as Local Planning Authority and therefore amount to DDC's consultation response to WNDC:
41. The proposed layout of development fails to adequately integrate into the existing built form of Daventry, particularly where the urban extension meets Southbrook across Eastern Way. Due to the layout, scale, indicative design and proposed highway access layout of the proposals, the development would have poor connectivity to the existing communities resulting in an unacceptably inward facing and segregated extension to the town contrary to PPS1, PPS3, PPG13, RSS8 Policy 4, MKSM Strategic Policy 3, Northamptonshire Structure Plan 'saved' Policy GS5 and Daventry Local Plan 'saved' Policies GN2, EN42 and the Daventry Design Codes SPD 2005.
42. The proposed District Centre, by virtue of its layout, access and scale is considered of an unsatisfactory form that is contrary to the future good design of the urban extension harming the appearance and function of the area. For this reason the proposal is considered to be contrary to RSS8 Policy 4, MKSM Strategic Policy 3, Northamptonshire Structure Plan 'saved' Policy GS5 and Daventry Local Plan 'saved' Policies GN2, EN42 and the Daventry Design Codes SPD 2005.
43. As a result of considering the Church Fields revisions on 15th December 2008, DDC planning committee concluded that the

landscape and design issues and reasons for refusal had been resolved by the changes to the scheme and the EIA reason for refusal be retracted in direct regard to socio-economic issues (although this reason for refusal remains in place and unresolved in relation to other environmental matters).

44. Notwithstanding this, DDC remains of the view that the application should be refused because it is premature and because it fails to provide the necessary employment floorspace to ensure a sustainable community is achieved amongst other reasons.

Issue 1

Housing and Employment Balance

45. Daventry District Council is concerned that the Church Field proposals include a high quantity of residential units without maintaining an employment balance either on or off site. My evidence will show that Daventry town presently has a sustainable balance of jobs and workers. As set out below, the Council believes that national, regional and local planning policy encourages a balance between jobs and workers, discouraging out-commuting and thus encouraging sustainable communities.

National Policy

46. National guidance on sustainable employment and housing mixes include PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development. This states that development plans should 'provide improved access for all to jobs.... where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport rather than having to rely on access by car' in paragraph 27. Furthermore, paragraph 23 of PPS1 states that 'the aim

should be to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home, in locations that reduce the need to travel’.

47. PPS3 Housing states that ‘the Government’s policy is to ensure that housing is developed in suitable locations which offer a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure’ in paragraph 36. Clearly such guidance relates directly to the Church Fields appeal proposals that consist predominantly of housing.

48. Paragraph 30 of PPG13 Transport is also particularly relevant. It states that planning policies should aim to ‘produce a broad balance at the strategic level between employment and housing’ and ‘both within urban areas and in rural communities, to minimise the need for long distance commuting’.

Development Plan

49. The Development Plan for Daventry is made up of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS8) (CD1.1) adopted in March 2005, the saved policies of Northamptonshire County Structure Plan (CD2.1) and the Daventry District Local Plan 1997 (CD 3.29).

50. The adopted RSS8 has Regional Core Objectives contained in Policy 1. This seeks local planning policies that ‘promote and improve economic prosperity, employment opportunities and regional competitiveness’ and ‘improve accessibility to jobs, homes and services across the region by developing integrated transport, ensuring the improvement of opportunities for walking, cycling and the use of high quality public transport’.

51. In terms of RSS8’s approach to sustainable communities, MKSM Strategy Policy 3 states that they will be achieved through the

principles of 'ensuring good accessibility and providing better public transport', 'facilitating safe and convenient movement on foot and by cycle', 'reducing reliance on car-based transport' and 'providing high quality employment land and premises which meets the needs of growing industries'.

Other planning documents

52. The Daventry Design Codes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)(CD 3.3) was adopted by DDC in Dec 2005 after a 6-week period of public consultation in late summer 2005. The consultation was carried out in accordance with the Council's submission version of the Statement of Community Involvement before adoption under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

53. The Design Codes SPD devotes an entire chapter to the principles of the new urban extensions. The chapter commences by setting out 'Stakeholder Principles' in paragraph 8.2. Principle number 7 in this list states that:

'Daventry is a well balanced town in socio-economic terms. This should be maintained in the urban extensions'.

54. Further into the urban extension chapter of the Design Codes SPD, paragraph 8.14 has the sub-headed section titled 'Supporting a balanced and sustainable community'. This section states that:

'Daventry is a well balanced town in socio-economic terms. Stakeholder consultations have highlighted the need for maintaining this balance when considering proposed land uses, access to jobs and facilities, movement, and in and out commuting. The aim for the urban extension is to achieve a sufficient critical mass in order to be commercially viable and to

be able to support a range of facilities. The development should provide a balanced mix of new homes and jobs and provide a mix of densities’.

55. The development plan and its supplementary papers support Daventry District Council’s wish to maintain a sustainable balance between new housing and new employment.

Emerging policy considerations

Revised RSS8

56. The Consultation Draft of the RSS8 Review (CD 1.2) was published for public consultation in September 2006 and after an Examination in Public, the Inspector’s proposed changes were issued in July 2008 (CD1.4). The subsequent adoption of the revised RSS is scheduled for early 2009. The most relevant parts of this emerging document are contained in Policy 1 (e) of the Core Strategy that seeks sustainable development that will improve accessibility to jobs, homes and services by the ‘encouragement of patterns of new development that reduce the need to travel’ (‘especially by car’ – Proposed Changes July 2008 CD1.4).

57. Additional research and evidence collection was carried out in the period leading up to 2006 when DDC began the process of preparing a Local Development Framework for Daventry. The following documents were published:

Daventry Strategic Development Options Study (SDOS) 2005

58. Appendix One of the Daventry Strategic Development Options Study (SDOS) (CD3.15) prepared by Ancer Spa for Daventry District Council in 2005 investigated the employment position and the economy of Daventry and its wider district. This document was to feed into the development of the Daventry Core Strategy by establishing the spatial and quantum requirements of the district.
59. In summary, SDOS used 2001 census data to conclude an existing situation where the district has an overall population of 72,000, with 38,000 resident workers and 34,000 district jobs resulting in a net outflow of 4,000 workers to surrounding areas. SDOS gives a Daventry current (2005) town population of 21,200, but does not detail the town's employment pattern.
60. SDOS gives generic economic analysis of Daventry town in stating that the local economy had grown in preceding years and that there was a relatively equal proportion of economic activities and employment numbers shared between manufacturing, distribution, the service and the public sector.
61. The Council as a major local landowner and commercial landlord had commented in the SDOS document that there had been a 'reasonable' balance between demand and availability of commercial premises. SDOS concludes that this and other evidence indicated that the supply of employment land in Daventry town was broadly sufficient to satisfy commercial demand and that this baseline balance should be maintained in the future development of the town.
62. A 2003 countywide employment study (Copela) concluded that roughly 5,000 new jobs would be required in Daventry up to 2021. But in 2005 SDOS concluded that this figure should be over 10,000 using RSS8 predictions as explained below.

63. Using RSS8 predictions of housing growth for the town of 540 new dwellings per year for the District, SDOS suggests a 10,685 figure of future working residents by 2021. SDOS then demonstrates potential provision for 9,000 jobs using many of the sites shown in the 2006 Daventry Master Plan and notes the 1,700 shortfall in jobs suggesting either the provision of 'reserve' sites around Daventry to pick up the imbalance, the possibility of the projected house-building targets not being met, or out-commuting of future residents to places such as Northampton.

64. Using the town centre vision and growth predictions, SDOS assumes that 2,000 retail/ leisure/ community jobs could be added, primarily in the town centre, with another 1,000 jobs in the new urban extensions.

65. Potential industrial jobs (B1b, B1c and B8 classes) are predicted to provide 1,300 new jobs, however these are in diverse locations and many are away from the town.

66. With an overall need for 10,700 jobs and roughly 4,500 possible in industrial, commercial and social sectors outlined above, a shortfall of 6,000 jobs that could be made up in office-based fields to make up the difference. However, the office offer in SDOS comes to 4,500 jobs around the town on sites such as part of Danetree, the town centre, the urban extensions' business villages, live/work units and offices in existing employment areas.

**Core Strategy for Daventry District - Pre-submission version
November 2005**

67. The abandoned pre-submission Core Strategy (CD 3.16) progresses the SDOS groundwork and after adjusting future housing growth to 2021, predicts a need for 7,750 to 8,750 jobs that can be monitored

and planned for over the development plan period. It also goes further in Appendix G to show how and where 8,350 jobs could be provided, again in broad terms, over the plan period.

68. For employment and the economy, the preferred approach expressed in the pre-submission Core Strategy is to provide for around 8,000 primarily knowledge and office-based jobs to match and be phased in with the projected housing growth.

Conclusion

69. These documents are no longer Council policy because the Core Strategy is now being advanced by the Joint Planning Unit. However the factual information contained within them offers an informative picture of the employment balance in the town. The proposition that a broad balance should be maintained in the town between workers and jobs offers an accurate reflection of Council approach then and now.

Church Fields

The imbalance of jobs and homes

70. The appeal proposals consist of up to 4,000 new dwellings. Using census projections for the entire Daventry District, the appellant has extrapolated a figure of 1.7 economically active persons per dwelling to the potential for 4,000 dwellings to estimate a future workforce of 6,800 residing on Church Fields. In the revised details, the appellant have subsequently reduced the ratio of economically active persons per dwelling to 1.27 but without a clear justification for that shift.

71. The Council has in background evidence documents, such as the pre-submission Core Strategy, previously applied a 53% quotient to the

number of Daventry residents who are economically active with an average of 2.35 persons per household. Applying this percentage and multiplier to the 4,000 dwellings proposed results in a future workforce of approximately 5,000 people.

72. The likely employable workforce residing on an urban extension of 4,000 dwellings will be around 5,000 to 6,800 on the basis of both these logical interpretations of existing patterns.

73. The Church Fields revised proposals outline the following additional land use budgets providing employment opportunities alongside the residential provision:

- Employment B1 – 8,300 square metres
- Supermarket – 1,500 square metres
- Other retail – 1,440 square metres
- Health centre – up to 2,000 square metres
- Community building – 750 to 1,000 square metres
- One secondary school
- Three primary schools

74. The number of people (full-time equivalent posts) likely to be employed in these respective land uses (using the English Partnerships guide) is as follows:

- Employment – 280 (R&D) up to 450 (office) approx
- Supermarket – 130 approx
- Other retail – 75 approx
- Health centre and community building – 100 approx
- Schools – 200 approx

Floor space employment levels are estimated (where relevant) using English Partnerships - Employment Densities: A simple guide, Arup (Sep 2001).

75. These estimates conclude an overall (maximum) employment provision of 955 jobs overall consisting of around 400 in the B1 enterprise centre and around 500 in shops and facilities. The appellant's Environmental Statement concludes that 700 to 900 jobs would be provided in addition to local shops and services giving a potential overall estimation of closer to 1,300 jobs.
76. Without full details of the appellant's employment mix and, given the outline nature of the proposals, a range of employment provision between 900 and 1,200 is the best estimate possible should development go ahead.
77. If an estimation of 1,000 jobs on Church Fields is projected, the shortfall of employment provision equates to approximately 4,000 jobs for the entire development.

The phasing of an on-site employment offer

78. The majority of the employment land uses that can provide employment as part of Church Fields will be provided in developing the District Centre, with only the Local Centres and the schools being built elsewhere. The District Centre is scheduled on the appellant's amended phasing agenda (see Appendix 3) for Phase 2, which is due to commence 6 to 12 years into the development, after a minimum cumulative total of 1,400 dwellings will already have been completed, according to the appellant's completion table in their amended Design and Access Statement (Section 26, p160).

79. During Phase 1, the only employment uses included will be one local centre and a primary school, providing employment for approximately 100 people.
80. It is estimated that a minimum of approximately 1,500 economically active residents will be living on Church Fields at the end of Phase 1 before any significant employment uses are developed. Even when the District Centre is fully developed in Phase 2, there would only be an estimated 800 jobs on offer with almost another 2,000 dwellings being constructed alongside in the remainder of Phase 2, creating an even greater imbalance between workers and jobs. There would then be 3,100 dwellings on the Phases 1 and 2 of Church Fields with less than 900 jobs.
81. With the introduction of thousands of employable residents in a new urban extension, it is considered reasonable to expect that there should be local employment opportunities, on or off site, to counter-balance this scale of local demographic growth to create a sustainable urban extension. Maintaining and transposing the existing housing and employment balance in the town will prevent the harmful effect of future residents commuting long distances out of Daventry to work, particularly by car. These harmful effects are likely to be car-generated pollution, highway congestion on the wider road network and the creation of Church Fields as a dormitory suburb, without a diverse mix of uses and amenities.

The off-site employment opportunities

82. None of the appeal sites under consideration are allocated as urban extensions in the present 'saved' Daventry Local Plan and the Core Strategy for West Northamptonshire is not scheduled for adoption until late 2011. The LDF allocations and development management documents for Daventry are scheduled to follow around the end of

2012 and early 2013. The 'saved' Daventry Local Plan has no substantial employment allocations yet to be realised around the town.

83. In short, there are no major Development Plan-led opportunities to supply residents of Church Fields with local jobs with employment allocations elsewhere in the town. The Local Development Framework may provide employment allocations in 2012/13, but it is best estimated that these jobs will not materialise until some time after that due to the need to implement lead-in infrastructure and gain planning consent. It is considered that 2014/15 is a likely time when plan-led employment provision will be operational in the town, hopefully sustainably related to new housing.

84. The existing situation for employment development in Daventry District has been analysed in the Annual Monitoring Report 2006/7 (AMR)(CD 3.17). 26 hectares of employment land has planning permission district-wide discounting DIRFT. On analysis, only a small proportion of this area is consented employment sites in or around the town and this provides an insignificant job offer that is poorly located in relation to the Church Fields scheme.

85. The AMR states that additional employment land will be needed to accommodate long-term growth, and that this supply should be addressed in the production of the Core Strategy. As stated above, the Joint Core Strategy and future allocations for growth are not yet developed and as such there is no mechanism in place to balance the premature housing proposed in the Church Fields scheme. Presently, Daventry District is maintaining a broad balance between jobs and resident workers with planning consents for employment that will continue this equilibrium up to the next Plan period. To commence high levels of house building on top of this development pattern will inevitably result in excess resident workers who cannot work locally.

86. The initial work in compiling the abandoned Daventry Core Strategy was developed alongside the Interim Daventry Master Plan document of December 2006. This is not a formal planning document, but was consulted on with other Councils and CABE, but not to a wider group of statutory consultees. It is a 'vision' document that expressly states that it is work in progress. Although the Council informally involved the public before they adopted the Interim Master Plan, again no formal consultation with Daventry residents took place. When it was published, it was nonetheless considered a guide to what future employment development sites might come forward in the town.

87. The Interim Daventry Master Plan (CD 3.16) gives a list of potential development sites, mainly in the town centre, but also including parts of Danetree, Monksmoor and Church Fields, which were projected at that time for potential adoption in future Local Development Documents. A plan of these sites is included in Appendix 4. These include:

Town centre sites

- Site 1 – Retail (10,000 square metre) – estimated completion - end of 2012
- Site 2 – Retail – no projected completion date
- Site 3 – Leisure and residential – estimated completion – end of 2014
- Site 4a – Retail – projected completion early 2009
- Site 4g – Innovation centre – estimated completion – late 2010
- Site 5 – Retail and leisure – estimated completion – end of 2012
- Site 6 – Learning Quarter – estimated completion – late 2011

88. None of the above sites have any connection to Church Fields, or have a Development Plan allocation. The Council does not understand any of these sites to be owned, or in the control of, the appellants.
89. All of the sites listed from 1 to 6 are located in Daventry town centre. Only Site 4a has planning permission and is nearing completion as a bulky goods retail site. No other sites in the list numbered 1 to 6 have planning applications pending or permissions granted.
90. Although many of the town centre sites numbered 1 to 6 offer some employment components, there are also undisclosed numbers of residential units as part of the schemes. It is estimated that around 500 new dwellings make up parts of these sites.
91. The Pre Submission Core Strategy and the Options Paper predecessor, compiled by DDC in 2005, estimated 2,000 jobs would be created if the town centre sites were fully developed. It is estimated that this would be off-set by approximately 1,000 resident workers living on the same sites, giving a net increase of 1,000 jobs.
92. Many of these town centre sites are mixed land use with unspecified, but potentially high elements of residential use, effectively absorbing any advantage of providing new jobs by creating dwellings for additional workers as described above. Furthermore, the jobs that could be created in the town centre would be needed to serve as employment for residents in other housing developments in addition to Church Fields elsewhere around the town and district.
93. For these reasons, it is considered that the town centre sites do not offer the employment balance to offset the residential numbers proposed as part of the Church Fields scheme.

Sites outside the town centre

94. A plan of these site locations is included in Appendix 5.

Apex Park (B8) – planning application pending with WNDC

95. The planning application for three large B8 warehouses is currently before WNDC (as determining LPA) at Apex Park on the edge of north Daventry town, but this is also considered premature of any allocation in an LDF and visually intrusive by DDC (see DDC response to WNDC in Appendix 6). WNDC have not taken this application to their planning board and have not committed to a formal opinion on the acceptability of this proposal. Should this go ahead it could provide around 700 jobs, albeit relatively distant from the appeal site, thus not providing an accessible location given there are few sustainable transport options between Apex Park and Church Fields and car commuting is most likely.

The Marches extension (north of the A45) – light industrial/ offices – part of the Danetree appeal proposals

96. The Marches employment extension area shown in the DDC Interim Master Plan is part of the Danetree proposals and any additional jobs provided would be counter balanced by the residential components of this scheme that would be developed simultaneously. Any jobs created here will be balanced by Danetree housing thus reducing any benefit. There is no stand-alone planning application for the employment element in isolation. It is not considered that this will counteract the residential elements of the Church Fields appeal proposals.

DIRFT extension (B8) – potentially 300 additional distribution jobs (8 miles from Daventry)

97. The Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal (DIRFT) expansion would provide some employment opportunities for residents with 180,000 square metres of B8 employment space approved in outline in 2003, but not yet implemented. The reserved matters applications may be approved during the Inquiry. However, DIRFT is over 8 miles to the northeast of the town. It is not an easily accessible location to Daventry residents and the principal method of getting to DIRFT from the town and the appeal site is likely to be the private car. DIRFT is exceptionally accessible by car from many directions due to its location on Junction 18 of the M1. It is also significantly closer to Rugby than Daventry and pools its workforce widely.

98. Should DIRFT implement some of its 180,000 square metre potential during the first phase of Church Fields' development, no doubt some local Daventry workers would be employed there. The Daventry Strategic Development Options Study (SDOS) states that 'the planning application provides evidence that that 21% of the DIRFT employees are likely to come from an expanding Daventry Town'. Applying this ratio to the 1,496 jobs gives 314 jobs provided by DIRFT that benefit all Daventry Town residents, not just those who will be living within Church Fields.

99. Due to the ambiguous nature of when DIRFT will be expanded, no certainty can be attached to when those 300 jobs would come to fruition. What is more certain is that should 300 workers travel from Daventry to DIRFT, it will mainly be by car, which will do little for the principles of sustainability and again mean that Church Fields will be little more than a dormitory suburb supplying workers to the wider region.

Daventry Employment Sites

100. There is no certainty that the employment sites identified in the Interim Master Plan are suitable in planning terms, available or deliverable:

- Firstly, they are unallocated sites that cannot be guaranteed to come forward through the planning process.
- Secondly, the present economic climate gives an example of the lack of financial certainty about modern-day development. It is possible, or even probable, that none of these sites may proceed due to lack of capital funds for the foreseeable future.
- Finally, many of the employment opportunities made available by these sites may not come to fruition (according to the Daventry Development Programme, see Appendix 7) until the middle of the next decade or later, by which time Church Fields will have finished Phase 1 at least.

101. Without Development Plan allocations for the employment sites around Daventry, there is little certainty and indeed, a low probability that these sites will come forward and be developed in tandem with the Church Fields residential development.

102. It is a further reason why this appeal is premature because it is proposing very substantial residential development well in advance of any decisions being taken as to where in the town the commensurate level of employment provision should be located. These decisions will be taken in the context of the preparation of the Core Strategy in 2011.

103. There is no opportunity for the developer to mitigate through conditions or a section 106 obligation the harm caused by the lack of on, or off-site employment opportunities to provide work for the thousands of new residents generated by the development.

104. Seeking off-site contributions from a developer for employment provision in the wider town area would be contrary to policy given that the Development Plan, adopted and emerging, identifies no employment allocations of any significance. The Council has considered whether it would be appropriate to seek contributions for employment in the wider town, however the difficulty is that the appellant does not have the ability to bring forward any sites for employment.

Housing and employment outcome

105. It is considered that the Church Fields scheme, if developed, would result in thousands of new resident workers being housed with no significant on-site or local off-site employment provision, thus resulting in an inevitable pressure for residents to find work in the wider area and region.

106. Many of the new residents would be forced to out-commute in significant numbers to jobs in the wider region, or further afield. In those circumstances there will be increased car borne commuting stressing local roads and producing higher levels of emissions to the detriment of the environment. Furthermore, any hopes for a self-sustaining and inclusive community with a range of facilities and opportunities that can be accessed locally are forfeited as workers treat the urban extension as a dormitory and do not create demand for local ancillary services.

107. Should new residents on Church Fields start to compete in the existing Daventry work market there is an inevitable increase in demand for what is likely to be a relatively stable number of jobs. This would force other residents of Daventry to travel further away to get to work, or worse, leave them unemployed, harming the social sustainability of the town.

108. National, regional and local planning policy is clear in its aims to encourage balanced communities and discourage the need to travel long distances particularly by car, to jobs elsewhere. The town of Daventry is not well connected by public transport to other employment hubs in the region by virtue of having no railway station in the town (although Long Buckby station offers limited opportunities). The out-commuting will add pressure to the roads, the most important being the A45 which is matter of concern to the Highways Agency and County Council who have issued a Holding Objection in part due to the interchange of the A5 with the A45 at Weedon.
109. Even if the Church Fields development is accepted as a commuter dormitory for the wider area, the commensurate car borne travel will have a significant adverse environmental and highway impact contrary to planning policy.
110. The town and its economy are not robust or big enough to absorb high numbers of new residents in a planning application-led approach to expansion. In the context of PPS1 and the Regional Spatial Strategy, the preferred method for bringing forward spatial development patterns is through the LDF 'plan-led' process, so that disparities between residents and jobs can be balanced in the phased release of land both housing and employment in a holistic manner.

Conclusion

111. The proposals do not include sufficient employment provision to counter-balance the large numbers of economically active residents being accommodated. With little likelihood of significant employment development taking place in the wider town area to react to and employ the newly housed residents, Church Fields is most likely to develop as a residential dormitory where inhabitants travel into the wider region for

their work by private car due to the limited opportunities for public transport use.

112. Similarly, the strain on the local job market could result in additional competition for local vacancies from Church Fields residents, causing greater scarcity of employment and potential unemployment in the town as a whole. For all these reasons, the proposals are at odds with the aims of PPS1, PPS3 and PPG13 for mixed, sustainable communities that have local jobs and opportunities at their heart and guard against imbalanced areas of predominantly one type of land use where this harms sustainability.

113. With no adopted Core Strategy due until 2011 and allocations and management development documents due 2012/13, there are no opportunities for the LDF to provide employment growth strategies for the town with any certainty in the early phases of Church Fields' development that could counter-balance the inequalities. With an insufficient on-site employment provision the Church Fields proposals are clearly contrary to the RSS component of the Development Plan and the Daventry Design Codes SPD that seeks to maintain the existing socio-economic balance.

Cumulative impact

114. Should the Secretary of State be minded to allow a combination or all of the schemes before her, differing levels of employment provision will be forthcoming. The only significant employment offer that satisfies the concerns about social and economic sustainability are those on the Danetree proposals.

115. The Danetree employment areas are considered to be satisfactory to 'soak up' the early residential development phases of the Danetree urban extension and it is likely in the longer term (ie. well after 2011) that the Core Strategy will provide employment allocations around the town to counter-balance the greater numbers of future working residents.

116. It is not anticipated that the Danetree employment offer could serve to offset the negative impacts of the Church Fields site. Some, but not all, of the 1,600 knowledge-based jobs will come forward in the first phases of Danetree but will be only enough to counter-balance the residential development coming forward on the Danetree site.

117. In short, if the Danetree scheme proceeds, it will not override the employment objections to the Church Fields scheme.

Issue 2

Layout and Design

The original planning application master plan for the urban extension known as Church Fields led Daventry District Council to state its objections to a number of layout and design issues. As well as detailed objections to the proposed scale, massing, layout, edge, movement structure, street hierarchy, density, response to topography and context of the master plan, the Council objected to the separated location of the sports pitches to the south east, the relationship of the development with the existing suburb of Southbrook to the southwest and the scale, access and layout of the proposed district centre.

The appellant has subsequently revised the master plan with an extensively amended Design and Access Statement that has resulted in the Council

reconsidering the scheme at Committee on 15th December 2008 (CD 7.30). The Council has resolved to retract its objections on design and layout grounds and gives an explanation below.

National Policy Guidance

Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1)

After encouraging the use of By Design – Better Places to Live (CD 1.37) as a guide to good design in Paragraph 37 of PPS1, Paragraph 38 (CD1.11) significantly states the following:

Design policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. Local planning authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning documents on design.

Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing (PPS3)

Paragraphs 12 and 13 broadly encourage good design in stating:

Good design is fundamental to the development of high quality new housing, which contributes to the creation of sustainable, mixed communities.

And;

Reflecting policy in PPS1, good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR THE EAST MIDLANDS (RSS8)

Policy 4

Policy 4 of RSS8 (CD 1.1) gives a number of design elements that should be promoted:

- the use of design led approaches which take account of local natural and historic character, for example landscape character assessments, urban design frameworks, town and village design statements, local concept statements, countryside design summaries, and masterplanning exercises;
- design and construction that minimises energy use, improves water efficiency, reduces waste and pollution, incorporates renewable energy technologies and sustainably sourced materials wherever possible and considers building orientation at the start of the design process;
- architectural design which is functional, yet which respects local natural and built character;
- increased densities for new housing in line with national guidance;
- access from new development to local facilities on foot, by cycle or by public transport;
- highway and parking design that improves both safety and the quality of public space;
- design which helps to reduce crime, supports community safety and vitality, and benefits the quality of life of local people; and
- approaches to design, layout and construction which takes account of, and where appropriate provide for increases in biodiversity.

MKSM Sub-Regional Strategy

Strategy Policy 3

Strategy Policy 3 gives a sub-regional guide to how sustainable communities can be developed including amongst other things 'designing attractive cities, towns and public places'.

Northamptonshire Structure Plan saved Policy GS5

The saved policy of the Structure Plan promotes high quality design and highlights the importance of visual appearance in relation to local characteristics, the need to encourage mixed-use development, planning out crime and the requirements of sustainable development, particularly reducing the need for the private car.

Daventry District Local Plan saved Policies GN2 and EN42

Saved Policy GN2 of the Daventry District Local Plan broadly states that development should be 'of a type, scale and design in keeping with locality and does not detract from its amenities'.

Saved Policy EN42 relates specifically to local design and states that design will acceptable if:

- Designs promote or reinforce local distinctiveness and enhance their surroundings; and
- Designs take account of local building traditions and materials; and
- The scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout and access of the proposal combine to ensure that the development blends well within the site and with its surroundings; and

- Crime prevention measures are incorporated in the site layout and building design; and
- Existing landscape attributes of the site are incorporated within the layout wherever practicable, and combine with proposed landscaping and open space to ensure that the developments environmental impact is minimised.

Daventry Design Codes SPD (Dec 2005) and By Design (2001)

The most relevant, detailed and informative documents on which the design must be considered are contained in the Daventry Design Codes SPD (Dec 2005) (CD 3.3) and CABE's - By Design – Better places to live (2001) (CD 1.37)(as suggested by PPS1).

Both documents explore the detailed principles of good design and the Daventry Design Code SPD has an entire chapter dedicated to the principles to be applied to urban extensions to Daventry. The list of 13 urban form principles in the SPD and their supporting guidance are clearly highly relevant to the urban design consideration of the appeals. These will be explored in the detailed evidence below.

By Design – Better places to live, is the longstanding urban design guide that remains a key tool in investigating the quality of development design, particularly on major schemes. The detail of this document will be referred to extensively in the evidence below.

Church Fields

It was the Council's case that the appeal proposals have a number of urban design and layout shortcomings that are qualified in projected reasons 5 and 6 of the Council's statement of case and points 1 and 2 of its consultation response to WNDC.

Subsequently, the appellant has revised the scheme. The revisions include:

- Relocated playing fields;
- Moving built development away from the higher ridgeline to the northeast;
- Breaking up the urban edge to the north eastern extreme of the site;
- Design response to topography;
- Widening the green corridor between Borough Hill and Daventry Country Park;
- Enhancing the street hierarchy;
- Straightening the principal internal movement corridor;
- Revised school locations;
- Separation and definition of built character areas;
- Better off site links for bikes and pedestrians;
- Changed phasing strategy;
- Reduced height scales in the outer areas;
- Revised structural landscaping;
- Redesigned and linear district centre;
- A detailed response to the Southbrook/ Eastern Way boundary;
- A detailed response to Daventry Country Park boundary;
- Supermarket reduced from 2,500 square metres to 1,500 square metres.

As a result of the revisions the Council has retracted its objections for the reasons below.

Hierarchy of streets

The revisions give a better demonstration of street hierarchy through a 'space typology' that enables the Council to have confidence that urban form will be legible and of improved appearance.

Movement

The repositioned main movement corridor through Church Fields is more direct and uses slight deflections to offer an efficient but legible route through the urban extension in line with the Manual for Streets. The secondary movement corridors are also improved by this change and overall the revisions are considered sufficient for objections to be dropped.

Scale

The scale of buildings proposed in the master plan revisions have been changed and corrected. Most importantly, the excessive heights of residential buildings in the sensitive outer areas of Church Fields have been addressed and the concerns about visual intrusion overcome.

Density

Density patterns throughout the site have been modified in line with the master plan revisions and are considered acceptable throughout.

Topography

Buildings have been omitted from higher land areas and the revised layout follows height contours resulting in a more responsive layout that respects and makes the most of existing landforms without being obtrusive to the satisfaction of the Council.

Green Links

The link between Daventry Country Park and Borough Hill has been widened and strengthened and gives adequate latitude for further improvements at

reserved matter stages. The Council is satisfied that this matter is suitably addressed.

Urban Edge

Two elements of the appeal proposal's urban edge were a cause for objection:

i) Southbrook

The revised layout of Church Fields shows greater reference to the existing communities in Southbrook and the potential to provide an inclusive and integrated junction with the existing town.

ii) North eastern Boundary

The Design Code SPD outlines a preference for informal edges that 'crumble away'. This edge of the urban extension is particularly sensitive as it is the interface with the countryside to the east and can be viewed from numerous public viewpoints beyond.

The amendments show a broken edge, with a reduction in bulking structural planting that accords with the guidance of the Design Code SPD and this is no longer a reason for objection from the Council.

Buffer to Daventry Country Park

The 100 metre-plus buffer to the reservoir and Country Park have been demonstrated to adequately respect and stand back from this important local feature and resource. The development would now be suitably separated from this area.

Location of Sports Pitches

The majority of the sport pitch provision was previously located south east of the realigned B4036. The revised layout has moved these pitches inside the road to the north west and their location is no longer an adverse concern to the Council.

District Centre

The revised layout provides a linear form to the district centre where there was previously a concentric form. The modified layout is considered to respect local landform, reflect other nearby local centres such as those in the District's villages and allows for an accessible, attractive and flexible commercial centre in accordance with Development Plan policy and the Design Code SPD.

Conclusion

Where Daventry District Council previously had design and layout objections to the Church Fields proposals, the revisions have suitably addressed the issues raised and the Council is now satisfied that the scheme accords with the Development Plan policies relating to design and layout.