



Land off Station Road, Isleham, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5GH FAQ's and comments

We know you will have questions so have put together the below list of frequently asked questions with response from the experts who undertook the relevant survey. If there's something we have not covered that you would like to know more about, please get in touch either via our website, email or the comments form enclosed.

Is the site of archaeological interest?

Oxford Archaeology recently undertook a trial trench evaluation as part of the pre-application works for this project. This comprised excavating seven trenches (each measuring 50m long and 2m wide) across the proposed development area to test the level of preserved buried remains.

The archaeological works identified a small number of features, comprising two ditches and a couple of groups of postholes. One of the ditches was parallel to the southern boundary of the site and perpendicular to Station Road, and thus is most probably a former field boundary which would have been filled in to make the field larger. The function of the other ditch is a little more ambiguous because its alignment did not fit with anything in the immediate surroundings. The postholes identified in the trenches formed clear lines and were regularly spaced, suggesting they were former fence lines. A very small finds assemblage was recovered from the archaeological features, comprising late medieval to early post-medieval pottery and tile. The low density of archaeological features coupled with the small number of finds indicates that this location would have been outside the original core of the village and therefore has most probably been used for farming-based activities for the last few centuries.



Has a noise survey been carried out, especially as there are several houses fronting Station Road?

A noise impact assessment has been undertaken, which has informed the design of the layout provided within the information pack. The homes located closest to Station Road have been designed to have non-habitable rooms facing Station Road or at least dual aspect rooms to allow overnight ventilation from the west facing facades.

The site occasionally has standing water, has the site been assessed for flooding?

The site is situated in Flood Zone 1 (FZ1) which is the 'low' probability flood zone. Residential development is 'appropriate' in FZ1 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 Sequential Test is satisfied. A site specific Flood Risk Assessment will be prepared to assess flood risk to and from the site. All forms of flooding will be considered following relevant guidance documents, taking into account the effects of climate change over the lifetime of the development.

A sustainable approach to surface water management is to be adopted using appropriate SuDS techniques, following the policy requirements of Cambridgeshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority and their technical guidance for developers. The proposed development will follow the hierarchy of drainage options and retain all surface water run-off on site for natural infiltration into the sub-soil. Techniques will include the use of individual plot soakaways for roof run-off, permeable paving for all private roads and hardstandings and an infiltration basin to serve the highway that will include a bioretention area to treat surface water run-off prior to it being discharged into the ground. A SuDS Management and Maintenance plan will detail the activities required to maintain the surface water drainage features for the lifetime of the development.

There is a concern that extra housing causes extra traffic. The increase in vehicles will cause traffic delays exiting Isleham. How will this be mitigated?

EAS has been commissioned to provide highways and transportation advice for the development. An access position is proposed that meets the required visibility requirements based on speed surveys. A generous parking provision of two car parking spaces per home has been provided with additional visitor parking. The development will generate 1 vehicle trip every 2-3 minutes in the peak hours of travel, which will have an insignificant impact upon the local road network. The footway along the site frontage with Station Road is proposed to be widened to 2m to the benefit of local residents

Is the site contaminated? Is it suitable for residential development?

A F Howland Associates Limited has been commissioned to carry out geotechnical and environmental ground investigations to aid in future residential development of the site. The work comprised a series of machine excavated trial pits across the site for both infiltration testing and to investigate the ground conditions and obtain suitable samples. Subsequent laboratory testing was carried out to classify the material and provide information on any potential contamination issues. In this instance none was identified and the site was deemed as being suitable for residential development.

What types of housing are proposed?

The current proposal provides a small number of 2 bedroom bungalows and a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses to meet the local housing need, as dictated by the Specialist Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer at the Local Planning Authority (East Cambridgeshire District Council).

The site is currently a wildlife area in the village raising concerns about habitat loss. What will be done to protect this?

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) including desk study was undertaken in March 2020 by James Blake Associates. The site was assessed for its suitability to support protected and important species such as bats, great crested newts and reptiles; however, the survey concluded that the site in its current state offers low ecological value for protected species. No habitats on site are listed as Priority Habitats within The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006 (NERC).

A reptile survey was undertaken between March and May 2020 by James Blake Associates; however, no reptiles were recorded on site during the survey period. The Public Open Space (POS) will enhance the site for reptiles by providing new basking and foraging opportunities for these species and encourage reptiles to colonise the site from the surrounding area. The addition of new hedgerow planting will also provide suitable shelter, hibernation areas and commuting corridors.

The POS will provide new foraging habitats for invertebrate such as butterflies and bees, as well as bats and badgers. Additional boundary planting will increase commuting routes for species such as birds, bats, badgers and great crested newts; as well as providing shelter for most of these species. Increased planting will also provide more opportunities for nesting birds. The proposed development will overall improve the area for local wildlife and potentially attract new species to the area.

Are the trees going to be retained? Does the hedgerow along Station Road have to be removed?

A detailed assessment of existing trees and vegetation was carried out in accordance with BS5837: 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition, and construction – Recommendations. Overall, vegetation within the site is of low-moderate quality and consists of several planted trees located within the boundary hedgerows. There are no trees located internally to the site. Tree and vegetation loss have been kept to a minimum and consists of the removal of the hedge and the four low quality trees on the eastern boundary to form the site access and to make improvements to the public footpath. A new native mixed hedgerow will be provided on the eastern boundary set behind the visibility splays. The proposed development and the extensive areas of public open space provides an opportunity to secure a future generation of trees. It is considered that the limited removal of tree cover necessary to deliver this housing development would outweigh any adverse arboricultural impacts from the proposed losses.

I am concerned about more housing in the village without the infrastructure in place. 45 houses, many of which will be family homes raises question over school and preschool capacities. Also, we have only one small local shop which is often busy as it is. There is also consideration for doctors' surgeries. Will the plans take into account supporting local infrastructure changes?

As part of the planning application process the local authority will consider contributions to support the infrastructure of the village and its services. We await their advice on what level of contributions will be required.

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As part of the local authority's consideration of the planning application they will look at the upgrades required to support services such as schools, doctors' surgeries and other infrastructure. The local authority will decide what is required and what levels of contributions are required to support enhancement to infrastructure as part of considering our planning application.

Living at 3A Station Road, my key concern is (excluding the replacement of fields) the removal of tall hedges on Station Road and the proposed pedestrian/ cycle path that exits onto Station Road.

We can see that the removal of hedges will facilitate a wider footpath which is welcomed however, a certain amount of privacy which is currently enjoyed by a few properties on Station Road will be lost. It would also appear that the visibility splays proposed on Station

Road are at the rear of each new property. Is it not considered that the inhabitants of those properties would also value the privacy of high and continuous hedges to their back gardens?

The proposed pedestrian/ cycle path that exits onto Station Road appears unnecessary with alternative accesses proposed on Fordham Road and the main entrance on Station Road. The proposed path is located at a junction which has the potential to disturb the existing residents of Station Road and adjacent properties. We would ask that consideration is given to either removing the path entirely (given two proposed alternative accesses) or that the existing location is moved further along Station Road opposite the apple orchard.

We have had a couple of comments relating to the existing tree and hedgerows which we have passed to our design team to consider as the proposals evolve. In principle it is our intention to try and retain as many original trees and hedgerows as possible. Where removal is necessary, we will replace with native species. There will be locations where removal is unavoidable but additional planting will be made to other areas of the site. The design team will consult with highways regarding the footpath and take advice on whether it is necessary and in a suitable location.

A development such as this is definitely needed for the village, but it still means the loss of "insignificant " farmland and "insignificant " hedgerow, trees and eco systems which have been here long before I was born. Do you think you can compensate for these losses with this development? An extra, say, 60 cars in the village may not sound significant, but, compounded with other ongoing developments it is going to be a nightmare. Perhaps the best we can hope for is a reduction in the speed limit along station road to 30mph in line with every other route in and out of the village!!!

Please see above regarding planting and hedgerows. With regards to the reduction in speed limits this is a position we would support. The local authority will consult highways when considering the planning application and it could be, they impose a reduced speed limit. Unfortunately, we cannot request it as part of the application, but your comments will be submitted.

Speaking from a personal perspective, there is a great need for affordable local housing for local people. I am a 53 year old lady going through a divorce with no assets at all, I am Isleham born and bred and unable to get a property from the council, and am having to move out of the village in order to have manage an affordable rental property. My elderly mother and daughter live in the village, I have a good social network of friends and have volunteered for different organisations within the village, it is awful to have to leave the place where I was raised, my home. There is an absolute need for these properties to be built. Please!

Thank you for your support. It is a shame the lack of housing may force you to leave the village. It is a common and devastating issue with many rural locations. May we suggest you contact the Lady Frances Trust to see if they are able to assist?

In principle this is a very good idea for Isleham. The village is in desperate need of smaller homes which are affordable to rent and/or buy. The young people from Isleham who have grown up here and have family support networks have absolutely no chance of currently affording anything that is available. Likewise, more mature people who have always lived in the village and for one reason or another, now need smaller affordable accommodation, are having to move elsewhere. We need to have some housing that is specifically for local people who wish to stay in the place they have always lived, and to enable them to look after elderly relatives still in the village. There is a massive gap in availability as most council houses and bungalows have gone into private ownership. The only smaller places have an age limit of 55+ which is another problem.

Our proposals in Isleham offer a variety of house types which means homes to suit the needs of lots of different people. We hope we will secure planning and be able to start work on new homes as soon as possible.