1.0 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 Members are recommended to REFUSE the application for the following reasons:

1. The proposal would be out of keeping with the pattern of built form and the character of the street scene by virtue of its scale and position on a prominent plot at the entrance to Brewhouse Lane. This would create a contrived and cramped form of development and would be out of keeping with the appearance of the wider street scene, to the detriment of the adjacent Conservation Area and the spacious setting of St Felix House. The site currently makes a valuable contribution to the open spacious setting of St Felix House and the Conservation Area. The application is contrary to Policies ENV2 and ENV11 of the Local Plan 2015, LP22 and LP27 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017, and the Design Guide.

2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

2.1 The application seeks outline permission for the construction of a detached two-storey dwelling on land adjacent to St Felix Lodge. The proposed dwelling would measure 7.1m to the ridgeline and would occupy a footprint of 147m². The proposal includes the provision of a garden area of approximately 140m². This application is
submitted following a previous refusal for exactly the same proposal in October 2017.

2.2 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/. Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, in the application file.

2.3 The application has been called into Planning Committee by Councillor Carol Sennitt.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 17/01200/OUT Outline planning application Refused 13.10.2017 for a detached dwelling

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The site is located on the corner of Brewhouse Lane and East Fen Common, in Soham. The site is currently garden area for St Felix Lodge and is bordered by a brickwork wall. Dwellings within the vicinity of the site are generally two storey in scale and set back from the public highway with parking to the front and side.

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.

Parish – On a corner plot requires better vision onto Brewhouse Lane.

Ward Councillors - I would like to call the above planning application in because I feel this should be considered by the planning committee. This application is outside my ward but the applicant is elderly and knows me, he feels more comfortable dealing with me personally. The councillors covering this ward are happy for me to call this in and write a supporting note. The application is adjacent to Soham Conservation area and has been advised by the conservation officer to change the design which the applicant has complied to this and changed the design and layout. Recently four applications have been passed in the nearby White Hart Lane which is nearer the church so therefore nearer the conservation area. I believe these properties in the surrounding area that have been given planning permission have set a precedence.

Cambridgeshire Archaeology – Our records indicate that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, situated 170m east of 12th century Saint Andrew's Church (Historic Environment Record reference 07123). White Hart Lane is a significant archaeological location, situated in the historic core of Soham. Recent archaeological investigations conducted to the south of White Hart Lane revealed
evidence of an Iron Age and Roman settlement (MCB18184, ECB4538, and ECB3587) and medieval settlement (MCB18185). In addition, numerous burials have been recorded from the gardens of houses along the lane (for example, at No 1: MCB17746; at No 11: 11789 and adjacent to No 46: MCB19457). Further remains from this settlement are likely to be present within the development area, and the discovery of further human burials can be expected.

We do not object to development from proceeding in this location but consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured through the inclusion of a negative condition, such as the example condition approved by DCLG.

Conservation Officer – This application affects a site located adjacent to Soham conservation area (to the southwest boundary), the application seeks outline permission for the construction of a detached dwelling on the site with access, scale and layout being considered. The amendments to the scheme in regards to layout and scale would not be considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As noted previously there is a mix of architectural styles and quality within proximity of the application site and there is no definitive style or character. The proposed dwelling is a 1.5 storey dwelling with a maximum ridge height of 7.3m, the surrounding properties are predominantly 2 storey in nature. The application has been updated to include indicative elevations to show the appearance of the dwelling, These appear to have addressed the concerns raised previously regarding the design and appearance of the property. However, an indicative plan cannot be approved or formally considered in an outline application and for me to assess the impact fully then, as advised previously, the applicant would need to request that appearance be considered as part of the outline application. That being said, should a reserved matters application be submitted on the basis of the indicative plans then I may be in a position to consider such an application.

Conservation Officer (Following amended application form to include appearance)- The inclusion of appearance to be considered as part of the outline application is acceptable. As per my previous comments, the design of the proposal would appear to address the concerns raised previously and I do not consider the scheme would result in harm being caused to the significance of the Soham conservation area.

Senior Trees Officer- The access element of this outline application does not impact significant trees therefore I have no objection. I would like to ensure no damage is caused to the trees during development with a condition identifying no development shall take place until a scheme for the protection during construction of the trees on the site, in accordance with BS 5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (Condition TR2A).

Consultee For Other Wards In Parish - No Comments Received

Waste Strategy (ECDC)- No objections raised. Standard informatives recommended.
Highways Authority - The highways authority has no objections in principal to this application. The lamp column will need to be relocated and separate permissions must be sought from CCC Lighting team and all and any costs must be covered by the applicant.

Lead Local Flood Authority - The application is not classified as major development and therefore no comments received.

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

- Overlooking and loss of privacy to neighbouring occupiers.
- The building would break the current building line and be close to the road.

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015
ENV 2 Design
ENV 11 Conservation Areas

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents
Design Guide

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012
7 Requiring good design
12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

6.4 Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017
LP22 Achieving Design Excellence
LP27 Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

7.1 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are the principle of development, residential amenity of nearby occupiers, and the impact on visual amenity and character of the wider area. The impact on highway safety also needs to be considered.

7.2 When the application was first received, it was only to consider access, layout and scale. Following concerns raised by the Conservation Officer, the agent requested that appearance was also considered, as the appearance of the dwelling could not be properly assessed in terms of its impact on the Conservation Area.

7.3 Principle of Development

7.4 The site is located within the defined settlement boundary of Soham and therefore complies with Policy GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and Policy LP3 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017, which seek to focus new
development within the defined settlement boundaries. The proposal considered by this application would make a small but positive contribution to the local housing supply in the form of one dwelling. The proposal would also be beneficial to the local economy in the short term due to the construction stage.

7.5 **Residential Amenity**

7.6 Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council’s Local Plan 2015 and Policy LP22 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017 require that proposals should ensure that there are no significantly detrimental effects on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.

7.7 The applicant has submitted drawings showing the appearance of the dwelling. The position of the windows is not considered to create a significant level of overlooking as the first floor window on the east elevation overlooks the front of Felix Lodge. A neighbouring resident at Number 5 Brewhouse Lane has raised objections due to the position of a first floor bedroom window overlooking that property. However it is considered that the distance between the new window and No5 on the other side of the road, is at some 20m, sufficient distance away to prevent unacceptable levels of overlooking. The level of two storey built-form is kept to a minimum along the boundaries with adjoining neighbours, and therefore the proposed dwelling is not considered to create a significant level of overbearing.

7.8 **Visual Amenity**

7.9 In terms of visual amenity, Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council’s Local Plan 2015 and Policy LP22 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017 require proposals to ensure that location, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and colour relate sympathetically to the surrounding area and each other.

7.10 The proposed dwelling is adjacent to the edge of the Conservation Area and will therefore impact upon it. Any development should therefore be of a particularly high standard of design and materials, in line with Policy ENV11 of the Local Plan 2015 and Policy LP27 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017. This is reiterated within the supplementary planning document, Soham Conservation Area.

7.11 The site is located in a prominent position on the corner of Brewhouse Lane and is enclosed by a brickwork wall which provides an attractive feature in the street scene and compliments and positively contributes to the character of St Felix House. The proposed dwelling would measure 7.1m to the ridgeline, and due to its scale, the footprint would fill the plot from Brewhouse lane to the side of St Felix House. The junction at Brewhouse Lane is open in appearance, with the two dwellings at the entrance (Numbers 3 and 4) being set back by a significant distance. The introduction of a dwelling in this location would impose built form into an existing important gap in the street scene, which contributes to the character of St Felix House, as does the boundary wall, and would therefore be incongruous and out of keeping with the pattern of built-form and the character of the street scene. The dwelling would give the appearance of being squeezed into a plot which doesn’t warrant built form, and is therefore considered to be a cramped and contrived form of development.
7.12 In addition, the boundary wall offers an important feature in the street scene and compliments the character of St Felix House by enclosing the space around it. A large section of this feature wall would need to be removed, some 12 metres to accommodate the new access to the dwelling. It is considered that this will further exacerbate the harm caused to the conservation area by not only opening up views of the dwelling but by the removal of a boundary wall which currently makes a positive contribution to the street scene on the edge of the Conservation Area, contrary to Policy ENV11 of the Local plan 2015 and Policy LP27 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017 which seeks to retain attractive traditional features such as boundary walls.

7.13 Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire District Council's Local Plan 2015 and Policy LP22 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017 require proposals to ensure that location, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and colour relate sympathetically to the surrounding area and each other. The agent has indicated on the plans that brickwork and slate roof tiles would be used, in keeping with St Felix House, and this is considered to be appropriate in the context of the street scene.

7.14 The Conservation Officer has been consulted regarding this application and has advised that it is not possible to fully assess any potential impact without details of the finished appearance being considered. Following an amendment to application in order to consider appearance as part of the outline application, the Conservation Officer has advised that the design of the proposal would appear to address the concerns previously raised and as such they do not consider the application would result in harm being caused to the significance of the Conservation Area.

7.15 **Highways**

7.16 The applicant proposes to drop the kerb along Brewhouse Lane to allow for a new vehicular access to the driveway and garage. It is proposed that a lamp post is relocated in order to enable this access, however it is the responsibility of the applicant to gain the necessary permissions for this work.

7.17 The proposal includes two parking spaces, which complies with the requirements of Policy COM8 of the Local Plan 2015 and Policy LP22 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017. The Local Highways Authority has raised no objections to the proposals, and the application is considered to comply with Policy COM7 of the Local Plan 2015 and Policy LP17 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017.

7.18 **Planning Balance**

7.19 On balance, the provision of a dwelling is not considered to carry significant weight against the significantly harmful impact on the character of the area and the Conservation Area. The proposed development would be detrimental to visual amenity and contrary to Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 and Policy LP22 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017. In addition the proposal fails to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and is contrary to Policy ENV11 of the Local Plan 2015 and
Policy LP27 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2017. Therefore the application is recommended for refusal.

8.0 APPENDICES

8.1 None

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Documents</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17/01880/OUT</td>
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National Planning Policy Framework -

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -