APPEAL BY NORFOLK HOMES LTD : LAND AT WYNGATES, YARMOUTH ROAD, BLOFIELD, NORFOLK

PINS ref : APP/K2610/A/13/2198950

PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF TERRY HARPER BSc FRICS
PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF TERRY HARPER BSc FRICS

1. I have been employed by Norfolk Homes Ltd, the Appellant in this case, as the company's Land and Development Manager since 2000. The purpose of my evidence is to demonstrate that the company is ready and able to proceed with the development of the appeal site and will be able to complete the development within 3 years.

2. I obtained a National Diploma in Construction in 1993, a Higher National Certificate in Building in 1995 and a Bachelor Science degree in Property Management in 1999. I became a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 2000, and was elected as a Fellow in 2013.

3. In my role as Norfolk Homes' Land and Development Manager, I am responsible for all aspects of the acquisition of development land, progressing and overseeing planning applications and appeals, together with general duties pertaining to seeing a potential site’s inception through to being ready for build.

4. In my 13 years at Norfolk Homes, I have overseen the development of approximately 1,500 houses on a variety of sites throughout the County. I am currently responsible for bringing forward and managing planning applications for residential developments which range from smaller sites such as the appeal site through to a phased 850 dwelling and mixed use allocation south-east of Norwich in Poringland. My aim, and achievement to date, is to keep secure the company’s strategic ability to continue in operation by having an adequate land supply now and for the future. This amounts to about 125 dwellings being built each year on 6 active development sites throughout Norfolk – typically, 5 sites are actively delivering houses with the 6th site either going off or coming on stream.

5. Norfolk Homes has owned the part of the appeal site which is coloured blue on plan no NHBD1/APP-A4 [Appendix 1] since 1997. That land is not subject to any mortgage or charge in favour of any Bank or other lending institution. My company has an Option agreement over the rest of the appeal site and the large area of land which immediately adjoins the northern boundary of the site and which is to be provided as additional open space as part of this
development. We are able to exercise that option as soon as the appeal is allowed and can take possession of the land without delay with a willing seller.

6. Norfolk Homes Ltd is a private company with substantial resources that has built about 3,000 new homes throughout Norfolk for over 25 years. The company will not need to borrow funding in order to carry out this development and furthermore has a strong in house and consultant technical team that can readily progress matters to the development stage.

7. If this appeal was allowed by the end of 2013, I would expect the development timetable to be as follows:
   - December 2013: Appeal allowed
   - March 2014: Submission of details to discharge pre-commencement conditions
   - June 2014: Discharge of pre-commencement conditions by District Council
   - July 2014: Start on-site works
   - March 2015: Completion of 15th dwelling (sales commence early 2015)
   - March 2016: Completion of 40th dwelling
   - March 2017: Completion of 64th dwelling.

8. Whilst our own experience of the demand for new homes (with Norfolk Homes building premium products of all sizes and tenures in desirable locations) has remained fairly constant over the last few years in the face of many of our competitors and general trends, we have furthermore experienced some upturn last year and rather more so this year. Blofield is a very desirable village indeed to live and this site location is an excellent one. I should also note that, with our application being a full application, our intention and thus our commitment is assured.

9. On the basis of these factors, I am therefore very confident that we will build and sell approximately 25 dwellings each year and therefore complete this development by March 2017, just over 3 years from the date when a favourable appeal decision might be issued. This underlines the point made in Simon Wheatman’s evidence that the Council’s concern about too
much development being delivered all at once (concurrent with the Manor Park appeal site) is unjustified. In reality, the Norfolk Homes development will be coming to a close while the Manor Park appeal site will only just be getting underway at best. Therefore, an effective growth rate of delivery in Blofield is more likely to be a consistent 25 dwellings per annum rather than the early barrage that the Council fears.

10. It also underlies the point that the appeal site is well placed to act as one of the sites which contribute to meeting the 2,000 dwelling small sites allowance.

11. I should finally stress that there are no impediments to this site proceeding promptly. In my lengthy experience, this is one of the few sites of this nature which can proceed without significant infrastructure and highway improvements.

Terry Harper BSc FRICS
Land and Development Manager
Norfolk Homes Ltd

Appendix 1 : Plan no NHBD1/APP-A4