

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4 April 2018

AUTHOR/S: Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

Application Number:	S/0549/18/FL
Parish:	Cambourne
Proposal:	Construct a storage area between the cycle shed and waste store
Site address:	South Cambridgeshire Hall, 6010, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne
Applicant:	Michael Turner, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Recommendation:	Approval
Key material considerations:	Principle of development Visual impact upon the local area Loss of landscaping
Committee Site Visit:	N/A
Departure Application:	No
Presenting Officer:	Edward Durrant, Principal Planning Officer
Application brought to Committee because:	The applicant is South Cambridgeshire District Council
Date by which decision due:	09 April 2018

Executive Summary

1. This full application seeks permission to construct a storage area on a strip of landscaping between the existing cycle shed and waste storage building, both of which are located to the west of the Council's offices at Cambourne. The development would not result in the loss of any parking spaces but it would require the felling of a number of semi-mature trees that were planted as part of the landscaping for the site.
2. The application site is located within the development framework of Cambourne and the principle of the proposed development is acceptable. The visual impact of the new building would be in keeping with other ancillary structures to the west of the main building and is therefore not considered to have a detrimental impact upon the character of the building or an adverse visual impact upon the setting of the Business Park. The loss of landscaping to accommodate the new building is unfortunate but there is no statutory protection of these trees and the boundary landscaping of the site would not be impacted upon as a result of the development.

Planning History

3. S/0320/15/FL - The provision of new solar photovoltaic (PV) canopy system, amendments to car park layout to accommodate the system and 10 additional parking spaces. Upgrade to existing cycle storage facilities and provision of roof mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) systems to existing cycle and refuse ancillary buildings – Refused.

S/0951/08/F - Reconstruction of existing and construction of additional staff parking and associated landscaping works – South Cambridgeshire. Hall - Approved.

S/6147/02/RM - Council Offices, associated works and civic square - Approved

S/6136/01/O - Erection of three storey building for offices (B1 Use) or Council Offices for South Cambridgeshire District Council (Sui Generis Use)

National Guidance

4. National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan Policies

5. The extent to which any of the following policies are out of date and the weight to be attached to them is addressed later in the report.
6. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD, 2007:**
DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
NE/6 Biodiversity
7. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):**
District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010
Biodiversity SPD – Adopted July 2009
8. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission - March 2014**
HQ/1 Design Principles
NH/4 Biodiversity

Consultations

9. **Cambourne Parish Council** – Recommends approval and has suggested that the store be constructed with a green roof.
10. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – Has no objection and has suggested that the green roof mentioned on the planning forms be conditioned in order to help mitigate the loss of the existing trees.
11. **Ecology Officer** – Has no objection and has requested that any consent be conditioned to ensure that a scheme of ecological enhancement is secured and requested an informative to inform the applicant that no vegetation should be cleared during the bird nesting season.

Representations

12. No third party representations have been received.

Site and Surroundings

13. To the west of the three storey office building known as South Cambridgeshire Hall, there are three, single storey, flat roof structures that serve as cycle sheds and general storage purposes. The central structure is a refuse store and serves as a gateway separating the main parking area from the strip of parking to the west of the staff entrance to the main building. The site edged red has been drawn around the strip of landscaping that sits between the northernmost cycle shed and the refuse store. To the east and west of the strip of landscaping there are parking spaces used by staff and members of the public visiting the site.
14. South Cambridgeshire Hall occupies the westernmost plot of Cambourne Business Park. The main building primarily accommodates District Council staff as well as officers from the County Council. To the west of the car park the boundary is well screened by semi-mature landscaping that was planted some fifteen years ago. To the north and south the landscaping is less dense and less mature as it was planted at the time the building was erected. The parcels of land to the north and south were identified as employment land under the original Cambourne masterplan, neither of which has as yet been developed.
15. The site is located within the development framework of Cambourne and in addition to the perimeter landscaping there are two strips of semi-mature landscaping between rows of parking spaces within the car park, and a further area of landscaping between the refuse store and the southern cycle shed that are to be retained. The car parking spaces to the east and west of the site will not be impacted upon as a result of the development, other than when it is being constructed.

Proposed Development

16. The application proposes to construct a new storage building that will be physically connected to the cycle shed and the refuse store. Although not shown on the plans the access to the new store would require a modification of the northern wall of the existing refuse store. Therefore, none of the adjacent car parking spaces would be lost in order to provide the permanent access to the new store.
17. The proposed elevations of the building would be timber clad in keeping with those of the adjacent refuse store. Although the plans detail a plywood deck with a single ply membrane the application forms say "*consider green roof*". This point has been picked up on by several of the consultees.

Planning Assessment

18. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are the principle of development and whether there would be any detrimental impact to the visual appearance of the site resulting from the new building and associated loss of landscaping that would impact negatively upon the character and appearance of the Business Park.

Principle of Development

19. The use of the storage building would be ancillary to the use of the wider site. As such the principle of a development of this scale within the village framework of Cambourne

is acceptable.

20. The proposed storage building would help meet the storage needs of South Cambridgeshire Hall. This would allow existing space within the building to be used to accommodate staff, either employed directly by the Council or one of its partner organisations.

Design, Visual Impact and Loss of landscaping

21. South Cambridgeshire Hall is a contemporarily designed office building and the existing ancillary buildings are subservient in scale and design to it. The new building would follow the design cues of the existing buildings and the timber cladding would match that of the existing refuse store.
22. In 2015 an application was refused for photo-voltaic panels on the Council's car park due to the detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the Business Park. This was primarily due to the loss of some of the perimeter landscaping to the south of the car park and the large area of trees within the car park itself. This proposal would also have resulted in the loss of the present landscaping within this site edged red. All of the landscaping that was proposed to have been lost would have been replaced with low level landscaping, which was supported by the Council's Trees and Landscape Officer.
23. Although this application would result in the loss of all of the semi-mature trees and associated landscaping within the sited edged red the perimeter landscaping would be retained. Therefore views of the wider site from the Business Park would remain largely unchanged and the reason for refusal of the 2015 application would not set a precedent for the determination of this application.
24. Notwithstanding the above, the development of the land would inevitably result in the loss of a number of semi-mature trees that could not be mitigated by replacement planting. Although the loss of any trees as a result of development is unfortunate there is no statutory protection for these trees. Therefore, they could be removed at any time. Both the Parish Council and the Trees and Landscape Officer have suggested that some mitigation be provided by a green roof. The applicant has indicated on the application forms that he would consider this. Although not detailed on the application drawings, it is considered appropriate to attach a condition requiring a scheme of ecological enhancement that would include the provision of a green roof.

Ecology

25. The existing trees have an ecological value but as discussed above there is no requirement for them to be retained. Moreover, they are an isolated area of landscaping that would not serve as an ecological corridor for land based species due to the hardstanding on all sides. The suggested green roof would go some way to mitigating the loss of habitat that would occur as a result of the development. The Ecology Officer has also suggested that bird boxes be attached to the new structure in accordance with details to be submitted for approval in writing to the Local Planning Authority.
26. The Ecology Officer has also requested that an informative be attached to any consent informing the applicant that no clearance of vegetation should take place during the bird nesting season.

Impact upon parking

27. The development itself would not impact upon the level of car parking but there would inevitably be disruption to the parking spaces in the immediate area whilst construction takes place.
28. It is worth noting that due to the present storage needs of the site the northern cycle shed is regularly used as an overflow storage area. As a result of this the number of cycle parking spaces provided for the site falls well below the levels that the Council would require new office developments to provide through the determination of planning applications. The provision of this storage area would therefore relieve some of the pressure on the cycle sheds allowing them to be used for their intended purpose.

Conclusion

29. Having considered the proposed development against the applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material into account, it is recommended that planning permission should be granted in this instance.

Recommendation

30. Approval subject to:

Conditions and Informatives

31. Planning conditions and informatives as set out below, with the final wording of any amendments to these to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair prior to the issuing of planning permission:

Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development, which have not been acted upon.)
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: drawing numbers 1392-PL-002 Rev P1 and 1392-PL-008 Rev P1.
(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)
- 3) Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme of biodiversity enhancement shall be supplied to the local planning authority for its written approval. Notwithstanding the details contained in drawing 1392-PL-008 Rev P1 the scheme shall provide details of how the roof of the storage building shall be designed so that it enhances the biodiversity value of the building above the specifications shown in the submission drawings. The scheme shall also include measures such as bird boxes on appropriate elevations of the building. The development shall thereafter be constructed and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.
(Reason – To ensure that the development mitigate the loss of the existing habitats in accordance with Policy NE/6 of the adopted Local Development

Framework 2007.)

Informative

- 1) The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this act. Trees and scrub are likely to contain nesting birds between 1st March and 31st August inclusive. Trees and scrub are present on the application site and are assumed to contain nesting birds between the above dates, unless a recent survey has been undertaken by a competent ecologist to assess the nesting bird activity on site during this period and has shown it is absolutely certain that nesting birds are not present.

Background Papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission 2014
- Planning File Reference: S/0549/18/FL

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