

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation  
Control Committee  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

1<sup>st</sup> March 2006

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**S/6326/05/RM – Cambourne**  
**Erection of 65 dwellings and associated works at area GC19, off Greenhaze Lane,  
Great Cambourne, for MCA Developments Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for determination: 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. This 2.74 hectare site lies on the west side of Great Cambourne, south and west of the established housing in Greenhaze Lane and Foster Way and backing on to the planted woodland area of the Country Park. West of Foster Way is another allocated housing site, GC22, which will be accessed from Granary Way, with a minor road link through to this application site. A ditch defines the west side of the site, while the south boundary is formed by the southern greenway planned in the Master Plan for Cambourne. The land has a very gentle slope down from east to west
2. The application seeks approval for the reserved matters of siting, design, means of access and landscaping. The scheme is for 65 dwellings at an average density of 24 dwellings per hectare, comprising one flat above garages, 29 three-bedroom houses, 13 four-bedroom houses, 15 five-bedroom, and 7 six-bedroom houses. Three pairs of semi-detached three-storey, and six short terraces of three- and two-and-a-half-storey townhouses are proposed. The remainder would be detached. A design statement is submitted with the application which describes of the principles followed in the design, which include most significantly, the creation of views and vistas through the site to the woodland edge, and the opening of the layout to face the Greenhaze and southern greenways, and the density gradation specified in the approved Phase 5 South Development Briefing Document. To reduce the need for car travel, several of the dwellings have home office rooms to facilitate working from home. The house types have been simplified to create a coordinated sense of place, with common themes of window types and boundary treatment. Informal play space is provided as required by the Cambourne Play Strategy. Parking provision is planned within the detached plots, and in small courts serving the townhouses. Along the spine road single garages and hardstandings are shown to allow for a greener street scene.
3. The layout shows a shared surface road from area GC22 to link with the approved layout in that development, joining with the spine road at a focal point and public open space (LAP). At the junction between Greenhaze Lane and Fox Hollow, another feature open space is planned with a house overlooking and forming a feature with it. Boundary treatment and seating will be required to make the areas suitable for children's play and general social intercourse. To allow for housing facing the greenways, four shared drives would serve the houses on the east and south sides of the site. Views through to the woodland on

the west side would be provided by three shared drives serving houses on the west of the site. The drives allow for small groups and courtyards of substantial houses, keeping car parking away from the spine road. Refuse bin collection points would be provided within the longer shared driveways and at the rear access from townhouses.

4. Tree planting is proposed in the LAPs and adjacent to the garage courts. It is also proposed to enhance the greenway frontages with additional planting. On the northeast boundary, at the rear of gardens in Foster Way, replacement planting is proposed for the hedge which was removed in the course of that development (GC14). This would complete the wildlife habitat by linking the east and west remnants of the (mostly hawthorn) hedge. The detached houses have generous spacing and ample back gardens. Because of the narrow plots of the townhouses, a few of them have relatively cramped outdoor space, but because of the orientation of the buildings all the dwellings would enjoy some sunshine outdoors, and the length of the gardens (averaging 15 metres) would provide adequate amenity for occupiers, and an outlook from the dwellings.

### **Planning History**

5. **S/1371/92/O** Outline planning permission for the new settlement of Cambourne granted in 1994 with conditions relating to Master Planning and submission of reserved matters. A Design Guide with associated Briefing Plans forms part of the approved Master Plan.
6. The approved Phase 5 Briefing Document for this area defines a “western core” area in the northeast part, of relatively high-density character. The streetscape here should have a tight, confined feel with a narrow road corridor enclosed by linked buildings and high garden walls. The open spaces should be hard-surfaced to create “informal village squares”. The remainder of the site is “woodland edge” of relatively medium density character. Development along this western edge should not face out but should emphasise the containment by the woodland by the use of enclosed courtyard areas, allowing glimpses to the woodland beyond. The southern greenway and greenway junction are to have sustainability and a more “contemporary” design philosophy to create a different sense of place along the greenway, and a focus with Space for Imaginative Play at the greenway junction between the southern and Greenhaze greenways. From the centre of this site a view is to be created towards the greenway to the east, and through to the LAP in GC21 to the east. 65 dwellings are allocated for this area in the revised approved Phasing schedule which forms part of the Master Plan (an increase of 9 dwellings from the original schedule).

### **Planning Policy**

*Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:*

7. **P1/3** – Sustainable Design in Built Development,
8. **P3/4** – Rural Services and Facilities,
9. **P5/4** - Meeting Locally Identified Housing Needs

*South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.*

10. **HG10** – housing mix to include a range of types and sizes, including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of

community which reflects local needs. The design and layout should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape.

11. **EN5** – retention of natural features, new planting appropriate to the character of development, its landscape setting and the biodiversity of the locality.
12. **Cambourne 1** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan
13. **Cambourne 2** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Design Guide
14. **SE2** – Rural Growth Settlements
15. **SE7** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan and Design Guide.
16. **TP1** – Promotion of sustainable transport choices, restriction of car parking to the maximum levels in appendix 7/1.

### **Consultation**

17. **Cambourne Parish Council** – recommend refusal on the grounds that:
  - increase on original numbers indicated in master plan and no revised breakdown of dispersal of additional dwellings,
  - extent of hardstandings and private roads too high,
  - type and mix of housing limited number of smaller houses ie 2 bed dwellings,
  - the tall thin dwellings are not in keeping with adjoining buildings,
  - insufficient parking provision especially for guest parking,
  - no information on size and design of garages,
  - no indication of bin storage areas at the end of private roads,
  - the description on the application form omits reference to the 6 bed houses,
  - surface water drainage in the area.

The Parish Council would want conditions to be imposed with regard to working times and use of haul road.
18. **County Highways** – requested minor amendments to make the roads tie in with adjacent sites and to address safety requirements. These have been incorporated.
19. **Ecology Officer**- encouraged by the inclusion of ecology in the design statement. Requires provision of 10 bird boxes, and provision of small mammal routes under fences near the bridleway. These are indicated on the layout plan.
20. **Environmental Operations Manager** – no response.
21. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** – no response.
22. **David Chare, Cambourne Developers Project Director** – no reply.
23. **Environment Agency** – no objection subject to satisfactory surface water drainage and adequate sewerage by Anglian Water.
24. **Anglian Water** – no reply.

### **Representations**

Two letters of objection on grounds of

- poor land drainage at present via the perimeter ditches,
- impact on outlook of excessive height of the three-storey houses near the north side of the site,
- impact of the tall buildings near Foster Way without substantial landscape screening.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

25. The key issues are the housing mix, the design and layout, access and parking, landscaping and ecology, impact on the surrounding area and residential amenity.
26. The proposal only includes one two-bedroom flat to cater for the Structure Plan requirement for smaller dwellings. However, 45% of the dwellings are three-bedroom townhouses, of relatively limited floorspace, which cater for smaller families. These dwellings have been designed into the layout to fulfil the particular requirements of the design brief for the “core” area, and to reflect the terrace to the north of the site in Foster Way. Thus notwithstanding the conflict with Policy P5/4 of the Structure Plan, the proposal accords with Policies HG10 and SE7 of the Local Plan insofar as it makes the best use of the site, reflecting local need and is informed by the wider context of the local townscape as required by the Design Brief.
27. The design of the dwellings has been amended to create a simpler streetscape more in keeping with nearby developments. The “core” area creates a sense of enclosure around the “village square”, with pinch points formed in accordance with the design brief to mark the transition between the different character areas. The sharp transition between the relatively high density core and the medium density woodland edge accords with the Brief. The vistas and glimpses have been designed to link with the surrounding areas. The contemporary/sustainable character required to face the southern greenway is agreed in principle, subject to further amendment. Therefore the proposal accords with Policies Cambourne 1& 2 which require compliance with the Master Plan and design guide (which includes area briefs).
28. Satisfactory vehicular access would be provided within this site and through it to adjacent sites. A garage and hardstanding is provided for each three-bedroom dwelling; this accords with the Council’s maximum standard of two spaces per dwelling and is appropriate to the location, providing scope for visitor as well as residents’ parking. The larger units with double garages and thus four parking spaces exceed the maximum standard, and have been amended accordingly. The only exceptions to this would be the larger houses on shared drives where it is important to make provision for potential visitors without impact on the private access. With this proviso, the proposal accords with the principles of the Structure Plan, and Policies TP1 and Cambourne 1 & 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
29. The layout has been designed so that there are railings to the woodland edge where courtyards abut it; this allows wildlife corridors into the site and its gardens. The courtyards enclose feature trees to accord with the design brief encouragement to increase the connection with the woodland by “occasionally bringing woodland planting into the courtyards or other incidental open space within this area.” Along the greenway frontages back gardens are avoided, and landscaping to the shared drives or side garden boundaries will blend these areas with the open spaces. Ecological enhancement is to be provided in

accordance with the Ecology Officer's advice. Along the spine road the feature trees would mainly be in the LAP spaces, to emphasise the tight core area opening into open spaces, and the vistas through to more distant spaces. This accords with Policy EN5 of the Local Plan.

30. The design of the eastern side of the site allows for sufficient space to preserve residential amenity in the public aspects to Greenhaze Lane, Fox Hollow and along the greenway. On the north side of the site the pair of three-storey semi-detached houses facing east would present a large tall flank wall to the rear gardens of number 7 Foster Way. However, the wall would be three metres from the boundary, and there is a rear access footpath north of the boundary. The distance of 21 metres between these properties is considered sufficient to avoid unacceptable overbearance, given the oblique angles between the properties and the large gap due south of the number 7 (to the rear of the garden of number 8). Further west one terrace of 3 townhouses and one of 4 are proposed 15 metres from the site boundary, giving at least 26 metres between these and the existing houses. This is where the new line of planting is proposed to replace the former hedgeline. Adjacent to the proposed housing in site GC22, the orientation of the flat-over-garage has been amended to give sufficient separation from the bungalow to the north. It is considered that the impact of the proposal on residential amenity is acceptable in accordance with Policy Cambourne 2 of the Local Plan.
31. It is therefore considered that the design and layout are acceptable in terms of the Master Plan, revised phasing schedule and the Briefing Document. The density character is distinctive in relation to the designated "core" and "woodland" areas, and the views and vistas are open and attractive in relation to the margins and adjacent sites. It is thus concluded that compliance with the design guidance, coordination with the surrounding area and efficient use of land is sufficient to overcome the lack of one- and two-bedroom dwellings in this instance. Approval is therefore recommended.

### **Recommendation**

32. Approve the siting, design, means of access and principles of landscaping, subject to the following conditions:
  1. No development shall take place unless and until a scheme of landscaping and boundary treatment, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained together with measures for their protection in the course of development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall subsequently be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.  
(Reason – Because insufficient information was submitted with the application, and to enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area in accordance with policies EN5 and CAMBOURNE 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)
  2. No development or site clearance shall take place during the bird breeding season until a suitably qualified ecologist has checked the site for the presence of nesting wild birds and important plants and declared them absent.  
(Reason – To prevent damage to or destruction of the nest of any wild bird whilst the development is being built or in use, and any important plants, in the interest of the biodiversity of the site in accordance with

Policies EN 13 and CAMBOURNE 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)

3. No development shall take place until a plan showing the location and details of the contractors' building compound and parking area has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning Authority. The plan shall be implemented as approved and no materials shall be stored, nor contractors' vehicles parked, outside the approved compound and parking area.  
(Reason – To ensure that the compound and contractors' parking are adequately accommodated without an adverse impact on existing landscape features, amenity areas or existing residential areas in accordance with Policy CAMBOURNE 1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004).
4. No development shall take place until a scheme showing access routes for construction traffic (deliveries and spoil removal) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall subsequently take place strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.  
(Reason – In the interests of the amenities of existing residents in the vicinity in accordance with Policy CAMBOURNE 1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)
5. No development shall take place until details of external lighting for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall subsequently be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason – In the interests of the amenity, security and the quality of the development in accordance with Policies ES2 and CAMBOURNE 1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)
6. No development shall take place until details of the road and footpath surfacing and hard surfacing within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning Authority. The development shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason – In the interests of amenity and quality of the development in accordance with Policy CAMBOURNE 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)
7. Development of the dwellings shall take place in accordance with the approved scheme of ecological enhancement based on "Ecological Opportunities within the Built Environment" (ESL, November 2000). The scheme shall subsequently be implemented as approved before any dwelling is occupied.  
(Reason – To ensure the ecological enhancement of the site in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 1994, and the Aims and Objectives set out in the Cambourne Master Plan Report and Policies EN12 and CAMBOURNE 1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)
8. During the course of construction, outside a secure compound area (a secure compound is defined as an area with a security fence extending to the ground, and with a gate extending to the ground and locked at night), any steep sided trench of less than 600mm deep must have at least one end sloped, and any steep sided trench of over 600 mm in depth must be covered or fenced if left open overnight.

(Reason – To prevent injury or death to badgers which may forage on the site and in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement dated 20<sup>th</sup> April 1994, and the Aims and Objectives set out in the Cambourne Master Plan Report and Policies EN13 and CAMBOURNE 1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)

9. Development shall take place in strict accordance with the approved schedule of materials and finishes and method of window opening. The development shall subsequently be maintained in accordance with the approved schedule. unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason – In the interests of amenity and quality the development in accordance with Policy CAMBOURNE 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)
10. Notwithstanding the provisions of Regulations 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), the following classes of development more particularly described in the Order are expressly prohibited in respect of Plots 30, 35, 39, 42, 44 and 45 unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf:-  
PART 1, (Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse)  
Class F (provision of hard surface)  
PART 2, (Minor operations), Class B (construction of access to a highway).  
(Reason – In the interests of amenity and road safety to avoid excessive provision of car parking along Road 1 in accordance with Policies TP1 and CAMBOURNE 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)
11. No windows shall be inserted in the north elevation of dwellings at Plots 1 and 14 at first floor level and above unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf:  
(Reason – In the interests of residential amenity of dwellings on adjacent sites in accordance with Policy CAMBOURNE 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)
12. No dwelling shall be occupied until the access road and footways linking that dwelling to the existing public highway network has been completed to at least base course level, and except with the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority such roads and footways shall subsequently be surfaced to wearing course level within 6 months of the occupation of the last dwelling to be completed on the site.  
(Reason – To protect the safety of users if the access roads and footways, and to enhance the appearance of the built environment in accordance with Policies TP1 and CAMBOURNE 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
13. The permanent space to be reserved on the site for parking and turning of vehicles shall be provided before the respective dwellings are occupied and those areas shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than for the parking and turning of vehicles.  
(Reason – In the interest of highway safety and in accordance with Policy TP1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004)

## **Informatives**

1. This decision notice is accompanied by a list of approved drawings and documents.
2. It appears to the Council in respect of this proposal that the following conditions of the outline planning permission continue to apply, and the applicant's attention is drawn to these and all conditions of that permission:

Condition 6 (vi) – implementation of landscaping.  
Condition 7 (b) – time limit for commencement..  
Condition 19 – noise protection scheme with 100m of occupied properties **(NB: requires submission prior to commencement)**.  
Condition 28 – roads and footpaths to base course level.  
Condition 37 – concealment of cables, meter boxes, etc  
Conditions 38 – 41 – aquifer protection measures

### **Reasons for Approval**

1. The approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
  - a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: **P1/3** – Sustainable Design in Built Development, **P3/4** – Rural Services and Facilities.
  - b) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: **Cambourne 1, Cambourne 2, SE7, SE2, HG10, TP1, EN5, EN13** .
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material considerations, which have been raised during the consultation exercise: **the capacity of the site, compliance with the Master Plan and Design Guide, and impact on residential and landscape amenity, land drainage.**

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003  
South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.  
S/1370/92/O Outline planning permission for Cambourne  
Cambourne Master Plan, including revised approved Phasing Schedule  
Cambourne Design Guide  
Phase 5 South Development Briefing Document

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