

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 10th May 2006
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/6340/06/RM – CAMBOURNE
26 Dwellings and Associated Works at Part of Site GC12, Great Cambourne, for
George Wimpey-East Anglia Ltd

Recommendation: Delegated approval / refusal (Major Application)
Date for Determination: 20th June 2006

Site and Proposal

1. This 1.108ha (2.74 acres) site comprises the eastern part of parcel GC12, being developed by the applicant as Phase 2 of that parcel. The site lies on the eastern side of Great Cambourne, facing onto the golf course, and is access via a single estate road, Willow Lane. To the north is parcel GC15, currently under construction for affordable housing (15 shared equity units), to the west is the remainder of GC12 (phase 1), almost complete. To the south west is a greenway, beyond which further development parcels are under construction.
2. The application, received on 21st March 2006 and subsequently amended, proposes 26 dwellings on this part of the site, a density of 28/ha. In terms of mix, all but two (flats over garages) would have 4 or more bedrooms. However, in the context of the whole GC12 parcel, the overall mix (as amended during the application) would be as shown in the following table, demonstrating a good range with 49% of the dwellings being of 2 or 3 bedrooms:

| No of bedrooms | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| No of dwellings | 25 | 17 | 37 | 4 | 3 |
| % of total | 29% | 20% | 43% | 5% | 3% |

Planning History

[Guidance - Planning Refs in **bold** but not underlined]

3. **S/6240/04/RM** – 69 dwellings on whole GC12 parcel approved in October 2004, phase 1 of which is nearing completion. Phase 2 consisted of nine large units, all 5 bedrooms, plus 5 annexes.

Planning Policy

4. South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: policies **Cambourne 1** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan; **Cambourne 2** – Development in

accordance with Cambourne Design Guide; **SE7** – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan and Design Guide;
SE2 – Development in Rural Growth Settlements.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: **P1/3** – Sustainable Design in Built Development.

The Cambourne Design Guide requires that towards the edges of Great Camborne the density should reduce and the size of houses increase, the eastern side being more formal with large housing provided to the edges of the golf course, and plot layouts encouraging the landscape into Great Cambourne at its perimeter.

The approved GC12-16 Briefing Plan which flows from the Design Guide requires a LAP on this part of GC12, and housing laid out in medium density at the southern corner, and low density along the golf course edge. It requires large detached houses to overlook the golf course with estate rail front boundaries.

5. The Cambourne Design Guide requires that towards the edges of Great Cambourne the density should reduce and the size of houses increase, the eastern side being more formal with large housing provided to the edges of the golf course, and the layouts encouraging the landscape into Great Cambourne at its perimeter.
6. The approved GC12-16 Briefing Plan which Plans from the Design Guide requires a LAP on this part of GC12, and housing laid low density along the gold course edge. It requires large detached houses to overwork the golf course with estate rail format boundaries.

Consultation

7. **Cambourne Parish Council** recommends Refusal as there is concern on the following issues:
 - Type and mix of housing, limited number of smaller houses 1, 2 and 3 bed dwellings, too many houses with 4 or more bedrooms;
 - Description on drawings states that there are 6 no. 3-bed houses, but none are proposed;
 - It is felt that the road is not of sufficient size to take the additional 17 houses over the original numbers combined with the single access to the site;
 - Bin spaces not adjacent to the ends of private roads;
 - No clearly defined or insufficient provision for guest / visitor parking;
 - No bird boxes noted, environmentally unfriendly.

The Council would require conditions to be imposed with regard to working times and the use of the haul road.

SCDC Landscape Design Consultant: whilst acknowledging that full detail may not be provided with the application, the landscape concept should be. Indicative areas of planting should be deliverable. To this end: planting to the greenway should be detailed so that the area can be interpreted as a whole; planting over the easement should not be assumed; space for trees in the street scene is important in this edge of settlement site which is to be less dense; the side boundary of plot 226 will be important – a close boarded fence would be unacceptable; access way 1 is too tight for meaningful planting apart from the side boundary of plot 217; rear garden planting should not be relied upon to create character.

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service requires adequate provision for hydrants (this is provided through the Cambourne S106 agreement)

SCDC Chief Environmental Health Officer: no objection.

SCDC Commercial Director: The properties on private drives that are more than 25m from the adoptable road will not have bins collected from outside the house.

Environment Agency: No objection.

Representations

8. A petition has been submitted, containing 30 signatures, stating: “we the undersigned residents object to any increase in densities to sites GC12 and GC15, both sites already have permission for the numbers agreed on the original masterplan and these sites were not even on the developers’ plans for Cambourne enhanced that was refused permission.”
9. Letters and emails have been received from nine residents of the Phase 1 part of GC12 and the access road leading into it, making the following points:
 - a. I bought my house in June of last year on the understanding and knowledge that only 9 large houses would be built on the area of the site. I have now found out that this is not the case and an additional 26 are planned in their place. I purchased the property on the basis of the plans that I saw and am now likely to lose money as a result of the Council’s undemocratic decision.
 - b. There has been no community consultation and this has not been referred to our Parish Council for comment or consideration. If approved, this will be the largest development allowed without a second road entrance. There will be a total of 101 homes in this area, with all residents’ vehicles passing through the single cross roads adjacent to the front of my house.
 - c. The site was subject to a briefing plan that indicated low density housing being adjacent to a planned golf course. The proposed revised plans will directly affect my immediate living area and I have a serious concern regarding the level of traffic that will need to be funnelled past my house for entry and exit to this site on an ongoing daily basis.
 - d. We have a young child and a pet who could be threatened by an increase in traffic.
 - e. We are concerned at the number of dwellings proposed, being almost 3 times the previous plans laid out, and feel this would over-develop the plot of land.
 - f. When purchasing the house we accepted that 9 houses (with an average of two cars each) would create a certain level of traffic past our property, but with the number of houses proposed this could increase a possible 18 cars to over 50. Bearing in mind all cars have to come down Willow Lane, this would cause increased pollution and traffic flow problems in the area.
 - g. Our primary objection is that the volume of traffic will be excessive as the road layout was designed for 9 properties not the new figure of 26. Our house will be passed by many cars each day and when we purchased this property we were told that there would only be 9 houses and as such traffic volumes would be low – a key point to purchase as we have young children with no road sense. Also very concerned that the road width is far too narrow to accommodate 2 way traffic, certainly as I have to park my car on the pavement outside my house to allow my wife’s car access, as such narrowing the road further there and at all other points where my neighbours have to do the same. Ideally a further access road should be built as I understand there may be over 100 homes using the same relatively narrow and sharply twisting access road. This has major safety implications and

should surely be addressed prior to any further building work or planning approval being undertaken. We also understand that the land adjoining the golf course would be of low density and this seems to have changed without permission. Surely this is not right?

- h. The building of further houses is likely to affect the rainwater run-off in the area.
- i. Can you please explain why there is a formal planning process if the District council then allows changes without consultation with the residents over a long enough period of time for them to formally make their case. I have spoken to a number of residents in this area who have not been advised of this change. How can this be allowed to happen? Clearly, it is of greater benefit to the Council and the developers than the residents who are affected. How can this be a democratic process if changes are made without reference to residents? At the very least I request additional time for other neighbours to respond.
- j. Should these houses be agreed we feel that the local infrastructure, schools in particular, will eventually be unable to cope with the demand for services. As Upper Cambourne has yet to be started we feel that the future needs of the community should be taken into account. We wholeheartedly agree with other residents' objections.
- k. Site GC12 is already part built and has planning permission for 69 homes, we are told that layouts are design led, yet a massive increase has been applied for, in effect a huge increase as 26 homes are replacing only 9. This goes against the policy to "create an edge of village location".
- l. This site is subject to a briefing plan that indicates low density being adjacent to the possible golf course.
- m. A memorandum of understanding was apparently signed on the very day an extra 64 homes in Great Cambourne were approved virtually disabling any objection to an increase in densities on specific sites by the normal consultation process.
- n. This site is accessed by one road and there is already a hazardous junction at Willow Lane/Tithe Way.
- o. Financial viability is not an issue for planning, if a developer has paid more for a site than is viable then this is not an issue that should be in any way be influential.
- p. This plan will have a significant effect on existing residents, who have purchased on the basis of the anticipation of a certain level of passing traffic.
- q. The site is unsuitable for such a substantial change.
- r. The remaining site already has permission for 9 homes and therefore defies claims that schemes are design led if replaced by 26.
- s. The extra traffic created in Willow Lane will create the largest number of homes in Cambourne accessed by a single non spine road. The number of witnessed accidents at the corner of Willow Lane and Tithe Way will undoubtedly increase.
- t. What is the point of having the original Masterplan which guided residents into buying and then agreeing a hard fought application to keep to the original 69 homes total – only to cave in and agree a vastly increased number similar to a plan that was rejected for "Cambourne enhanced", which planning opposed. And this area was NOT targeted as a possible expansion site for this proposal.
- u. Residents have signified their disapproval by way of signed petition.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

- 10. ***Number of dwellings.***
- 11. Members will recall approving an amendment to the Masterplan at their meeting of 7th December 2005, allocating an extra 64 units to Great Cambourne from Upper Cambourne (part of the original 3,300 units allocated under the original Masterplan). In return the developers' consortium agreed to bring forward any requirement for a Youth Centre under a future S106 Agreement associated with an additional 700

houses through the LDF process, and to a temporary youth venue (now on site). The Masterplan as now approved, allocates an additional 18 units on top of the 69. The application actually proposes an additional 17 units to the 9 already approved for Phase 2 of this parcel. Therefore the number of dwellings proposed is acceptable in principle.

12. ***Character of the area.***

Members approved the additional allocation of units to Great Cambourne on the basis that there would be no change to the requirements of the Design Guide. In relation to the application site, this means that the site should be low density character apart from medium density in the southern corner, as described under “Planning Policy” above. The application has been negotiated prior to and during submission to ensure that this character is provided. The southern corner is medium density, with houses continuing along the greenway from those on the main part of GC12. Houses also face onto the golf course, and onto the LAP for natural surveillance. The linear form of the LAP enables a landscaping ‘finger’ to be brought into the site as required by the design guide. Parking is set to the rear of these properties, mainly in a parking court, and the Council’s parking standard is met. Plot 203 has been designed to provide a visual stop from the entrance into the parking court, with an end elevation containing a chimney and windows for interest and surveillance. There are also views past this unit to the greenway. The LAP has been positioned over the sewer easement, where no building or planting may occur. However, the easement is to one side of the LAP, enabling sufficient space for planting.

To the east of the LAP, the low density part of the site has been laid out as a standard “perimeter block” with houses facing outwards, either to the golf course, LAP, estate road or access road. This ensures that adequate back-to-back distances are provided. A “flat-over-garage” arrangement provides a parking court for two of the houses facing the golf course, so that wider spaces between units can be achieved. In particular, houses have been joined together in pairs to give the impression of grand houses facing the golf course with significant space between pairs (10m). This creates the low density character required by the Design Guide and I have requested further amendments to increase this spacious character. An access way to the northern most units is provided as an informal green lane – a shared surface driveway with hedges to the front and side gardens facing it. Overall, subject to the further amendments requested above, the scheme has a clear character and form, and the mix of units is acceptable when considered in the context of the whole GC12 site, as described under paragraph 2 above.

13. ***Highways***

The Parish Council and residents have objected on the grounds that the single access road into the overall GC12 site may be inadequate, and that visitor parking is not provided. The Highway Authority has been consulted on the application and raised no objection.

In terms of parking provision, the Council’s standards are designed to include visitor parking, and are met.

14. ***Other Objections***

The amended plans show bin collection points at the end of private drives. A condition will be added requiring ecological enhancements. The additional surface water drainage will easily be accommodated, as this site drains into the same lake that Upper Cambourne will, so the relocation of the units makes no difference. In fact

these lakes were designed in advance of the “Cambourne enhanced” application and dismissed appeal so actually cater for more runoff than is required. It is unfortunate that purchasers have assumed the original planning permission for 9 houses would be implemented and whilst that scheme may be preferable in many respects, this application must be considered on its own merits.

Recommendations

15. **Delegated powers to APPROVE / REFUSE:** approval subject to the receipt of plans to address the changes mentioned above, and to the following conditions, (otherwise refusal on the ground of non-conformity with the Design Guide requirement for low density character at the village edge), and subject to no additional issues being raised as a result of the consultation period for the amended plans, which expires after the date of this meeting.

Conditions

Approve (reserved matters), as amended by plans stamped 23rd June 2005, subject to the following conditions:

1. **No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, 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.**
(Reason – Because insufficient information was submitted with the application, and to enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area.)
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 it is being built or in use, and any important plants, in the interest of the biodiversity of the site.)
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.)
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.)
5. **No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a 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 – Insufficient details were submitted with the application and to ensure the ecological enhancement of the site in accordance with the Section 106 Agreement dated 20th April 1994, and the Aims and Objectives set out in the Cambourne Master Plan Report.)

- 6. No development shall take place until a scheme for the storage and collection of wheeled bins has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.**
(Reason – To ensure the provision of appropriate facilities in the interests of visual and residential amenity, and usability.)
- 7. No development shall take place until details of materials and finishes for the doors, windows, walls, chimneys and roofs of the dwellings and garages, hard surfacing, roads, footways, boundary walls and gates, and method of window opening 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 – Insufficient information was submitted with the application and to enhance the visual quality of the development.)
- 8. No external lighting shall be installed on any part of the site except in accordance with a scheme which shall have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason – In the interests of amenity, security and the quality of the development.)
- 9. 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.)
- 10. All boundary treatment shall be constructed in accordance with the approved Great Cambourne Special, Common and Standard Boundary details ref 85M.100.DL, unless otherwise approved under condition 7 above.**
(Reason – To ensure that there is a coordinated strategy is adopted for this site in keeping with the aims of the Cambourne Design Guide.)
- 11. No work shall take place on site outside the hours of 0730 to 1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays, nor 0800 to 1300 hours on Saturdays, and shall not take place at all on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.**
(Reason – To protect the amenities of nearby residential properties.)
- 12. Meter boxes shall not be installed on any elevation facing a highway other than in accordance with a scheme which shall have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason – To avoid visual clutter in the interest of the quality of the development.)
- 13. Visibility splays shall be provided on both sides of all private drives and shall be maintained free from any obstruction over a height of 600 mm**

within an area of 1.5m x 1.5m measured from and along respectively the highway boundary.

(Reason – In the interest of highway safety.)

- 14. Visibility splays at road junctions and on the inside of bends shall be laid out and constructed to form part of the highway and not enclosed within the curtilages of adjoining properties.**

(Reason – In the interest of highway safety.)

- 15. 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 that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than for the parking and turning of vehicles.**

(Reason – In the interest of highway safety.)

- 16. 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 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.)

- 17. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 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 212-217 and 226 unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the LPA in that behalf.**

Part 1, Class A (extensions); and Class E (outbuildings).

(Reason – To protect the low density character of the area required by the approved Cambourne Design Guide.)

Informatives

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.
 - b) **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** Cambourne 1, Cambourne 2, SE7 and SE2.
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: **highway safety, refuse collection, ecology, security, landscaping, design and drainage.**
3. All other material planning considerations have been taken into account. None is of such significance as to outweigh the reason for the decision to approve the planning application.

General

4. This Decision Notice is accompanied by a list of Approved Drawings.
5. 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
6. The Environment Agency's comments are hereby attached.
7. Any substitution of plant species or stock from those approved will require the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
8. No dwellings should be occupied until street nameplates have been erected in a location and to a specification which shall previously have been agreed with the Council's Street Naming and Numbering Officer.
9. All work on the site shall take place in accordance with Cambourne Ecology Working Paper 6: Safeguarding Statutorily Protected Species during the Construction Phase. (ESL, May 1997).
10. The applicant's attention is drawn to the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 if works are proposed to a party wall.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S/6340/06/RM and S/6240/04/RM

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