

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

7th June 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/6340/06/RM – Cambourne
26 Dwellings and Associated Works at Part of Site GC12, Great Cambourne

Recommendation: Delegated Approval
Date for Determination: 20th June 2006 (Major Application)

Background

1. Members deferred this application from the last meeting as a result of objections on highway grounds, in particular that the road serving the site was not of the required standard under the Cambourne Highway Design Guide to serve so many dwellings, even as already approved let alone with the additional 17 now proposed. Willow lane, leading into the GC12 and GC15 sites is a 5.5m “collector road”, designed to serve up to 150 dwellings. There would be 101 houses off this road which would therefore be acceptable. However, the road narrows to a 5m wide “access road” once within the site. Such roads can serve up to 40 dwellings each, and as the road has been constructed as a loop road, all 101 dwellings were served off an inadequate width of road. Correspondence with the highway authority and applicant was reported to the last meeting which suggested that some traffic calming could be considered to overcome the problem.

Update

2. Further negotiations have taken place with the highway authority and applicant and amended plans have been submitted. These show the loop road divided into 3 single roads. This has been achieved by blocking off sections of the loop road with bollards and raised tables to prevent vehicular access, although cyclists are provided with a ramp at each end of the tables for the sake of permeability for them and pedestrians, in the interest of sustainability. The resulting three roads will serve:

North-eastern access way – 45 dwellings

Central access way – 16 dwellings, and

South western access way – 36 dwellings. (Total 97 dwellings, the remaining 4 being served off the 5.5m collector road at the site entrance).

3. A covering letter from the applicant states: The proposed division of the access way will potentially decrease levels of traffic in certain parts of the site as short cuts will be eliminated. The provision of the tables and bollards should be seen as the least intrusive way of overcoming the issues evident from the residents’ point of view. This should also result in the minimum change to everyday life, in terms of the way in which their properties are currently accessed. The end of each cul-de-sac will retain a suitably sized turning head to accommodate refuse and emergency vehicles with minimal compromise to the surrounding dwellings. The final alteration to the layout requires the repositioning of plot 220’s garage, which has now been accommodated within that plot’s own curtilage.”

Consultations on amended plans

4. **Cambourne Parish Council** to be reported verbally.
5. **Highway Authority** to be reported verbally.

Representations

6. Since the application was deferred the following comments have been received:
 - a. “As the freehold owner of 5 Willow Lane, I am very disappointed and extremely concerned at the ongoing discussions with regard to the extra houses on GC12, in particular the completely stupid idea of adding traffic calming to Willow Lane. Frankly, I understand that the District Council has now admitted that the access road to Willow Lane is too narrow and should be 5 metres, so they are looking at traffic calming measures, and one way systems etc. OVER MY DEAD BODY WILL YOU APPROVE TRAFFIC CALMING TO WILLOW LANE!!! I will not standby and have speed bumps installed. When I bought this property I understood properties would be built in GC12 but I didn't sign up for Speed Bumps!!!! The noise and the damage caused by speed bumps frankly is anti social to the extreme. Go ahead and approve the extra homes if you feel this is the right decision but don't insist of traffic calming to willow lane!!!!”
 - b & c (Identical letters from the same address): “I am strongly opposed to the substantial increase in the number of homes close to where I live. The road is narrow and has sharp bends, it could not cope with the increase in traffic that would result in the building of additional homes as most of the buyers would have more than one vehicle. In addition, there are a number of families that live in the area who have small children and the increase in cars would represent a safety hazard with an increased likelihood of someone getting hurt. Given the planning application that was made originally, the road was not designed to hold the increase in traffic that is now being asked. It is also true that the purchase of our house was based on the decision that a planning application had been made and your office had granted permission for a significantly smaller number of homes. I purchased the house on this basis and will now lose out as my house is likely to be less valuable as a result of the proposed change in the planning application. I was reassured at the time of purchase by my legal advisors that there was no application to amend the planning. Clearly it would appear that these searches are worth nothing and that developers can change their mind as and when it suits them. These additional homes will increase the developer's profits at the expense of residents that are already there. It is my understanding that developers are now trying to increase the number of homes on a site by site basis rather than apply for a total increase which has been rejected. On this basis, how can you possibly allow this additional development of the application in total was rejected? If you approved this, developers will have clearly won by an obvious ploy and confidence in the planning system will be in tatters as a result. In addition, the increase in housing is no doubt likely to affect the rainwater run-off which could cause further problems.”

Comments received as a result of the amended plans will be reported verbally.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

7. The amended plans appear to overcome the highway objection to the inadequate road width in all but one part of the site, where the north eastern access-way would serve 45 dwellings rather than 40. It is considered that this is relatively insignificant, especially bearing in mind that the previously approved scheme (which could still be implemented) had 86 dwellings off a substandard road. In general, there should be an improvement in the traffic situation through the restricted use of the now three roads. Nevertheless I await the comments of the Highway Authority and will update my recommendation if necessary. In visual terms, the raised tables with cycle ramps through will be relatively unobtrusive, as will the change to the position of one garage resulting from the proposals.
8. No other changes have been made to the layout or design of the site, which Members found acceptable at the last meeting.

Recommendation

9. **Delegated powers APPROVE** as amended, subject to the conditions listed in the report to the last meeting. (Delegated approval is requested because the deadline for comments on the amended plans expires at the end of today - 7th June 2006)

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