

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Services

6th September 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

S/0706/06/F – BASSINGBOURN-CUM-KNEESWORTH

Erection of New Ward Building to Accommodate Two Secure Wards, One Rehabilitation Unit, Reception and Visitors Centre with New Landscaping, Fencing and 57 New Car Parking Spaces for Partnership in Care Ltd

Recommendation: Approval

Determination Date: 10th July 2006 – (Major Application)

Departure Application

Site and Proposal

1. Members will recall deferring this application at the June meeting (Item 12) in order that officers could consider consultation responses. A copy of the officer report to the June meeting is attached at Appendix 1.

Consultation Update

2. The **Local Highways Authority** has confirmed that the application does not require the submission of a Traffic Impact Assessment.
3. Any additional comments of the **Conservation Manager and Trees and Landscapes Officer** will be reported at the meeting.
4. The **Council's Legal Officer** has reviewed the letter of representation that has been received but is content that officers have had regard to the planning issues that are raised.

Representations

5. Shortly before the June meeting a letter was received from a planning consultant acting on behalf of clients 'who are concerned to ensure that all such facilities and establishments for psychiatric care and rehabilitation are constructed and operated to recommended standards, in the interests of prospective patients, local residents and fair competition.'
6. A copy of the full letter is attached as Appendix 1.

Applicants Representations

7. In response to issues raised a letter has been received from the applicant's agents which is attached as Appendix 2

Planning Comments – Key Issues

8. I would ask Members to refer to the June report for a summary of the key points to be considered with this application. The planning comments below should be read in conjunction with those in the earlier report.
9. The applicant's agent has submitted details in respect of the site area which were not included on the original application form.
10. In respect of the impact of the proposed development on the character and setting of Kneesworth House, a Grade II Listed Building, I am content that the Conservation manager has given careful consideration to this matter before formulating his views which were included in the June report. The letter of representation comes to a different conclusion. I am content that details of materials to be used for the development can be adequately dealt with by condition.
11. I can confirm that this is not an application that requires consultation with English Heritage.
12. The Environment Agency has accepted the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application and is content that details can be dealt with by condition.
13. Officers have offered informal advice on this application as they would in any other case. The status of that advice at the pre-application stage is always stressed to an applicant.
14. The Local Highway Authority has confirmed that it does not consider that a Traffic Impact Assessment is required in this case. It has advised that highway matters can adequately be dealt with by condition.
15. There is an 'in and out' access arrangement for the site. The property immediately to the north of the access is owned by the applicants, although there are residential properties on the opposite side of the road, just to the north of the site. I do not consider that there will be a materially adverse impact on the amenity of these properties as a result of the additional vehicular movements that are likely to be generated by this development. No objections to the application have been received from local residents.
16. Additional information has been submitted by the applicants' agent in respect of the trees within the site, and includes an arboricultural report. It states that of the three trees to be removed as a result of this proposal a Horse Chestnut is in poor condition probably due to Phytophthora and has a life expectancy of less than 5 years. The Trees and Landscapes Officer has previously agreed that this tree can be felled along with a further Horse Chestnut that already has consent to be removed. A Lime tree is to be felled to accommodate the proposed building. This tree is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order and Members will have to balance the loss of this tree against the argument put forward by the applicant in support of the proposed development. The Trees and Landscapes Officer has not objected to the application.
17. In respect of car parking provision the applicant's agent has commented that the reference to 57 new car parking spaces on the application form is slightly misleading as it includes 41 spaces located in an existing car park, some of which are to be reconfigured as new spaces. The total number of new spaces to be provided is 35 and overall the Council's car parking standards are not exceeded. A Green Travel Plan is to be required by condition.

18. The applicants agent has confirmed that fencing will be erected to a height of 3m where shown and will be in accordance with details already supplied. The Conservation Manager is happy with these details. The applicants agent states that higher fencing is only required for medium secure units and is not the case for low secure units.
19. In respect to the concern about the amenity of patients within the building the applicants' agent has pointed out that this matter is controlled by other bodies and must meet certain criteria for it to be registered and allowed to operate by the Healthcare Commission.
20. The letter of representation expresses concern that the application was originally to be considered by Members prior to the expiry of the consultation period. The deferment of the application at the June meeting has addressed this point.
21. I am of the view that consent for this development can now be granted subject to safeguarding conditions.

Recommendation

22. That the application be approved subject to safeguarding conditions to ensure implementation within 3 years, submission of details of all materials, submission and implementation of a landscape scheme, schemes for foul and surface water drainage and pollution control, boundary treatment, the submission and timescale implementation of a Green Travel Plan, submission of precise details of compound fencing, highway visibility improvement and maintenance measures, measures to ensure tree protection through the course of development, hand digging in the vicinity of existing trees and to ensure compliance with the method statement for the construction of all new hard surfaced areas, foundation construction details to ensure tree protections, no external lighting without planning approval, scheme for the investigation of archaeological remains and the provision of fire hydrants.

Plus informatives from the Environment Agency

Reasons for Approval

1. Although the development is not in accordance with South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy CS12, it is considered to be acceptable as a departure from the development plan for the following reasons: the proposal is required to provide a better standard of care to patients and to meet nationally recognised shortfall in this type of accommodation. The proposal is not felt to adversely affect the visual quality of the wider landscape or harm the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Building.

The development is considered to generally accord with the Development Plan in all other respects and particularly the following policies:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 Policies P1/2, P1/3
South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policies EN1, EN3, EN4, EN5, EN28, EM7

2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Residential amenity including noise disturbance
 - Highway safety and car parking

- Visual impact on the locality
- Impact upon setting of Kneesworth House
- Impact on existing trees within the site
- Drainage matters

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 File reference S/0706/06/F & S/2362/05/F

Contact Officer: Paul Sexton– Area Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713255