

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

3rd October 2007

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

S/1327/07/F - LINTON

Very Sheltered Housing Scheme including 40 Flats with Communal Facilities, Car Parking and Landscaping, following the Demolition of Existing Dwellings (17-33 odd and 18-34 even), Flaxfields for Hereward Housing Association

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 10th October 2007 (Major Application)

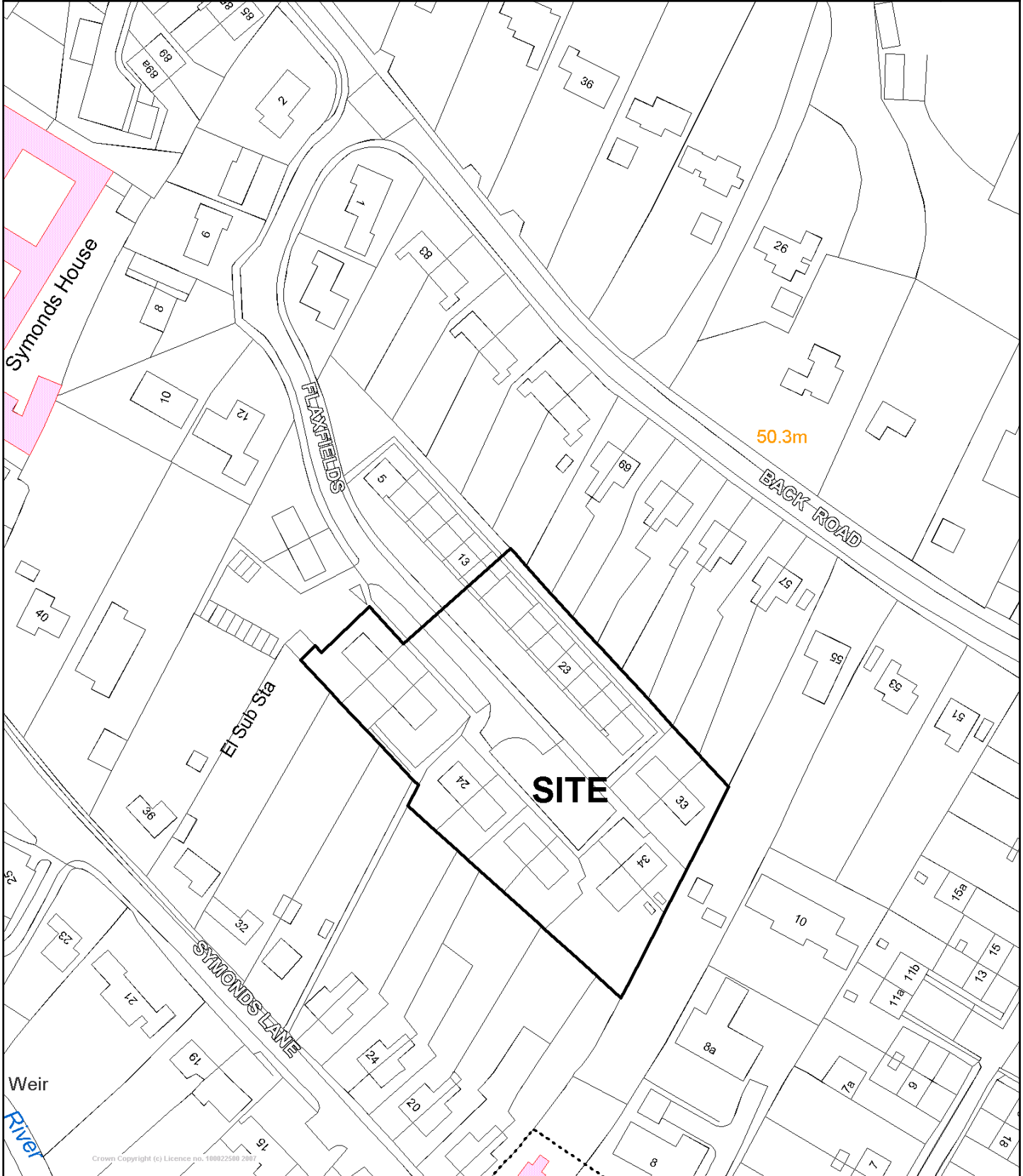
Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because it involves Council owned land and the Parish Council's objection does not accord with the Officer's recommendation.

Members will visit this site on Committee day.

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.5 ha site is currently occupied by 17 semi-detached and terraced bungalows and a two storey warden's house. The properties are owned by South Cambridgeshire District Council and with two exceptions are unoccupied. There is a marked slope across the site dropping by between 3-3.5m from Back Road to the north towards Symonds Lane to the south. Vehicular access is from Flaxfields, which has single storey dwellings adjoining the site. There is a small copse of conifers in the south-eastern corner of the site, and a few small decorative trees planted on the open spaces, including a small cherry and lime in the road verge.
2. The houses in Back Road have back gardens sloping down to the site, with a bank on the boundary line, surmounted by conifers and shrubs. Some gardens have access into the site via steps. From the site to the nearest point on the houses ranges from about 22-33m.
3. The houses in Symonds Lane are similarly separated from the site by gardens, some 37-48m in length sloping up to the site's boundary. There are also conifers and other hedging along this boundary, together with some fencing.
4. The south eastern boundary is abutted by rear gardens of two properties in Back Road and Symonds Lane and is marked by a deciduous hedge. The Symonds Lane property concerned (12) is also a Grade 2 Listed Building.



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5. The north western boundary to Flaxfields encompasses the two trees growing in the roadside verge and to the south of Flaxfields abuts a footpath which links through to Symonds Lane. On the northern side of Flaxfields the site adjoins bungalows owned by the applicants and to the south of Flaxfields a bungalow erected in 2004 by the Papworth Trust.
6. The full application, received on 11th July 2007, and amended on 28th August and 11th September 2007, proposes the erection of a 40 flat “very sheltered” housing scheme in lieu of the existing dwellings, with a 20 space car park adjoining on the southern side of Flaxfields. The existing footpath from Symonds Lane is re-routed around the rear of the car park. Accompanying the application is a Design and Access Statement, a Planning Statement, a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Implication Assessment, and a Habitat Survey.
7. Eight two bedroom and 32 one bedroom flats are proposed, all with kitchen and en-suite facilities. The provision of affordable housing within the proposed scheme will be dictated by the availability of grant funding. In line with current Government agendas, and to promote choice, a variety of tenure models will be made available, including social rent and homeownership.
8. The entire scheme at Linton will be for frail older people in housing need and requiring some level of care. An assessment process will be in place to ensure potential residents demonstrate sufficient housing and care need for the development. The scheme is being taken forward and developed in Partnership with the Council. It has also been identified by the County as their priority scheme for allocation of Supporting People funding. The extra care scheme consists of self-contained flats to promote independent living, and staff will be on site 24 hours a day to provide care and support.
9. Community facilities include a dining room, kitchen, lounge and a double height entrance lobby with reception. There are additional bathrooms, laundry rooms, plant rooms, offices, activity room, buggy store, cycle store and lift access to all floors.
10. The main building is basically ‘H’ shaped in plan form with accommodation in four wings, with a further wing extending along the northern side of Flaxfields. The northern blocks are two storey, the two southern blocks are three storey where the split level design utilises the fall in the site. The southern blocks are also cut into the site to retain a compatible ridge height. The roofs are generally pitched and hipped with dormers, rooflights and solar panels. Small elements of flat roof are incorporated at the roof ridges to reduce the overall height. The overall ridge height is between 7-10.9m above the current site level. This is approximately 3-3.5m higher than the existing bungalow. Measured from the new level cut into the site, the ridge height of the southern blocks is 11-11.4m. The lowest element of the scheme is adjacent to the bungalows on the north side of Flaxfields where the ridge height drops to 7m.
11. Between the main residential blocks are north and south facing landscaped courtyards with balconies.
12. In order to minimise overlooking of neighbouring properties on the eastern elevation, projecting angled bays are shown which limit the angle of view.
13. The wall materials are a mixture of brick and render with thermowood cladding on some projecting bays and stairwells.

14. On-site parking is provided for residents, visitors and staff, although it is unlikely the residents will drive. Four disabled spaces are situated by the main entrance plus sixteen general use spaces. A cycle store is provided within the building.
15. The Environment Agency has been consulted by the Applicants and advised that although the site is in a low flood risk area, the surface water run-off from the site must be managed. A rainwater harvesting scheme is proposed, involving a percentage of the rainwater run-off from the roofs being stored in underground tanks before being pumped back into the building for use in the communal toilets and laundry. Water attenuation will also be installed under the car park for the remaining roof run-off.
16. Investigations have not revealed any existing site contamination.
17. Part L and Part F of the Building Regulations will be strictly adhered to in the design to ensure the building is sustainable. The flats will have passive ventilation through the open plan living/kitchen spaces. High levels of insulation will be employed to provide good thermal mass, and cutting the building into the ground will help in this respect. Glazing along the main corridor (north and south facing balconies) will also help improve thermal mass through solar gain. Within the double height entrance space rooflights have been positioned to maximise natural daylighting. Energy efficient lighting will be specified throughout and solar panels will contribute to the hot water supply (approximately 60% of the total demand). Dual/low flush toilets, spray taps and low water use showers will be utilised to save water and there is also a communal laundry. Water butts are proposed to enable irrigation of the landscaped gardens. All these measures are intended to achieve a "Very Good" Ecohouses rating.
18. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey concluded that the empty houses on site appeared to have suitable features for roosting bats and a bat survey is recommended prior to demolition. The bat survey has recently been carried out and the results are awaited. The Habitat Survey concluded trees, hedges, scrub or areas of tall vegetation should not be removed during the bird nesting season.
19. Solar panels are proposed in strategic positions on the roof which maximise energy saving without adversely affecting the appearance of the building.
20. Public art will be provided in communal areas within the building as well as possible sculptures for the external landscaped courtyards. This will be achieved through integration with local schools and/or community groups. It is intended to hold workshops to achieve this.
21. The overall density of the scheme equates to 80 dwellings per ha.

Planning History

22. The existing dwellings were erected in the 1960's and only 2 remain occupied. At the January 2007 meeting Members refused an application for a Very Sheltered Scheme including 42 Flats, Communal Area and Car Parking for the reasons that:
 1. The proposed 42 flat scheme is an overdevelopment of the site, resulting in an excessive building footprint, allowing insufficient clearance to the site boundaries to accommodate landscaping, and with a scale, bulk and ridge height which will be overbearing for neighbouring residential properties,

particularly those in Symonds Lane which are at a lower level than the application site.

2. It is therefore contrary to Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy HG9 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which in the former seeks a high standard of design for all new development and in the latter states the quality of design of residential care homes should be in keeping with surrounding properties in terms of scale, form and layout and should protect the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.

The agenda item (Item 5) is attached as an electronic appendix.

Planning Policy

The site is within the village framework and the following policies are relevant:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:

23. **Policy P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development) states development will be restricted where there could be damage to areas that should be retained for their biodiversity value.
24. **Policy P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development) states a high standard of design and sustainability will be required for all new development.
25. **Policy P5/3** (Density) states densities of at least 40 dwellings per ha should be sought in locations close to a good range of existing services.
26. **Policy P7/2** (Biodiversity) states all developments will seek to conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of areas which they effect.
27. **Policy P7/6** (Historic and Built Environment) states Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) 2007:

1. Core Strategy

28. **Policy ST/3** concerns the efficient use of land through the re-use of previously developed land to deliver sustainable development.
29. **Policy ST/5** designates Linton a Minor Rural Centre where residential development and re-development up to a maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings will be permitted within village frameworks.

2. Development Control Policies

30. **Policy DP/1** states development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, as appropriate to its location, scale and form.
31. **Policy DP/2** states all new development must be of a high quality design.

32. **Policy DP/3** states all development proposals should provide, as appropriate to the nature, scale and economic viability, inter alia:

Affordable housing, car parking provision kept to a minimum, safe and secure cycle parking.
33. **Policy DP/4** states planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. Contributions may be necessary for, inter alia:

Landscaping and biodiversity, drainage and arts provision.
34. **Policy DP/6** states, where practicable, development which by its nature or extent is likely to have some adverse impact upon the local environment and amenity during construction/or is likely to generate construction waste should, inter alia:

Recycle construction waste, where appropriate accommodate construction spoil within the development.
35. **Policy HG/1** states residential developments will make best use of the site by achieving average net densities of at least 30 dwellings per ha. Higher average net densities of at least 40 dwellings per ha should be achieved in more sustainable locations.
36. **Policy HG/3** states, inter alia, that the amount of affordable housing sought will be 40% or more of the dwellings for which planning permission may be given on all sites of two or more dwellings.
37. **Policy SF/6** states in determining planning applications the District Council will encourage the provision or commissioning of publicly accessible art works in residential developments comprising 10 or more dwellings.
38. **Policy NE/1** requires developers to demonstrate that schemes will achieve a high degree of measures to increase the energy efficiency of new buildings.
39. **Policy NE/3** states all developments greater than 10 dwellings will include technology for renewable energy to provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements.
40. **Policy NE/6** requires new development to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity.
41. **Policy NE/12** states development must incorporate all practicable water conservation measures. All developments greater than 10 dwellings will be required to submit a Water Conservation Strategy.
42. **Policy CH4** states planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building.
43. **Policy TR/2** (Appendices 1 and 2) set out maximum parking standards for cars and cycles.

Consultation (pre-amendment)

44. Linton Parish Council objects:

1. “This site was originally identified as a location for a 30 unit extra care scheme, Linton Parish Council still has serious concerns about the need for a 40 unit scheme and details its concerns in the attached document. We do not think that it is acceptable that the number of rented or low-cost units will be confirmed after planning permission is granted, these need to be determined and guaranteed before the permission is considered.
2. We regret that there has been no response to the hastily convened and inadequate consultation with Hereward Housing (see notes from meeting), or the letter from Mr Gore of 25th May. The Design Statement (page 8) claims that the design team were keen to involve the local community. This was not the case as can be seen from the dismissive tone of their email to the Parish Council on 19th February. The statement claims to have made changes following a meeting with two representatives from the Parish Council on 17th May. All the changes mentioned were in place at that meeting thus reducing it to the status of a preview and not a consultation.
3. The advantage of the additional land offered by the District Council, from the demolition of three further bungalows, appears to have resulted in only a minimal reduction in the height and bulk of the building which remains substantially the same as that refused in the earlier application. The paper from the planning consultants (RPS) contains misleading comments, it refers to the site as ‘urban’ which it patently is not, being one street away from fields contained in an area of best landscape value; and that it is ‘paradoxically characterised by low density, spacious, traditional two storey semi-detached housing’, and hence far from urban.
4. The RPS paper claims that in the revised scheme ‘the overall scale of the care home has also been significantly reduced’. In fact the footprint of the home is bigger than previously, however that is to be expected with additional land. Nevertheless, according to the design statement the roof area of both plans are identical 1932m².
5. The report claims that the reduction in units from 42 to 40 has ‘allowed for the bulk of the overall building to be significantly reduced, particularly in scale and height’. Approximately one fifth of the roof area has been reduced by one metre, the remaining roofs are identical in height as are most of the elevations. The report states that ‘the scaling down of the care home has allowed for the footprint of the building to be set further away from the site boundaries’. The rearrangement has indeed allowed for a welcome perimeter path around the site but this has been achieved by moving the whole and enlarged footprint to the west and not by scaling down.
6. The design team cannot claim to have reduced the height of the bulk of the building but merely to have rearranged it on the site, and hence all the Parish Council’s and District Council’s concerns regarding the overbearing scale of the building remain as before.

7. To re-submit a plan with so few changes to one which was so emphatically rejected by the District Council on its first application seems, to the Parish Council, to be wasteful in terms of time and resources and shows a contemptuous disregard for the District Council's opinions.

The Parish Council still feels that the application remains in contravention of the planning policies contained in the original objection on the following grounds:

1. Linton Parish Council does not feel that the design is in keeping with surrounding properties and landscape in terms of scale, form, layout and materials. Regardless of the small reduction in height, the building still has 3 storeys and the introduction of a building such as proposed in a bungalow area is not in keeping in terms of scale and form. The new design is exactly the same height when viewed from Symonds Lane albeit a few feet further away.
2. Boundary treatment is intended to provide privacy and a high standard of visual amenity. We believe it is impossible to provide privacy from balconies on a building of such a height. We do not believe that a windowless brick and timber façade is a visual amenity and will have a detrimental impact on the street scene in Symonds Lane.
3. We are concerned that the greatly increased traffic movements will impact on the surrounding area contravening the need for safe and convenient access and wish it to be noted that adjacent, local footpaths off the site are not suitable for elderly pedestrians or mobility vehicles and considerable work would be required to make them suitable for use. (Photographs are submitted).

Linton Parish Council feels that the District Council should consider the following points when it considers the application.

The plan:

- a) Contravenes Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003.
- b) Is not in keeping with the location in terms of scale, bulk and ridge height.
- c) Gives rise to very grave concerns regarding water 'run off' and the effect that the massive excavations and below-ground-level design will have on the water draining down from the fields on Rivey Hill.
- d) Does not include a report attached with the application detailing the current demand in Linton or documentary evidence supporting need for 40 units.
- e) There is a known shortage of local carers therefore there may be many staff travelling by car and we are concerned that insufficient car parking will result in road parking which would therefore materially affect the neighbouring properties. The lack of demonstrable need for this type of home in the village will result in the homes being used by the frail and elderly from across the district whose visitors will arrive by car.
- f) Will not enhance the setting of the Listed Building situated at 12 Symonds Lane.

It should be noted that:

1. The site plan for this application is inaccurate, it does not show the Papworth bungalow that was built in 2004 and the landscaping plan shows photos that are over 4 years old. We feel that this may give an inaccurate impression of the surroundings especially when the large parking area shown on the periphery of the site is no longer in existence.
2. The Parish Council appreciates the plan shows living room windows angled to avoid overlooking but the kitchen and many of the bedroom windows will overlook neighbouring properties, and we note that some bedrooms appear to have no windows at all viz units 02 and 09. Angling some windows to overcome overlooking problems but not others in the same elevation becomes an elevational treatment instead of a solution to the problem. The issue of windows overlooking neighbouring properties must be resolved to achieve compliance with planning regulations.
3. There are flats located beside the plant room and the laundry which we believe will be noisy unless specifically sound-proofed. The flats at the south end of the lower ground floor will look out onto a retaining wall and this area would seem to be a better location for plant and a laundry room.
4. There is a discrepancy in the Site Layout Plan and the Landscape Plan over the two fine trees north of bungalows 18 and 22. The former indicates their retention whilst the latter proposed their removal. The Parish Council would wish to see these trees protected and retained, as the tree officer requested in the previous application.

Conditions

Should this application be approved we request the following conditions.

That:

Concerning the residents:

- a) Residents must be elderly, i.e. over 60 and/or disabled
- b) Priority is given to Linton residents or those with Linton connections

Concerning sustainability:

- c) Sustainable and renewable features should exceed by 20% the mandatory level of current building control levels. These should be demonstrated and proved at the planning stage.
- d) Lighting conditioned to minimise light pollution
- e) A further environmental wildlife assessment is made prior to demolition
- f) All hard surfaces should be permeable

Concerning the design:

- g) Overlooking should be addressed by appropriate treatments such as obscured glass.

- h) Linton Parish Council is consulted on materials to be used
- i) Approval is dependent on Listed Building Officers opinion

Concerning access and roads:

- j) Approval is dependent on the opinion of the Highways Department regarding the effects of the expected increase in traffic on Flaxfields itself and the safety of the junction with Back Road.
- k) Any damage to the Highway caused by building vehicles in Flaxfields and elsewhere in Linton is corrected by the developers on completion of the development, to the satisfaction of Linton Parish Council
- l) The route for HGVs to and from the site avoids the conservation area in Linton and notes the restrictions of the High Street.
- m) The link footpath from Flaxfields to Symonds Lane is upgraded”.

Enclosed with the objection were five further documents:

1. Notes on Pre-application consultations with Applicants

“Following the refusal of this application by South Cambridgeshire District Council on the 10 January 2007, two representatives of Linton Parish Council met with Hereward Housing on the 17 May 2007. They were asked to get informal feedback from the residents regarding a new site plan that had been drawn up (no elevation plans had been drawn). On the 21 May, Linton Parish Council was advised that comments must be received by the 25 May and an informal meeting was arranged at the Flaxfields Community Room with residents of Back Road, Symonds Lane and Flaxfields on the 24 May. Members of the Council’s Planning Committee were in attendance.

The comments below are a summary of the views expressed by residents attending the meeting; these comments should only be taken as informal feedback to a site plan provided as there was insufficient information to make any in depth/specific comments. In the time available, it was not possible to provide formal Parish Council feedback as there was insufficient time to call an official meeting.

Residents’ observations:

1. The original plan for the Flaxfields development was for 30 to 32 units. Residents were aware that a scheme of this size was financially unviable and although the new plan shows the demolition of three bungalows this does not provide sufficient space for the additional units. Consideration should be given as to how the site can be made larger to accommodate the additional units.
2. The residents of Symonds Lane, Back Road and some Flaxfields residents did not feel that the new site plan had addressed the concerns expressed by the residents or the reasons for rejection by SCDC planning committee. The SCDC planning committee stated that a **42 flat scheme was overdevelopment of the site** and the demolition of three more bungalows was not sufficient to address the concerns. That committee also stated that this **had resulted in an excessive building footprint, allowing insufficient space between the built development and the site boundaries to accommodate landscaping and with a scale, bulk and ridge height which would be overbearing for**

neighbouring properties particularly those in Symonds Lane which are at a lower level than the application site.

Although the new site plan showed that more clearance had been given to the boundaries there was no real attempt to reduce the scale, bulk and ridge height. To meet these requirements the ridge height would have to be significantly reduced, which had not been undertaken, as well as providing sufficient clear space between the building and the site boundaries.

3. Residents felt that resiting the building further up the gradient of the hill had effectively raised the height of the building.
4. The site plan shows the demolition of three bungalows, a resident of these bungalows was very upset and disappointed that no official or representative of SCDC had advised her that her home could be demolished. How would these residents be accommodated during the building works? It must be understood that residents of these bungalows have already had a considerable amount of instability and cannot be expected to move numerous times in their late eighties.
5. A resident of one of the other two bungalows retained by SCDC (to the west of the drive leading to the Papworth Trust bungalow) advised that her bungalow was being monitored by the Council because of suspected subsidence. Residents felt that SCDC already showed less commitment to the site now they only had five properties there, and it would be further reduced with only two. People were not averse to the possibility of those bungalows being incorporated into the scheme.
6. In conclusion the residents were very disappointed with the proposed site plan and had expected radical change rather than minor tweaking. Residents believe that SCDC and Hereward Housing need to take a holistic view of the Flaxfields development, and if the originally proposed 30-32 unit scheme is not economically viable then action should be taken to increase the land available to build a large scheme. Residents are not against an extra care facility at Flaxfields. However they believe that the current scheme is not suitable for the current site”.

2. Observations on the Planning Policy Context

“Planning Policy Statement 1- Delivering sustainable development

1. The references to PPS I in the applicant’s Design Statement concentrate on design issues. They do not address the importance of relating development to the character of the locality and to its impact on the surrounding area.
2. The Parish Council refers to paragraph 18 of PPS1 which states that the condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life and that planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment.
3. Paragraph 19 of PPS1 requires planning decisions to be based on the potential impacts, positive and negative, of development proposals on the environment, and states that planning authorities should seek to enhance the environment as part of development proposals, avoid significant adverse impacts on the environment, and pursue alternative options which might reduce or eliminate those impacts.
4. Because many residents would be moving from accommodation well away from Linton, and some distance from family, friends and existing social networks

(see the Parish Council's comments on need), the proposal fails to promote social cohesion as required by paragraph 14 and will tend to promote unnecessary travel by private transport contrary to the advice in paragraph 27.

5. The present proposal fails to meet the principles set out in PPS 1. It also fails to advance a justification based on need which would outweigh the conflicts with the principles of PPS1.
6. The Parish Council has identified an alternative use for the land- general social housing- which would bring the site back into full use and for which a proven strong local need exists, and which could be achieved in conformity with the principles contained in PPS 1.

Planning Policy Statement 3- Housing

1. In the context of the specialised form of development proposed by the applicants, many of the general principles contained in PPS3 referred to in the Design Statement are of marginal relevance.
2. To the extent that reference is made to the provision of a variety of tenures, the importance of the redevelopment of brownfield sites, and the need to maximise use of previous developed land, PPS 1 is clearly relevant. However, those principles cannot justify development which is incompatible with the nature of the surrounding area and its environment.
3. Particular importance should be given to the requirement in PPS3, acknowledged by the applicants, that developments should complement neighbouring buildings and the local area and create or enhance a distinctive character that relates well to its existing buildings.
4. Redevelopment of the site for general social housing, properly designed, could meet all the relevant principles contained in PPS3 and would not compromise the surrounding area and its environment.

Development Plan Policies

Core Strategy Development Plan Document

Policy DP/1 (Sustainable Development). The criteria from Policy DP/1 which the applicant's agents identify as being particularly relevant are:

- the need to minimise travel
- the importance of environmental considerations and
- the effective use of land.

The present proposal does not meet either the first or second of those criteria.

Policy DP/2 (Design of new Development). The applicant's agents identify a number of the criteria set out in Policy DP/2. They include the following, all of which the current proposal fails to meet:

- the need to preserve or enhance the character of the local area
(as is tacitly conceded by the applicant's agents in their letter of 9 July 2007)
- compatibility with environmental considerations

- that new development should offer variety and interest within a coherent design
- that development should be compatible with its location

Policy DP/7, Part 2 (Development Frameworks). This policy requires development to be sensitive to the character of the location. This proposal is not.

Suitably designed social housing would be in conformity with the policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan document”.

3. The Issue of Need for an Extra Care Scheme in Linton

“The issue of need is crucial for several reasons:

1. The site is not obviously appropriate for a development of this sort, given its location, the nature of the surrounding development and its physical characteristics. Nevertheless, Linton PC agreed to support the principle of a 30 unit extra-care development in 2003 having been assured that studies demonstrated a need for this type of facility for Linton and the surrounding area and being satisfied that a facility of that size could be reasonably accommodated within the site.
2. As the applicant’s planning consultants agents, RPS, have recently confirmed this proposal is for a form of “institutional care home for frail/elderly people.” Circular Guidance (currently LAC (2004) 20) in relation to care homes emphasises the importance of offering real choice for elderly people in the provision of accommodation, reflecting the generally recognised principle that elderly people should be able to remain living close to their existing family and their network of friends and local relationships wherever possible.
3. If need cannot be established, funding, which has been dependent on the District Council agreeing to transfer the site to the applicants at no cost, would require re-examination. This might prove an insurmountable hurdle, as it did for the original smaller proposal, resulting in the site remaining derelict and out of productive use.
4. It is important that all sites are used to best fulfil housing needs in the locality, given the balance of need and availability of land in the District.

Need and Adverse Environmental Consequences

1. The Parish Council, in its general comments on this proposal, has highlighted its adverse environmental impact on the area around the site. Indeed, the applicants and their advisers have not denied that the revised proposal will have an adverse environmental impact on the area. The difference between the original and revised proposals is that the degree of adverse impact has been reduced to a limited extent. As the supporting letter from RPS, Hereward’s planning consultants, dated 9 July 2007 concedes, this proposed high-density, multi-storey care home development is “within an area paradoxically characterised by low density, spacious, traditional two storey semi-detached/detached housing.” Later in the letter RPS acknowledge “To object to the proposal because it is not in keeping with the area is generally a valid comment.”*

**That sentence continues “however where the proposal is for a specialised institutional care home facility, such comments are considered to be out of context with what is being proposed and therefore inappropriate.” If that comment actually means anything at all, it clearly cannot mean that the usual*

principles in the determination of planning applications should be disregarded.

2. It is well settled, both as good planning practice and by a series of legal decisions, that issues of need and the investigation of alternative sites are frequently relevant to the determination of planning applications. As the Encyclopaedia of planning Law makes clear, if a proposal has some adverse environmental effect, the related issues of need and the availability of alternative sites are material considerations.
3. Accordingly, need and the availability of alternative sites have to be addressed. Need has been addressed, but as demonstrated below, the result appears to have been to establish that there is no need. The availability of alternative sites has not been addressed at all.

Analysis of lack of need

1. The proposal is for a scheme consisting of new build extra-care social units in the form of an institutional care home. It will be recalled that following the failure to secure external funding for the original 30-unit proposal, the Cabinet decided in 2004 that its preference was for a care facility which would consist entirely of social housing provision, though with a variety of tenures. The Parish Council understands that decision formed the justification for the proposal to transfer the land from the District Council to Hereward at nil cost. Indeed, it would be difficult to see how the District Council could transfer property without payment in order to enable the provision of private sector housing. The Parish Council's discussions with Hereward Housing and the Affordable Housing Statement in the current Design Statement confirm that understanding.
2. The analysis of need carried out by the County Council Research Group forms the basis of the District Council's Housing Departments' study produced at the end of 2006, entitled "Evidence of Need for an Extra Care Scheme at Linton." That analysis actually demonstrates a lack of need in the Linton area for such a scheme.
3. The Research Group's analysis confirms that in the extra-care sector, the requirement for new-build social units in the County is 134 in the period 2005-9 and 101 in the period 2010-15, a total of 235 units. This represents 21% of the total of 1118 additional extra-care units required during this period, the remaining 79% being provided by three other types of provision: new-build private units, the re-modelling of existing accommodation and increased delivery to community-based clients.*

**The study makes it clear that Flaxfields is not relevant to the provision of units by the remodelling of existing accommodation.*

4. The study demonstrates that 24.75% (276) of the total shortfall of 1118 units will be within South Cambridgeshire. It is not suggested that the balance of need between the four different types of care provision is different in South Cambridgeshire compared with the County as a whole. Accordingly, the predicted shortfall for new-build social units in South Cambridgeshire is 24.75% of 235 for the period 2005-15, a total of 58 units. Of that shortfall, approximately 35 are to be provided by the Moorfields scheme in Melbourn, which was not treated as existing provision for the purpose of the study, leaving a residual need for about 23 further units.
5. Accordingly, the provision of a further 40 units as currently proposed will result in significant over-provision (of about 17 units) in the District in the

period to 2016, although it is likely to be absorbed during the period 2016-21 according to the Research Group's analysis.*

**The study suggests that the decommissioning of the bungalows in Flaxfields might result in abnormally high demand in Linton. However, despite nearly all having been decommissioned some time ago, there are still vacancies in the sheltered housing units in Chalklands nearby, so there is no evidence of abnormal local demand.*

6. Hereward confirmed at the meeting with Parish Council representatives in May that in their experience places in social extra-care facilities are normally restricted to residents of the County within which it is located, so there is no prospect of the facility meeting potential cross-border needs in Essex or Suffolk.
7. It will be seen, therefore, that building a facility of this size in Linton will exhaust the requirement for new build extra-care provision in the District to a date well beyond 2016. As a result, such provision will be concentrated entirely in the southern part of the District (Linton, Sawston, Melbourn) leaving the population in the northern half of the District without any reasonable access to new-build extra care social housing. That is contrary to the principles encapsulated in Circular LAC (2004) 20.
8. The Parish Council understands from its discussions with Hereward Housing that the level of care provided by a facility of this sort is different to what would be offered by the remodelling of an existing sheltered housing scheme. Besides, even if the form of care in that type of development could be regarded as reasonably comparable to an institutional care home, no evidence has been advanced to suggest that there are any sites in the north of the District where social extra-care units can be provided by the remodelling of existing sheltered housing. Those issues must be satisfactorily addressed before a decision to concentrate new-build social extra-care in the south of the District could be justified.

Balance of social housing needs in Linton

1. The Parish Council has always accepted the need for an appropriate redevelopment of the site.
2. According to the District Council's study, the total numbers of households on the housing register as at 5 December 2006 including Linton as a village of choice was 995, of which only 67 (7%) were couples or single people over the age of 60. The full breakdown contained in the study demonstrates that the overwhelming need for housing in the area is represented by households (couples, families or single people) under the age of 60, yet with the completion of Phase II of the Paynes Meadow scheme there are no proposals for general social housing in Linton, nor is there any prospect of such proposals coming forward in future.
3. It is not suggested by the study that the balance of need between over- and under 60s in other nearby villages is measurably different to that in Linton.
4. Flaxfields would offer a suitable site for general social housing. Such a development would meet a demonstrable need and not give rise to adverse environmental impact.

Alternative site

1. To the extent that there might be some limited future need for extra-care housing in the Linton area no steps have been taken to discuss with the owners of Symonds House Residential Home* whether the large complex of derelict land and buildings at the rear of the site- accessible from the former District Council hostel site on Back Road (now redeveloped as social housing), Crabtree Croft and Symonds Lane- might be used, either by way of remodelling and/or by way of new build.
2. Representatives of Hereward Housing advised the representatives of the Parish Council in May that this was not a matter for them, as a social housing provider, but for the statutory agencies. Accordingly, the District Council, as a housing authority, needs to enter into discussions with County Social Services, the Primary Care Trust and Raveedha Care Ltd, to explore the use of part of the unused land at Symonds.
3. Given the problematic nature of the Flaxfields site and the lack of need demonstrated, a development on a more modest scale carried out in conjunction with Raveedha Care appears to be a more appropriate approach. It also offers the prospect of synergy between such a development and Symonds House and the more effective use of resources.

**Symonds House contains both an extra-care residential facility, providing a similar level of care to that proposed by Hereward Housing, and a nursing home facility. The two facilities occupy different parts of the same building. It was recently acquired by Raveedha Care Ltd, a substantial residential and nursing home group*

Conclusions

1. The District Council's study demonstrates the lack of any foreseeable need in the District for a facility of this size in this location.
2. It is inappropriate to concentrate a particular form of extra-care provision in only one half of the District.
3. To the extent that there is, or will be, unmet need, it is in the northern half of the District.
4. No evidence has been produced to suggest that need in the northern half of the District can be met by the remodelling of existing schemes.
5. In any event, as they do not provide comparable levels of care, both new-build and remodelled sheltered housing developments should both be distributed around the various parts of the District.
6. No evidence has been produced to suggest that there are no suitable sites for a new-build social extra-care facility in the northern half of the District, indeed no evidence that a search for sites has even been carried out has been provided.
7. Because of the lack of justification for the proposed scheme, justifying funding may become problematic, leading to the prospect of continued dereliction.
8. There is significant unmet need for general social housing in Linton, some of which could be met by the redevelopment of Flaxfields for that purpose.

9. To the extent that there might be some limited need for social extra-care units in the Linton area, use of part of the Symonds House site appears more appropriate and a better use of public sector resources.
10. It is unfortunate that social housing providers should have been encouraged to invest time and resources in the working up of a scheme for which the District Council's study demonstrates there is no justification.
11. The present proposal appears to have been driven by the fact that the eastern part of Flaxfields has been used for housing elderly people in the past and is currently largely empty, rather than by a neutral analysis of its best future development in land-use terms.

Note: Apart from the issue of need, the Parish Council recommends refusal of the present application for the various reasons set out in its general observations on the application”.

4. Linton Parish Council's Letter of 17th June 2007

“To: Portfolio Holder for Planning Services: Cllr Nick Wright
Portfolio Holder for Housing: Cllr Daphne Spink
Portfolio Holder for Resources: Cllr Vicky Ford
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

We are contacting you as the portfolio holders for Housing, Planning Services and Resources regarding an issue that has been causing great concern to Linton Parish Council and we are very frustrated regarding the lack of communication and joint working with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Our concern is regarding the Flaxfields development in Linton. The development of an extra care scheme in this setting has been discussed for sometime.

- a) On the 14 October 2004 SCDC cabinet agreed the sale of land at Flaxfields to Hereward Housing for them to develop the site into a 30 unit extra care affordable housing scheme. Appendix B Agenda Item 9 of the report for that meeting stated that a scheme of four bungalows and a new extra care facility providing 30 sheltered flats has been agreed and supported by all interested parties. Following that report the cabinet resolved to dispose of the following sites on a free of charge basis to the relevant Registered Social Landlords to facilitate the provision of new affordable housing to meet identified local needs. The four bungalows were then built on the Flaxfields site.
- b) Due to problems obtaining funding, a report went before cabinet on the 13 July 2006, asking them to agree an alternative option for developing extra care housing at Flaxfields, Linton to enable the scheme to be progressed immediately and ensure its deliverability regardless of whether or not the bid to the Housing Corporation was successful. The report gave two options
 - (a) Option One — As Agreed by Members in October 2004. 100% Affordable Housing Extra care scheme consisting of 24 rented units

and 17 low-cost home ownership units. This would cost £2m in Social Housing Grant (SHG) and is the preferred option which would form the bid to the Housing Corporation.

- (b) Option Two — Extra care scheme of Mixed Tenure consisting of 11 rented units, 14 low cost home ownership units and 16 units for outright sale. This could be provided without SHG provided that the land is made available at nil cost. The subsidy for the affordable units would come from the outright sales rather than grant.

Cabinet gave its agreement to the two options with clauses to maintain the maximum amount of affordable housing. However, it was clear that Cabinet members thought that option 1 was in its entirety as previously agreed, however this was not the case and the scheme had actually been increased by 25%.

- c) Following the failure of a Social Housing Grant application a 42 unit scheme was put forward for planning permission in November 2006.
- d) The scheme was totally unsuitable for the area being three storeys high in a village cul-de-sac of bungalows and the Parish Council called a public meeting.
- e) At the public meeting, which was very well attended by local residents, SCDC housing and planning officers failed to attend although they were invited. Hereward Housing and their architects did but many residents queries could not be answered and the general feeling of the meeting is that all parties had been let down by SCDC.
- f) On the 10 January 2007 the application was unanimously refused by the SCDC Planning Committee contrary to the officer's report. The application was rejected on Planning Policy grounds as the proposed 42 flat scheme was an overdevelopment of the site, resulting in an excessive building footprint, allowing insufficient clearance to the site boundaries to accommodate landscaping, and with a scale, bulk and ridge height which would be overbearing for neighbouring residential properties, particularly those in Symonds Lane which are at a lower level than the application site.
- g) The Parish Council contacted SCDC soon after that meeting to arrange a meeting with SCDC officers and Hereward Housing, prior to another application being submitted. Residents and LPC were eager to be involved in the discussions and to help progress the scheme. We were advised that a meeting would take place but eventually LPC was only given the option of meeting Hereward Housing.
- h) On the 17 May 2007, two Parish Councillors met with Hereward Housing at their offices in Ely and were concerned to hear that officers had implied that they felt that if the building was moved away from the boundary a few metres then the scheme would be passed. To allow this to be achieved they were told there had been an agreement to demolish another 3 SCDC bungalows and the Parish Council representatives were asked to obtain residents views as soon as possible.
- i) A public meeting was arranged as soon as a venue was available and booked for the 12 June, however we were then told by Hereward's architect that views were required by the 29 May thus making any public announcement of the consultation impossible. However the Parish Council did arrange a meeting by inviting all involved to a hastily arranged venue on 24 May and forwarded residents views to Hereward Housing on the 25 May. This lack of consideration by Hereward Housing left local residents feeling aggrieved even before the new proposals had been discussed, pre-empted any spirit of constructive

consultation and a feeling of stalemate. The site has been derelict for nearly 5 years; it has already suffered an arson attack (due to squatters) and vandalism and is both a fire risk and health hazard. The unanimous opinion of the residents was that they do want to see the site developed and as soon as possible but that SCDC and Hereward needed to look holistically at the site and if a 40 unit scheme is the only option then the site must be further enlarged to accommodate the greater number of units within a two storey building.

We appreciate that you cannot comment on the planning issues involved but we feel you should understand that, despite the unsatisfactory process of consultation over the first application for this site, no lessons seem to have been learned over the benefits of community involvement at an early stage.

We would beg that our concerns as follows, be noted:

- a) The original report in 2004 stated - Following that report the cabinet resolved to dispose of the following sites on a free of charge basis to the relevant Registered Social Landlords to facilitate the provision of new affordable housing to meet identified local needs. The Parish Council had always been advised that this was a local facility for Linton and its surrounding community. However it has recently become clear from the Housing Strategy document that we have just been consulted on, that this project is no longer being driven by local need but is now regarded as a district wide facility.
- b) Why has there been reluctance from SCDC officers to meet with the Parish Council and/or the residents of Linton — both parties are interested in progressing the matter but have been getting very little feedback and this has been frustrating. We believe that an onsite meeting with the Parish Council, SCDC and Hereward Housing could have resolved many of the issues that are still outstanding.
- c) Hereward Housing appears to be under the impression from SCDC officers that minor tweaking will allow the planning application to be passed. This was not the opinion of the Planning committee (whose main concerns were over development, massing of the site and the dominating 3 storey building) and the submission of another 3 storey scheme would appear to be a waste of money.
- d) Why has there been no consultation of the fact that the scheme grew by 25% or the fact that SCDC were now offering to demolish another 3 bungalows. We are not against the demolition of the bungalows but think that a holistic approach must now be taken to the whole of the Flaxfields cul-de-sac. The residents and planning committee of the Parish Council have had some very good ideas as to how this can be achieved and have tried to communicate some of these but have had very little feedback.
- e) Many extra care units within towns and cities are three storeys however this is not appropriate for a village cul-de-sac. The design of the schemes submitted so far seem to be very unimaginative and not appropriate for the street scene and setting of this site. We believe that a scheme could be designed that is suitable for the site, that meets the needs of the area and has appropriate energy saving and sustainable design features. All of these are lacking in the current proposed designs.

We also attach the documents that we sent to Hereward Housing in May which details further our concerns and look forward to hearing some positive news about the development and how all parties can work together to progress this issue to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Yours sincerely, Esther Cornell, Chairman of Planning Linton Parish Council”

5. Linton Parish Council's Letter of 25th May 2007

"To: Leigh Scott
Hereward Housing
St Mary's Lodge
St Mary's Street
Ely
Cambridgeshire
CB7 4EY

Dear Leigh

Thank you for arranging the meeting last week which Esther Cornell and I found very useful.

The Parish Council arranged a meeting with local residents last night to find out their feelings about the suggestions you put to us last week. I enclose notes of the main points made by them. The Council intends circulating the notes to other interested parties next week.

The overall tone of meeting was positive. There was a general feeling that early redevelopment of some sort is needed, though residents clearly also felt that the larger number of units now being proposed required a large enough site to accommodate them properly and to allow for a design that was in keeping with the village residential setting.

As you will see there was continued and very clear concern about the height and proximity of the development in relation to adjoining dwellings, and if Hereward persists in an approach which retains 2½ or 3 storey elements and/or built development close to the boundaries we anticipate that the reaction of local residents will be similar to their reaction to the previous proposal.

So far as the Parish Council is concerned, you will appreciate that there was insufficient time to call a meeting within the time-frame specified, and in any event it would of course be inappropriate for the Council to express a formal view until it is formally consulted about any planning application Hereward may make. However, given what has already happened, it would be unrealistic to ignore the possibility that if a proposal is put forward which does not adequately address these issues, the views of both the Parish and District Council planning committees might well be similar to those expressed about the previous application. I am sure you will acknowledge that the District Council's planning committee expressed themselves quite robustly.

As you will see from the notes, a resident of one of the two bungalows to the west of the roadway leading to the entrance to the Papworth Trust bungalow, advised that her bungalow is currently being monitored for subsidence, and various people said that South Cambs DC was already losing interest in the site with five dwellings, and it does seem that leaving SCDC with only two properties is likely to mean even less landlord involvement in the future.

In the circumstances it might be sensible for Hereward to speak to SCDC to find out whether SCDC is willing to transfer the rest of its land. If the two additional bungalows and the parking area beyond were included in a redevelopment exercise as part of the parking area, it would allow most of the area shown as car parking on the site plan you gave us last week to be developed as a further one and a half storey wing, and in turn that would allow for the elimination of the remaining elements of the top storey in the southern wings of the complex whilst keeping within the

footprint shown on that plan. The drive to the Papworth Trust bungalow could serve as the means of access to some of the parking bays (or, subject to agreement with Papworth, the access to their bungalow could perhaps be re-oriented.)

This might be a way around what may otherwise prove to be a continuing impasse. None of the interested parties, or residents, wants to see further delay, but to proceed with another proposal which runs a real risk of being turned down will only have that result.

If Hereward are interested in looking at this as a way forward, it is essential that the residents of the two remaining SCDC bungalows are consulted immediately. The residents of one of the other three bungalows came to the meeting, and complained strongly that no one from Hereward or SCDC had told her or the resident of the other occupied property that their bungalows might be demolished. I am sure you will agree this is not a fair way to treat elderly people who are already concerned about their future”.

45. **The Local Highway Authority** has no objections.
46. **The Environment Agency** recommends a surface water drainage condition is attached if permission is granted.
47. **Anglian Water** envisages the existing network can accommodate foul flows arising from the development. A standard foul drainage condition is recommended.
48. **Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust** fully supports the application, which is a further step forward in providing quality homes for life for older people and contributes to genuinely sustainable and mixed communities in rural areas. The Primary Care Trust, as integrated social care and health provider for older people in Cambridgeshire, has worked closely with Hereward Housing and South Cambridgeshire Council on this proposed scheme.

South Cambridgeshire District's over-85 population is projected to grow by over 13,000 by 2021, including growth of around 2,500 over 85s.

The County Joint Commissioning Strategy has a target of increasing the number of extracare (also known as very sheltered) housing units over the next ten years, in order to enhance the ability of older people to continue to live independently with access to care and support. South Cambridgeshire has the lowest provision of this type of housing in the county.

49. **The County Council Countryside Access Team** points out the footpath between Flaxfields and Symonds Lane is not recorded on the Definitive Map and there is no official process for its diversion. The Team welcomes the retention of the path.
50. **The Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** does not require any additional water supplies. Access and facilities for the Fire Service should be provided in accordance with the Building Regulations Approved Document B5, Section 16.
51. **The Housing Development Officer** “wholeheartedly” supports the application, on the assumption the applicant has addressed legitimate planning issues. There is an identified sub-regional need for developments of this type for the user group identified in this application. Therefore, I consider the development would provide a contribution for accommodation suitable to the specific needs of those individuals requiring the services of an Extra Care facility. I fully appreciate that the proposal will

not address the local housing need but would provide a facility that will be of benefit to the whole sub-region and Linton in the long term.

52. **The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** has no objections subject to conditions concerning the use of power operated machinery and pile driven foundations during construction.
53. **The Council's Trees and Landscapes Officer** has no objections.
54. **The Landscape Design Officer** has a preference for the retention of the two trees in the verge on the southern side of Flaxfields, and the road could be narrowed to achieve this. The proposal to plant only native species is questioned given the site is in a built-up area. Although the landscape proposals are only sketch details, an attempt to create one or more circular walks should be explored. The garden has to meet a wide range of needs and requires skilled design.
55. **The Conservation Officer** comments:

"In connection with the developments impact on the nearby listed "Pest House" (12 Symonds Lane), the building was originally sited on the edge of Linton in a rural setting, but this setting was fundamentally changed to a suburban setting in the middle of the twentieth century when a number of semi-detached houses were sited in very close proximity to the listed house (the nearest of these semi-detached houses is only 6 metres from the Pest House). This new very sheltered housing will be over 50 metres from the Pest House, and therefore, subject to the inclusion of suitable landscaping in that part of the site between the new buildings and the boundary with the Pest House, it is my opinion it will not cause further harm to the setting of the listed building.

Recommendation: No objection, but in the event that the scheme is approved I would wish to see a landscaping condition added, and a condition requiring agreement of boundary treatment".

56. **The Council's Ecology Officer** objects to the absence of a bat survey (NB this has now been undertaken according to the Applicant). A condition is required to prevent the removal of vegetation during the bird breeding season.

Representations

57. Nine letters of objection have been received from neighbouring residents, and one letter of support from a Linton resident.

The objections can be summarised as follows:

1. No significant changes from previous refused scheme.
2. The building is an overdevelopment of the site.
3. The building is still too high, particularly the 3 storey element, with elements over 10m above existing ground levels.
4. There is potential for overlooking neighbouring properties from upper floor bedroom windows.
5. The proposal is out of character with the area because of its size and bulk. The existing open space on site would be lost.

6. The site is in an elevated position in the village and the proposed building will be highly visible from the A1307 and from local footpaths to the north-west of the village. It will detract from the character of the village.
 7. The building is a poor architectural design - a "green" flat roofed 2 storey building is suggested as an alternative. Underground parking should also be considered given the degree of excavation proposed.
 8. The external communal areas for the residents are too small for recreational use.
 9. Concerns about flooding, in an area with a history of problems. Impermeable hard surfaces proposed could lead to flooding in periods of heavy rainfall, particularly the properties in Symonds Lane. Lack of detail regarding the underground tanks proposed as part of the rainwater harvesting scheme - overflow could cause flooding.
 10. Inadequate landscaping proposed because of the excessive footprint of the building.
 11. The conifers in the south-east corner of the site should be retained as a buffer zone to the rear garden of 12 Symonds Lane, a listed building.
 12. The degree of excavation is likely to damage roots of trees adjoining the site.
 13. Potential light pollution from corridors/escape routes because 24 hour regime.
 14. The development will put pressure on local services, particularly medical and sewerage system.
 15. The O.S. site plan is out of date and does not show the Papworth Trust bungalow built in Flaxfields in 2004.
 16. Symonds Lane is unsuitable for frail pedestrians because of speeding traffic and parked cars restricting vision.
 17. No construction statement has been submitted regarding demolition/excavation/erection of new building.
 18. The development will increase the wear and tear on the access road (Flaxfields).
 19. There has been a lack of public consultation by the Applicants.
 20. The nearest bus stop is 300m from the site and not within the 200m stated.
 21. Insufficient parking, will lead to parking on adjoining roads and difficulties for emergency vehicles.
58. The letter of support considers Flaxfields an ideal site for the proposal, which presents a modern approach to caring for the frail elderly. There is an ageing population and not enough facilities for them. There is a national and regional need for this type of scheme.

59. **Additional comments by the Applicants in response to the Parish Council's Objections:**

1. Issues relating to Housing Need

60. "Whilst we are happy to address the rationale for the scheme and issues of need, we do not believe these are intrinsically linked to the determination of the planning application. The Linton Parish Council's objections appear to be more related to the particular client group than the proposed building. We believe that the planning application should be determined on planning grounds and not objections to providing housing for the intended client group within Linton.
61. Sanctuary, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust all believe that Flaxfields is an appropriate site for an extra care scheme. The scheme is well located for sheltered housing generally with good access to local facilities and transport routes.
62. The Parish Council appear to have a fundamental misconception about this type of scheme. They refer to it on a number of occasions as an "institutional care home". It is not a care home as defined by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and therefore the reference to Circular Guidance LAC (2004) 20 is erroneous and misleading. Extra care schemes are housing schemes and by their very nature are not institutional. In fact they seek to be the exact opposite of institutional care and are often regarded as a preferable alternative to residential care for many frail older people.
63. The site is entirely appropriate for a domestic sheltered housing scheme, which is what is being proposed. Extra care housing is intended to be part of the community within which it is based. Older people in the scheme are offered care and support to enable them to enjoy the maximum independence possible. Extra care schemes offer frail older people the opportunity to live in self contained apartments within the community. Care and support for residents is provided on the domiciliary (care in the community or home care) model. Services are flexible and person centred, providing residents with choice and independence.
64. Hereward Housing is a subsidiary of Sanctuary Housing Association. With over 35 years experience, Sanctuary Housing Association is one of the country's leading associations managing over 63,000 properties throughout England and Scotland including general rented, sheltered and supported accommodation, student and key worker accommodation. Following a recent restructure of the company, all care schemes and extra care housing are being managed by Sanctuary Care. Sanctuary Care is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sanctuary Housing Association, established in 1995 to provide older people with high quality nursing, residential and home care services. The Flaxfields scheme will be developed and managed by the same locally based staff but now working for Sanctuary Care.

Funding

65. We do not believe that the financial arrangements for the development of the scheme are relevant to the determination of the planning application or the need for the scheme. Therefore, we do not intend to comment on the acquisition of the land from the Council or capital and revenue funding for the project in any detail. The proposed scheme is deemed as social housing – affordable housing for people in need. Flats in the scheme will be rented or leased to frail older people who satisfy

the entry criteria to the scheme (frail elderly people in need of housing with care and support).

66. Residents of the scheme will have the choice to rent or purchase flats on a leasehold basis. Housing need transcends different tenures and there is considerable need to provide specialist housing for frail older homeowners as well as existing rented tenants. The commercial market does not provide adequate affordable apartments in such schemes for many older homeowners, many of whom are not particularly affluent despite being a homeowner. Therefore the definition of affordable housing extends to cover different tenures and shared ownership or low cost homeownership for the elderly is an officially recognised form of affordable housing. Increasingly we seek to meet the housing needs of a range of different people. The inclusion of housing for sale in this scheme is in response to defined local need.
67. The financial arrangements for building such a scheme are complex and cannot be fully covered here, however, it should be pointed out that Sanctuary Housing Association is a not for profit organisation with charitable objectives. The scheme will be developed on an "open book" basis with South Cambridgeshire DC and any "profits" from leasehold sales will be re-invested in the scheme to lower the need for public subsidy. Such schemes often require substantial public subsidy to be viable. It is not uncommon for a local authority to offer free or discounted land to help facilitate a social housing development of this type.

Analysis of Need

68. Sanctuary and its partners are satisfied that there is a defined local need for the proposed scheme. All the relevant commissioning bodies, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust, support the need for this development.
69. The most authoritative assessment of need for extra care housing is contained in the county wide Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing carried out in conjunction with all the agencies involved in the Supporting People process. This showed a county wide need for more extra care housing, including in South Cambridgeshire. The most recent assessment of need was reported to the Supporting People Commissioning Body in July 2007. That report identified a need for 402 extra care units in South Cambridgeshire by 2015/16. At this stage there is a shortfall of 372 units.
70. By the very nature of extra care housing it can never be a truly local facility in rural communities. There are 101 villages in South Cambridgeshire, so were the need to provide circa 400 units averaged out there would need to be 4 units in each village. That is simply not practical. Extra care schemes need to be of a certain size to justify the communal facilities and care and support staff. Extra care schemes are usually circa 40 units, so in reality meeting the need requires circa 10 schemes around the district. The location of schemes is therefore determined according to local need not in the village but within that part of the district generally. Ideally there needs to be a network of schemes covering the whole of the district.
71. South Cambridgeshire and the County Council will likely have to look to provide a number of new extra care schemes (through either new build or remodelling existing buildings) through out the district in the future. The proposed Linton scheme is part of a wider strategy to meet need in South Cambridgeshire generally and not Linton

specifically. Points about need for extra care in the north of the district may well be justified but they are not an effective argument against the development of Flaxfields.

2. Planning Policy

72. The Council has accepted the principle of developing this site for an extra care scheme.
73. The Council have recently adopted their Core Strategy (January 07) and Development Control Policies Document (July 07). Neither document contains any policies nor objectives that are directly related to residential care homes or housing for the elderly/frail.
74. In the Local Plan 2004, policy HG9 (Residential Care Homes) set out a criteria that would need to be met in order for such development to be considered acceptable. However this policy was "Not Saved" and was not transferred into the Council's DCP or Core Strategy.
75. Therefore, due to the lack of a directly related policy, the Council are likely to be relying on broad ranging housing policies to assess this proposed extra care scheme.
76. The most relevant policies contained in the Structure Plan, Core Strategy and Development Control Policies are the following:

Structure Plan:

- Policy 1/3 – Sustainable Design in Built Development

Core Strategy:

- Policy ST/3 – Re-Using Previously Developed Land and Buildings

Development Control Policies:

- Policy DP/1 – Sustainable Development
- Policy DP/2 – Design of New Development
- Policy DP/3 – Development Criteria
- Policy DP/6 – Construction Methods

Policy P1/3 – Sustainable Design in Built Development

- a) The proposal would not give rise to a significant amount of car travel to and from the site due to the type of care provision proposed (for the elderly and frail). However the proposal would provide 20 car parking spaces (4 disabled) and a cycle bay to accommodate visitors and staff.
- b) The application site is located within reasonable walking distance of a range of shops and services, however the proposed care home would be self contained and would not depend on the surrounding shops and services, therefore the proposal is unlikely to put any unnecessary pressure on the local economy.
- c) Currently the site contains several derelict inactive bungalows set within overgrown vegetation. The site is currently unsightly and has been subjected to arson attacks.
- d) The proposal would aim to reinvigorate the area by making better use of the site. The boundaries of the site would be attractively landscaped and many of

the boundary trees would be retained to make the scheme attractive and also to assist in softening the appearance of the extra care scheme from the most sensitive boundaries.

- e) The car parking area would provide sufficient space for vehicles to manoeuvre unrestricted. There is also sufficient space for service vehicles to manoeuvre in and out. The highway arrangement would be in compliance with County highway standards.
- f) The proposal would create a sense of place that is currently missing from the site due to the empty bungalows currently on the site.
- g) The design of the proposed extra care scheme has been planned to ensure the impact on the surrounding neighbours is minimal but without compromising its overall design concept.
- h) There are concerns that the proposed extra care housing is not in keeping with the surrounding properties and landscape in terms of scale, form, layout and materials. This is true; however, one needs to make sense of what is actually being proposed before insisting such development should replicate the surrounding built form purely for the sake of it.
- i) What is being proposed is a high density, 40 unit, two/three storey, self contained extra care housing scheme, which has been significantly modified to ensure the physical and visual impact on the adjoining residents and area is alleviated, even though many of adjoining properties are located between 37.0 and 49.0 metres away from the application site.
- j) The proposed scheme is a sophisticated modern building that has been purposely designed to provide a specialist form of accommodation for its occupiers. By designing an extra care scheme, which replicates the surrounding built form, would not make the best of this opportunity to enhance the site.
- k) The application site is considered to be a brownfield site. The proposal is to redevelop a derelict housing area to provide much needed extra care housing in Linton. The proposal would therefore comply with the Council's policy to re-use previously developed sites to accommodate new housing schemes.
- l) The District Council expects to accommodate 20,000 new homes in the District between 1999 and 2016 in order of the following preference; on the edge of Cambridge, Northstowe and in Rural Centres and other villages.
- m) The proposal is located in an area where there is a demonstrable need for such care provision. Therefore it would be inappropriate to argue that this form of development is not required in this area.

ST/3 – Re-Using Previously Developed Land and Buildings

- a) Between 1999 and 2016, 37% of new dwellings will be located on previously developed on land.
- b) The application site is previously developed land and therefore would not only comply with this policy but also guidance contained in PPS 3 (Housing). This

application to locate an extra care scheme on previously developed land is also considered to be the most sustainable option.

DP/1 – Sustainable Development

- a) The application is previously developed land.
- b) There is a clear need for the proposed extra care scheme in this area.
- c) The proposal would use sustainable methods of construction including the use of energy efficient materials.
- d) The proposal would also implement energy efficient features to reduce the impact on the environment.
- e) The proposal includes several energy saving methods, details of which can be found in the Renewable Energy Statement.
- f) The scheme has been devised following lengthy meetings/consultations with the Parish Council. Several of the concerns raised by the Parish Council were taken on board. Details of the changes that have been made due to the public consultations can be found on page 4 of the Design and Access Statement.
- g) The listed building (12 Symonds Lane) is considered to be far enough away from the proposed care home so as not to be considered an issue.
- h) This proposed development is therefore considered to comply with this policy.

DP/2 – Design of New Development & DP/3 – Development Criteria

- a) The proposal due to its modern design and considered layout would significantly enhance the current appearance of the site.
- b) The distances between the proposed scheme and adjoining properties would be considered as a significant level of separation. It would be difficult to argue the proposal would create any adverse levels of overlooking or overbearing impact.
- c) In the Council Design Guide (Draft Supplementary Planning Document, 2005) on pages 100 and 101 it advises, **“Where windows of primary habitable rooms are built facing each other, a distance of at least 18m should be retained”**. The Design Guide also advises **“Where blank walls are proposed, a minimum of 12m should typically be maintained between the wall and any neighbouring windows which are directly opposite”**.
- d) The proposed scheme has been set back from the site boundaries that abut the rear gardens of the properties in Back Road and Symonds Lane.
- e) The northern elevation of the proposed scheme would be 38.0 metres from the rear elevation of the properties in Back Road.
- f) The first floor windows in the proposed scheme would be in line with the rear ground floor windows of the properties in Back Road.

- g) The southern elevation would be approximately 49.0 metres from the rear of the properties in Symonds Lane.
- h) The design of the proposed extra care scheme offers architectural variety and interest within a coherent design concept.
- i) The variations in the ridge line helps to break up the mass of the building.
- j) The southern section of the proposal has been designed into the slope, which contributes towards reducing the overall height of the scheme.
- k) The proposal would ensure the existing public right of way is maintained so that local residents, visitors and staff are able to use this route to access the site.
- l) The external elevations of the proposed building would contain brickwork, render and thermowood cladding.
- m) The site has been subjected to arson attacks whilst in its current conditions. The redevelopment of the site would significantly reduce the opportunity for crime having been designed to 'Secured By Design' standards.
- n) The proposed scheme would provide the area with natural surveillance, which could ward off crime.
- o) Overall the design of the proposed extra care scheme would significantly enhance the existing appearance of the site. The modern design features and detailing which include energy efficient features, combined with the well considered layout and level of separation from adjoining residents would allow the proposal to sympathetically assimilate into the landscape without causing any adverse harm to the area that could potentially warrant the application to be refused.
- p) The proposal is considered to satisfactorily comply with the criteria based in these policies.

DP/6 Construction Methods

- a) The proposed extra care scheme would include several energy efficient and renewable energy features, details of which can be found in the Renewable Energy Statement.
- b) The Parish Council has insisted on the applicant providing a 20% energy saving, which is considered to be completely unreasonable. The applicant has shown a willingness to provide an energy saving which is more than enough to satisfy policies NE/1 (Energy Efficiency) and NE/2 (Renewable Energy) and goes above and beyond the requirements of the local authority at the time the application was made. Details of the energy saving measures can be found in the Renewable Energy Statement.

3. Design

- a) Extensive consultation has taken place with both Bob Morgan (Planning Officer) and his predecessor (on the previous application) Andrew Moffat who are/were both in full support of this development.

- b) All issues relating to potential overlooking were discussed with Bob Morgan at an early stage in the development and all instances of overlooking from principle habitable rooms have been designed out.
- c) Bob Morgan has confirmed on many occasions that issues of overlooking are only relevant from the Living Rooms of resident flats. Anticipated hours of use prohibits overlooking from resident bedrooms being an issue.
- d) The Conservation Officer has been consulted on this scheme and has confirmed that our proposals
“will be over 50 metres from the Pest House and, therefore, subject to the inclusion of suitable landscaping in that part of the site between the new buildings and the boundary with the Pest House, it is my opinion it will not cause further harm to the setting of the listed building.”

Community Involvement

- a) In order to understand the level of community involvement it is important to look at the development life cycle of this project, the development team has been instrumental in involving the community with the development of the design from an early stage. Below are the key events arranged by the design team to ensure Parish/ community involvement throughout the design progression:

14/09/06 - Parish Consultation/ Presentation - Hereward Housing arranged for a presentation of the scheme (whilst still in its infancy) to residents of Linton to ensure that feedback could be collated and reasonable relevant revisions made before the original application was submitted. This public consultation session was well publicised and transport was provided to and from the event for the elderly residents currently living in Flaxfields. The meeting gave the local residents an opportunity to have their questions about the scheme answered. Names of residents were taken and subsequent meetings (on site) were arranged to talk over the scheme with these residents specific to their siting. Again, design revisions were made based on the feedback received from residents.

05/10/06 – Meeting on site with residents - Direct consultation took place with the owners of 12 Symonds Lane to discuss the scheme and revisions were made to the scheme as a direct result of this consultation. Further revisions have seen the proposed scheme move back approximately 5000mm from the boundary with 12 Symonds Lane to ensure that sufficient clearance exists for a suitable landscaping scheme.

06/12/06 - Linton Parish Council Meeting – Hereward Housing and their architects attended the Parish meeting in Linton with the intention of once again explaining the scheme and answering any questions residents may have. All stakeholders were invited to the meeting and both Hereward and The Johns Practice were able to answer questions relating to the design and management of the proposed scheme.

10/01/07 Original application refused

17/05/07 – Further meeting with Parish members – A further meeting took place in May where the new proposals were presented. Following this meeting

Hereward and The Johns Practice received formal feedback from the Parish which included an alternative design approach whereby an additional two bungalows would be demolished at the other end of Flaxfields to provide a larger site. Following careful consideration of the Parish suggestions we concluded that any development of that site would be to the detriment of the schemes core principles. The Parish was informed of this process and the reasons for not pursuing this route of development further.

4. Environmental Issues/ Considerations

- a) The mandatory information provided with the planning application clearly indicates the number of environmental issues that have been considered in the submittal of this application.
- b) A number of concerns have been raised about the scheme having an 'adverse environmental impact' on the area. Without having qualifying what these are it is difficult to appease the Parish' concerns directly other than to say that the application has carefully considered - through both compulsory and non-compulsory supporting information - a number of environmental aspects on the site and within the surrounding context.
- c) An extended Habitat survey has been undertaken by a qualified Ecologist to assess the local species in and around the site throughout the year. The findings of this report have concluded that the site has low ecological value. This assessment/ survey is an ongoing process and in conjunction with South Cambs District Council Ecologist, Rob Mungovan, we have agreed to carry out a specialist Bat Survey on the site prior to any demolition.
- d) Arboriculturalists were appointed to look at the trees/ vegetation in the area and assess how best to maintain the trees with high amenity value and those on the site boundaries.
- e) A Landscape proposal has been established and further consultation will be made with the Landscaping Design Department at South Cambs District Council to agree on suitable species.
- f) By The Parish's own admission the site, as it stands, has "already suffered an arson attack" and is both a "fire risk" and "health hazard", this poses a much higher environmental risk than any redevelopment of the site.
- g) The environmental considerations associated with the design of the building are clearly detailed below in the '*Sustainability*' section.

5. Sustainability

- a) South Cambridgeshire District Council did not, at the time of submittal, have any prescriptive planning policy requiring inclusion of renewable energy.
- b) Hereward Housing Association have, from the outset, demonstrated their commitment to sustainable energy through the provision of on-site renewable energy generation.
- c) Creative Environmental Networks (CEN) is a not for profit organisation who were directly appointed by Hereward Housing Association to work alongside the architects with a view to delivering a more sustainable and environmentally considerate extra care scheme in Flaxfields, Linton.

- d) Through continued consultation with CEN a Low and Zero Carbon Technology Option Appraisal has been produced appraising various renewable technologies specific to our site, design and surrounding context. The findings of this report concluded that an energy saving of 6-7% (Carbon Saving of 3,100kgC/yr) across the whole scheme could be implemented.
- e) Details of how the scheme will achieve an energy saving of 6.7% can be found in the Renewable Energy Statement submitted with the application.”

Planning Comments – Key Issues

Background

77. In October 2004 Cabinet agreed to dispose of 15 sheltered housing units and communal facilities at Flaxfields to Hereward Housing Association to enable them to provide a new facility of affordable extra care sheltered units, the subject of this application. This would provide a new resource in line with the requirements of future generations of older people, it would contribute to meeting the targets established in the County Wide Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing, and it would replace older sheltered bedsits which have proved difficult to let. South Cambridgeshire shows the sharpest rise in its over-65 population in the County, especially between 2006 and 2016 and has the highest proportion of its over-65 population in the over-85 age group. In terms of geography Linton was considered to offer a suitable location to meet the needs of its own population of older people and that of surrounding villages in a part of the District that has no current extra care provision. It would also compensate for the ‘loss’ of traditional sheltered housing following the decommissioning of the low demand sheltered bedsits.
78. In January 2007 Members refused planning permission for a 42 flat very sheltered scheme on part of the current application site because of overdevelopment/impact on neighbouring properties (see ‘Planning History’). Following the decision further meetings took place with the applicant concerning the scale and design of the building and the scheme now includes an additional area of land currently the site of 3 bungalows.

Key Issues

79. The key issues to consider in determination of this application are:
1. The density and scale of the proposed development and its likely impact on the character of the area.
 2. The effect of the proposed building and its use on the amenities of neighbouring properties.
 3. The need for very sheltered housing in Linton.

1. Density and Scale/Character of Area

80. The proposed accommodation is arranged in an ‘H’ shaped plan form with two internal courtyards plus an additional linking wing on the northern site of Flaxfields. The density is high at about 80 units per ha, but this is specialist accommodation with communal facilities which enables a higher density to be achieved without overdevelopment of the site.
81. In terms of height, the ridge heights vary because of the design and the sloping nature of the site. At its highest the ridge is 10.9m above current ground levels, with other ridge levels in the range 6.2-10m. Compared to the previous refused scheme

the height of the tallest wing has been reduced by 0.5m and the ridge of the new block on the northern side of Flaxfields is 7m above current site levels. The two southern blocks are cut into the existing slope by 1-2m, enabling an additional level of accommodation to be achieved in the roof space. The ridge heights proposed above current site levels will give the majority of the complex the equivalent height of a large, modern house. The roofs will be plain tiled and hipped on the northern and southern elevations which will help reduce the bulk of the building. The combination of a reduction in the number of flats and the enlargement of the site has enabled greater clearance to be given to the site's northern, southern, and eastern boundaries (by a further 2-5m), resulting in an average separation of 4-10m, which with landscaping will further aid the assimilation of the building. Overall the footprint of the building covers 41% of the site, which is a 5% decrease over the previous scheme.

82. The character of the site is currently residential, albeit at a low density. The proposal is for a higher density scheme of increased scale, but the site is surrounded by housing on all sides and although there will be a change of view the essential character of the area will not change.

2. *The effect on the amenities of neighbouring properties*

83. The Applicants have held extensive discussions with officers, the Parish Council and neighbours in an attempt to design a scheme which is acceptable to neighbouring residents. An exhibition was held prior to the submission of the refused application and the design has been amended a number of times culminating in the current application.
84. The two most sensitive elevations are those facing the back gardens of dwellings in Back Road and Symonds Lane. The houses in Back Road will look down onto the site, which is already cut into the slope by 1-2m, and have relatively long gardens ranging from 22-33m on average, with some trees and hedges along the common boundary with the site which will help filter views of the new building. The exception is 55 Back Road, which is a new house set further back from the road, and has a much longer rear garden (c.65m) which runs along part of the eastern boundary of the site. A number of first floor bedroom windows will overlook the bottom half of the garden, but principally because of the overall length of the garden and also the degree of separation of the proposed building from the garden boundary, I do not consider the extent of loss of privacy to warrant a refusal of the application. The living rooms associated with the flats in question have been designed with projecting angled bays to restrict the angle of vision for occupants and prevent what would have been an unacceptable loss of privacy for neighbouring residents. Also in the revised scheme the building footprint is a further 4.8m from the house which improves the relationship, and ornamental trees are proposed along the boundary to enhance the existing screening.
85. The impact of the proposal on Symonds Lane residents is slightly greater because the application site is approximately 3m higher than their houses, but this is partly offset by the length of their rear gardens (35-40m) and existing landscaping along the rear boundaries. The two facing blocks of accommodation are set off the boundary and staggered, with a courtyard between them which will help break up the bulk of the building when viewed from Symonds Lane. The revised scheme sets the buildings back a further 3-5m giving a separation from the boundary of 6.4-9m, which allows for additional planting to screen the new building. The new building is also to the north and will not affect sunlight to the Symonds Lane properties. As with the Back Road properties there will be a marked change of view but there are no

windows to habitable rooms in the two blocks closest to the boundary and loss of privacy should not be an issue.

86. 12 Symonds Lane is a Grade 2 Listed Building (known as the Pest House) surrounded by more modern development. The owners are concerned that the proposal will impact on the setting of the listed building, but given the degree of separation between their house and the proposed building (c.50m) the Conservation Manager is satisfied there will be no further harm to the setting of the listed building, subject to suitable landscaping in the increased area now available between the proposed building and the site boundary.

3. Need for very sheltered housing in Linton

87. Members will see from the report that both the Parish Council and the Applicant have commented extensively on the issue of need. As the Applicant has pointed out this is not strictly relevant to the determination of the planning application.
88. The Parish Council, whilst willing to support the 30 unit scheme initially proposed in 2003, question the need for a scheme of the scale currently proposed in Linton. The Applicant has responded (see Paragraphs 68-71 above).
89. This view expressed by the applicant is supported by the Council's Housing Department and the Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust.

Recommendation

90. Subject to the outcome of the bat survey:
91. Approval, as amended by plans and documents franked 28th August and 11th September 2007.

Conditions

1. Standard Condition A. (RCA). Time limited consent.
2. The development shall not begin until a scheme for the provision of affordable housing has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The affordable housing shall be provided in accordance with the approved scheme. The scheme shall include:
 - i. The numbers, type and location of the site of the affordable housing provision to be made;
 - ii. The timing of the construction of the affordable housing;
 - iii. The arrangements to ensure that provision is affordable for both initial and subsequent occupiers of the affordable housing; and
 - iv. The occupancy criteria to be used for determining the identity of prospective and successive occupiers of the affordable housing, and the means by which such occupancy shall be enforced.

(Reason - To ensure the details of the provision of affordable housing are satisfactory and in accordance with LDF Development Control Policy HG/3.

3. No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used for the external walls, roofs, and hard surfaces has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - To ensure the details of the development are satisfactory.)
4. Sc51 Landscaping (RC51).
5. Sc52 Implementation of Landscaping (RC52).
6. The tree protection measures shall be implemented as outlined in the tree survey and Arboricultural Implication Assessment dated 31st May 2007.
(Reason - To minimise damage to the trees to be retained and those bordering the site.)
7. No trees or hedges shall be removed during the bird nesting season (15th February-15th July) unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority. (Reason - To protect the habitat of nesting birds and, therefore, to improve biodiversity in accordance with Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies DP/1 and NE/6 of the Local Development Framework (Development Control Policies) 2007.)
8. During the period of demolition and construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the site before 08.00 hours on weekdays and 08.00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18.00 hours on weekdays and 13.00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays), unless otherwise previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions.
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents.)
9. Prior to commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme. (Reason - To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water damage.)
10. Details of foul drainage for the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before any work on the site commences. The drainage works shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans before the development is occupied. (Reason -To ensure satisfactory drainage of the site.)
11. Before development commences a plan showing finished floor levels of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (Reason - To ensure the details of the development are satisfactory.)
12. Before development commences details of the treatment of the site boundaries shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the work completed in accordance with the approved details before the development is occupied. (Reason - To ensure the site is adequately screened.)
13. Before development commences, a scheme for the provision of Public Art shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.
(Reason - Policy SF/6 of the LDF encourages the provision of Public Art in developments of 10 or more dwellings.)

Informatives

1. The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) comments:

- (1) “During demolition and construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.
- (2) Before the existing property is demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from the Environmental Health Department establishing the way in which the property will be dismantled, including any asbestos present, the removal of waste, minimisation of dust, capping of drains and establishing hours of working operation. This should be brought to the attention of the applicant to ensure the protection of the residential environment of the area.
- (3) Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted to and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled. Work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.”

2. The Council's Landscape Design Officer comments:

“The Applicant's Design Statement states that all the shrubs and trees will be native species. This will give a very limited palette for the landscape architect and is an unnecessary limitation. This is a site in a built up area and non-native, ornamental species are perfectly acceptable in both aesthetic and in biodiversity terms. It is quite possible to have a garden that has high biodiversity value that is composed of non-native species. I am happy to expand on this further if necessary. I think it is important that the residents have surroundings that include horticultural interest for their enjoyment and well-being. Additionally they will associate this with being in a place that is well cared for.

I note that the Landscape Proposals are only sketch ones at this stage. I should like to see an attempt to create one or more circular walks, accepting that this is likely to involve exiting the building from one door and entering by another. Elderly people sometimes set themselves regular expeditions such as this as a means of maintaining their mobility or perhaps regaining it after illness. An accessible and manageable distance could be provided, with assistance close at hand if necessary. I was pleased to see mostly grass adjacent to the paths so that the path is effectively widened, making wheelchair and walking aids easier to manoeuvre, allowing people to pass and pause to interact. This garden has to meet a wide range of needs and requires skilled design”.

3. The Countryside Access Team (County Council) points out with reference to the realignment of the footpath:

“The Developer should note, however, that if members of the public have been using a route for a long period of time without hindrance it is possible that the route does possess public rights and that it should be recorded on the Definitive Map. Members of the public may be concerned during development that the path is being stopped up and this could prompt someone to make an application to record the route on the Definitive Map. A successful claim would record the

path on the route that is currently walked, regardless of whether that land had subsequently been built upon. It would be prudent, therefore, that it is made clear on site that the path will be maintained following the development.

4. Anglian Water comments:

- (1) "There are no public surface water facilities in the vicinity of the proposed development and therefore you will need to investigate alternative methods of surface water drainage disposal which is outside the responsibility of Anglian Water and you will need to seek the approval from the local office of the Environment Agency.
- (2) The foul drainage from this development can be accommodated, at present, within the existing public sewer passing within the proposed site. There are no surface water sewerage facilities in the vicinity and surface water will not in any circumstances be permitted to discharge to the foul sewer.
- (3) The majority of the sewers in the vicinity of the proposed development are private unadopted sewers under the ownership of others".

5. The Environment Agency comments:

"In addition, any culverting or works affecting the flow of a watercourse requires the prior written Consent of the Environment Agency under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991/Water Resources Act 1991. The Environment Agency seeks to avoid culverting, and its Consent for such works will not normally be granted except as a means of access."

+ letter regarding routing of construction vehicles and Environment Agency Standing Advice.

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:

- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**
 - P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development)
 - P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development)
 - P5/3** (Density)
 - P7/2** (Biodiversity)
 - P7/6** (Historic Built Environment)
- **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF 2007)**
 - (1) **Core Strategy**
 - ST/3** (Re-using Previous Developed Land and Buildings)
 - ST/5** (Minor Rural Centres)
 - (2) **Development Control Policies**
 - DP/1** (Sustainable Development)
 - DP/2** (Design of New Development)
 - DP/3** (Development Criteria)
 - DP/4** (Infrastructure and New Developments)

DP/6 (Construction Methods)
HG/1 (Housing Density)
HG/3 (Affordable Housing)
SF/6 (Public Art and New Development)
NE/1 (Energy Efficiency)
NE/3 (Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development)
NE/6 (Biodiversity)
NE/12 (Water Conservation)
CH/4 (Development Within the Setting of a Listed Building)
TR/2 (Car and Cycle Parking Standards)

2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:

- The density and scale of the proposed development
- The effect of the proposed building and its use on the amenities of neighbouring properties

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy /Development Control Policies 2007
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S/2105/06/F and S/1327/07/F
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings

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