

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6th August 2008

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

S/0883/08/F - BASSINGBOURN

Conversion of The Cedars into 2 Semi-Detached Dwellings, Erecting of 21 Affordable Houses, Landscaping and Associated Car Parking following Demolition of Existing Outbuilding, The Cedars and The Orchard, 26 South End, for Braxted Homes (Bassingbourn) Ltd

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 15th August 2008 (Major Application)

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination as it relates to an exception site for affordable housing.

Members will visit this site on Wednesday 6th August 2008.

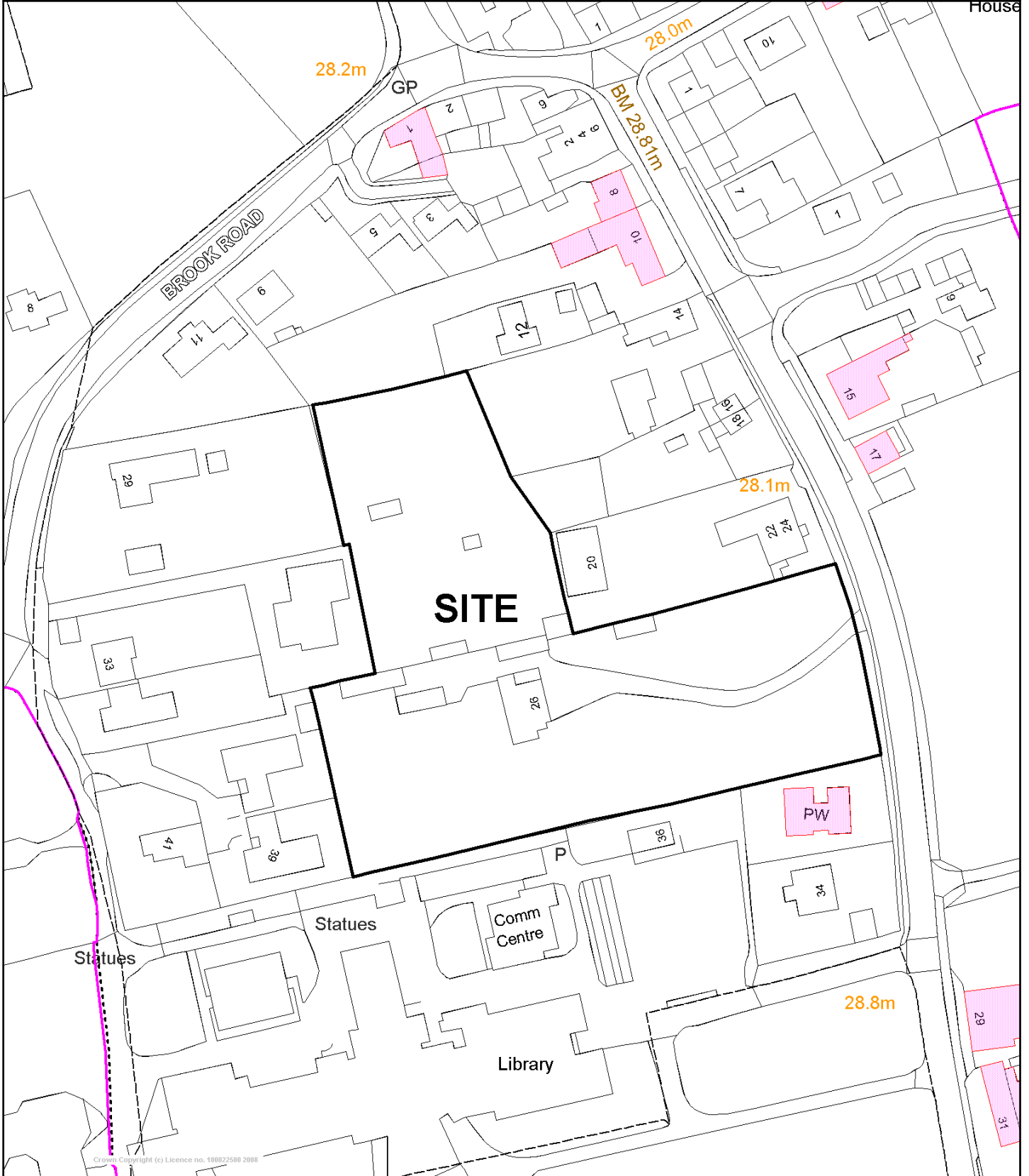
Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. This full application, received on 16th May 2008 relates to a 0.85ha area of land to the west of South End. The site comprises The Cedars, No 26 South End, a 19th Century detached house standing back from the road in well treed grounds and outbuildings, and an area of orchard land to the north, to the rear of existing properties in South End and Brook Road.
2. The proposal involves the conversion of The Cedars into a pair of three-bedroom dwellings and the erection of 21 new dwellings (10 x two-bedroom and 11x three-bedroom), following the demolition of existing outbuildings (see History below). All units are to be affordable dwellings.
3. The proposed new dwellings are all semi-detached apart from one terrace of three and all have a ridge height of 8.7m. The height of The Cedars is 9.3m.
4. The plan shows the provision of two communal amenity spaces, one a treed area on the left of the access roadway at the front of the site and the other under the canopy of an existing beech tree to the rear of The Cedars.
5. A total of 39 car parking spaces are provided. A landscaping scheme is included
6. The density is 27dph.
7. A new access is to be constructed to the site from South End, to the north of the existing. The creation of the access will require some removal of existing planting



House



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Scale 1/1250 Date 21/7/2008

Centre = 533108 E 243767 N

August 2008 Planning Committee

8. To the south the site adjoins Bassingbourn Village College and the United Reformed Church. To the west the site adjoins the rear boundaries of properties in Brook Road. Opposite the existing frontage of The Cedars is the Recreation Ground. On its north and east boundaries the site adjoins properties in South End.
9. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Summary Statement, Affordable Housing Statement, Ecological Assessment, Historic Building Analysis, Flood Risk Assessment, Transport Statement and a Trees and Development Report.

Planning History

10. An application for Conservation Area Consent for the total demolition of five outbuildings within the site (**Ref: S/0872/08/CAC**) was refused on 8th July 2008 on the grounds that three of the buildings are of architectural and historic interest and are an integral component to the setting of the main dwelling and therefore make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed demolition would therefore neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the aims of Policy CH/5 of the Local Development Framework 2007. The refusal notice goes on to say that the applicant has failed to show that the proposal is justified or that demolition is required. In the absence of an acceptable redevelopment scheme the proposal is contrary to the advice in paragraph 4.27 of PPG15 which states that consent for demolition should not be given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment.
11. A planning application for the erection of 5 bungalows, including 2 affordable dwellings, on the northern part of the site was submitted in 2004 (**Ref: S/1291/04/F**) and remains undetermined pending the signing of a Section 106 Agreement securing the two affordable units. Access to the development is via a driveway to be constructed between Nos 14 and 18 South End.
12. An earlier application for the erection of 4 bungalows (**Ref: S/1687/03/F**) was withdrawn.

Planning Policy

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007

13. **Policy ST/6 – Group Villages** identifies Bassingbourn as a Group Village and states that residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework. Development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make best use of a single brownfield site.
14. **Policy HG/1 - Housing Density** is set at a minimum of 30 dph unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment in order to make best use of land. Higher densities of 40 dph will be sought in the most sustainable locations.
15. **Policy HG/2 - Housing Mix** Affordable housing should be of an appropriate mix to respond to identified needs at the time of the development in accordance with HG/3.
16. **Policy HG/3 - Affordable Housing** occupation will be limited to people in housing need and must be available over the long-term. The appropriate mix in terms of housing tenures and house sizes of affordable housing will be determined by local circumstances at the time of planning permission, including housing need and the

achievement of mixed and balanced communities. In order to ensure sustainable communities, affordable housing will be distributed through the development in small groups or clusters.

17. **Policy HG/5 – Exception Sites for Affordable Housing** states that as an exception to the normal operation of the policies of this plan, planning permission may be granted for schemes of 100% affordable housing designed to meet identified local housing needs on small sites within or adjoining villages. The following criteria will all have to be met:
 - (a) The development proposal includes secure arrangements for ensuring that all the dwellings within the scheme provide affordable housing in perpetuity for those in housing need;
 - (b) The number, size, design, mix and tenure of the dwellings are all confined to, and appropriate to, the strict extent of the identified local need;
 - (c) The site of the proposal is well related to the built-up area of the settlement and the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the size and character of the village;
 - (d) The site is well related to facilities and services within the village;
 - (e) The development does not damage the character of the village or the rural landscape.
18. **Policy DP/1 - Sustainable Development** 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.
19. **Policy DP/2 - Design of New Development** requires all new development to be of a high quality design and indicates the specific elements to be achieved where appropriate. It also sets out the requirements for Design and Access Statements.
20. **Policy DP/3 - Development Criteria** sets out what all new development should provide, as appropriate to its nature, scale and economic viability and clearly sets out circumstances where development will not be granted on grounds of an unacceptable adverse impact e.g. village character and residential amenity.
21. **Policy DP/4 - Infrastructure and New Developments** requires that development proposals should include suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. It identifies circumstances where contributions may be required e.g. affordable housing and education.
22. **Policy DP/7 - Development Frameworks** states redevelopment of unallocated land and buildings within development frameworks will be permitted provided that:
 - (1) Retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character.
 - (2) Development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours.
 - (3) There is the necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development.

- Policy NE/1 - Energy Efficiency** states development will be required to demonstrate that it would achieve a high degree of measures to increase the energy efficiency of new buildings, for example through location, layout, orientation, aspect and external design.
23. **Policy NE/6 - Biodiversity** requires new developments to aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity. The District Council will refuse development that would have an adverse significant impact on the population or conservation status of protected species, priority species or habitat, unless the impact can be adequately mitigated by measures secured by planning conditions. Previously developed land will not be considered to be devoid of biodiversity. The re-use of such sites must be undertaken carefully with regard to existing features of biodiversity interest. Development proposals will be expected to include measures that maintain and enhance important features whilst incorporating them within any development of the site.
24. **Policy NE/9 - Water and Drainage Infrastructure** indicates that planning permission will not be granted where there are inadequate water supply, sewerage or land drainage systems to meet the demands of the development unless there is an agreed phasing agreement between the developer and the relevant service provider to ensure the provision of necessary infrastructure.
25. **Policy NE/12 – Water Conservation** states that development must incorporate all practicable water conservation measures. All development proposals greater than 1,000m² or 10 dwellings will be required to submit a Water Conservation Strategy prior to the commencement of the development to demonstrate how this is to be achieved.
26. **Policy TR/1 - Planning for More Sustainable Travel** states planning permission will not be granted for developments likely to give rise to a material increase in travel demands unless the site has a sufficient standard of accessibility to offer an appropriate choice of travel by public transport or other non-car travel modes. The amount of car parking provision in new developments should be minimised, compatible with their location. Developments should be designed from the outset with permeable layouts to facilitate and encourage short distance trips by cycle and walking. Safe and secure cycle parking shall be provided.
27. **Policy TR/2 - Car and Cycle Parking Standards** states car parking should be provided in accordance with the Council's maximum standards, to reduce over reliance on the car and to promote more sustainable forms of transport.
28. **Policy TR/3 - Mitigating Travel Impact** requires applications for major residential development to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment.
29. **Policy TR/4 - Non-motorised Modes** states the District Council will use its planning powers by ensuring that all new developments are designed at the outset to facilitate and encourage short distance trips between home, work, schools and for leisure.
30. **Policy SF/10 Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments** requires all residential developments to contribute towards outdoor playing space, formal outdoor sports facilities and informal open space to meet the additional need generated by the development. Where appropriate, provision will involve all or some types of space within the development site. However, an appropriate contribution will be required for 'off-site' provision of the types of space not provided on-site.

31. **Policy SF/11 Open Space Standards** defines the minimum standards for outdoor play space and informal open space.
32. **Policy CH/5 – Conservation Areas** requires that development proposals in or affecting Conservation Areas are determined in accordance with legislative provisions and national policy (currently in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15). Proposals should seek to preserve or enhance the character of the area.

Consultation

33. **Bassingbourn Parish Council** recommends refusal commenting:

“As the proposed development was within the framework, and not on an exception site, priority would not be given for affordable housing to local people

Drainage, the area already suffered from poor drainage.

The increase in traffic from the proposed site which would have an impact on the junction with the High Street.

The density and impact on the surrounding area would be contrary to the District Council Local Plan and not in keeping with the conservation area.”

34. The **Conservation Manager** comments that pre-application discussions have taken place in respect of this site. It would appear that the development is still too dense and will neither preserve nor enhance the character and setting of the Conservation Area or the buildings within the site. A Conservation Area Consent application for the demolition of existing outbuildings within the site has been refused.
35. The **Trees and Landscapes Officer** comments that the Beech tree at the rear of the site can be afforded further space through the loss of the trees at the rear of the site in the south west corner, these are identified as Norway spruce, Apple and an Elm. This will allow the footprint of the plot to be moved further back away from the tree both increasing the space around the tree and therefore the rooting area. It is suggested that the ground cover is maintained as a rough grassland cover and not manicured to make it an informal area and not an area where compaction occurs on a regular basis.

The Lime tree is currently positioned in the corner of a garden plot, a pinch point, and the tree will also overhang two other gardens. Currently the tree has a natural form with branches coming to the ground. Some works could be undertaken to alleviate the form but the tree will be under pressure for continued works and there will also be on-going issues of shading of the gardens.

The widening of the access from approximately 3.5m to 8m appears to result in the removal of a Yew tree and trees will also require works to the crowns to allow for construction vehicles to enter. The widening of the access to 8m and any modification of the crown will detrimentally change the character of this frontage and therefore the street scene.

The housing density of the site will place pressure on the ‘open area’ where the Beech tree is and garden space will be shaded by the Lime. Permitted Development rights should be removed to prevent any structures being paced near to the lime tree.

In conclusion an objection is raised to the widening of the access due to change of character of the street scene; the Lime is still of concern given the nature of the dwellings and the small gardens; the Beech tree can be given further space by the re-siting of the footprint of the plots in the south west corner following the removal of the Norway spruce and apple.

36. The **Housing Development and Enabling Manager** supports the scheme which provides 21 units of affordable housing for the village and will go some way towards addressing the shortage of affordable housing in Bassingbourn. The scheme will be built to Housing Corporation Design and Quality Standards.
37. The **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** requests that a condition is attached to any consent requiring the submission of a scheme for the investigation and recording of any contamination of the site, along with remediation objectives.
38. The **Local Highway Authority** has raised no objection to the application. It requests that a condition be imposed to the effect that no demolition works shall commence on site until a traffic management plan has been agreed with the Highway Authority and that an informative is added to the consent.
39. The **Ecology Officer** is concerned that Ecological Assessment states that further surveys will be undertaken in respect to bats and slow worms (reptiles), however no further work has been submitted and on that basis the application should be refused. It is not appropriate to complete these surveys by condition.

The proposed development would result in the loss of an old orchard which is listed as priority habitats for conservation and to allow the removal of the entire area of orchard, without any form of retention or replacement would conflict with Policy NE/6. Furthermore it is noted that there are 2 ponds present, which, as a UK BAP habitat, should not be lost without compensatory measures being in place.

Old orchards are also noteworthy for heir deadwood habitats, bird nesting and feeding habitats, and invertebrate interests, all of which should be investigated through survey work.

The general design of the scheme appears to achieve little integration of existing habitats or makes provision for compensatory features.

Whilst The Cedars is retained if it is found to provide a bat roost then the site layout may need to be modified to retain bat flight paths and/or avoid light pollution.

Following a site meeting and further discussion revised comments will be reported at the meeting

40. **Cambridgeshire Archaeology** comments that the site should be the subject to a programme of archaeological work, to be secured through a negative condition.
41. The comments of the **Building Control Section, Anglian Water** and the **Architectural Liaison Officer, Cambridgeshire Constabulary** will be reported at the meeting.

Representations

42. 32 letters have been received objecting to the application on the following grounds:
- (a) The number of dwellings proposed exceeds the limit on numbers for Bassingbourn set out in Policy ST/6.
 - (b) The proposal represents an overdevelopment of the site. The density is too great and out of character with the area
 - (c) The proposal will neither preserve nor enhance the Conservation Area. It will damage the character of the area. This impact is exacerbated by the loss of existing buildings.
 - (d) The proposed houses are out of character with the area and too high, particularly in relation to adjacent properties.
 - (e) Demolition of buildings would be detrimental to the sale of the property as a whole should the application for redevelopment fail
 - (f) Although the area is not in an Environmental Flood Risk area there is a history of flooding in the area, particularly during times of heavy rainfall, due to inadequate surface water drainage systems. The problem is exacerbated by the high water table in the area. The application does not adequately address this situation. It is believed that the surface water drainage system in the area is designed to cater for a once in 30 year occurrence whereas it should be once in 100 years. The Elbourn Way development on the north side of The Causeway has a surface water reservoir to take excess water but South end is on lower ground with a higher water table. The application makes reference to a SUDS which it state does not add to the burden of the existing mains drainage system however there is concern that it would not cope with this amount of development given the existing problems in the area. It is recognised that flooding caused by extreme rainfall is increasingly due to climate change and assurance is sought that the new development will not add to this. Photographs have been submitted showing the existing flooding problem.
 - (g) It is noted that there are no plans to upgrade the foul water drainage system in the area which is not adequate to cater for the proposed development. What are the views of Anglian Water?
 - (h) Concern about the impact on trees. There is a large Beech and a fine Walnut which may be prejudiced by the development. The creation of the new access will result in the loss of planting on the South End frontage. The development does not take sufficient account of existing trees, some of which have Tree Preservation Orders, or the impact upon their rooting systems. There is concern that there will be further pressure in the future to remove trees due to restricting light to the properties, safety, risk of subsidence and heave and general nuisance, and that existing restrictions will be lifted the trees may be subject to damage during construction. No reference is made to the age of the trees
 - (i) Orchard is the home to wildlife which will be lost, including bats and slow worms, and can attract butterflies and moths. Application suggests that

wildlife and habitat surveys will be carried out later; these should be completed before any planning permission is granted. The assessment was carried out in mid-January when key protected species will have been hibernating. The report incorrectly states that the site has no connecting habitat potential for great crested newts – there are several connecting routes. Great crested newts are known to live in ponds – there are two on the property. Why as Hertfordshire rather than Cambridgeshire Data been used in the report? The report notes that the existing property has architectural features favoured by roosting bats and a more extensive survey should be carried out. The report does not prove that slow worms do not inhabit the site. The application should be refused as insufficient information has been submitted for the site. Assurances are sought on this point

- (j) There are a lack of services in the village (medical, educational, electrical supply) and the development is in an unsustainable location.
- (k) Traffic in the area is particularly bad in the mornings and afternoon due to school traffic. There is a problem with the use of the Recreation Ground at evenings and weekends, which has no parking. This turns South End into a one-way bottleneck most weekends and some evenings due to parked cars. There is a blind junction at the top end of South End with High Street. The United Reformed Church adds to traffic.
- (l) Sight lines at the access are restricted and the road and pavement is heavily used by people coming too and from the Village College, particularly children.
- (m) 38 car parking spaces will not be enough and will result in overspill parking in South End where there are already problems.
- (n) Details of traffic count are queried as there is a long period when no data was recorded – was equipment faulty? The device was placed only 25m north of the entrance to No26 and therefore ignores traffic flow at the northern end of South End. The survey takes no account of extra traffic generated as a result of the opening of the Sports Centre nor the increase usage when sports teams are training/playing on the recreation ground in spring summer and autumn. The survey was carried out for a period of less than a week in February and does not take account of the impact on road safety for children and students using South End on the road and pavement. Traffic flow is much higher than suggested and the report does not address the parking down one side of South End
- (o) The application contains no proposal to contribute to road improvements
- (p) Inadequate employment in the village with no suitable public transport therefore more traffic.
- (q) Previous scheme for five bungalows seems reasonable. This application was judged under previous policies.
- (r) The occupier of 31 Brook Road objects to the proposed demolition of the wood store which forms a substantial part of the southern boundary with the application site. At the present time there is a 2.05m high clunch wall, 8.8m long and part of the building is directly opposite the sitting room window of No 31. The occupier states that the demolition of this wall would have a devastating impact on the house and its garden.

- (s) The orchard is not a brownfield site. It is a rare surviving orchard site and should be protected. DEFRA has recognised that ancient orchards provide a unique and diverse habitat.
- (t) The site will be of archaeological interest.
- (u) The application in effect combines two pieces of land into one.
- (v) Disturbance during building works
- (w) No mention in the application of the high number of homes in the village that already provide accommodation for the elderly or social housing. As a result there will be a loss of balance of properties in the village.
- (x) The application gives no details of street lighting. The access road will run along the side of 22/24 South End and to the rear of other properties and elevated street lighting will be intrusive and change the character of the area. Details should be included and lighting should be low level to reduce the level of illumination to neighbouring gardens and houses.
- (y) General noise nuisance from the development.
- (z) The occupier of 37 Brook Road is concerned about the close proximity of plots 12 and 13 and the proposed location of a car park for 6 cars immediately adjacent to the boundary.
- (aa) No meaningful attempt has been made to screen the development from existing properties on the west boundary.
- (bb) There are two other sites that are being considered for affordable housing that are more suitable and it is not clear that houses would be for Bassingbourn people
- (cc) Increased difficulties on policing that area.
- (dd) Loss of value to existing properties.
- (ee) Concern about the pre-application consultation and presentation by the applicant.
- (ff) One letter supports the use of the site for affordable housing, particularly if the existing house is to be retained, but objects to the current scheme.
- (gg) One letter has been received in support of the application stating that there is a great need for affordable housing for young people if they are to remain in the village and it is good to see that The Cedars is being kept. The plans are admirable and the site is suitable to manage the amount of housing proposed.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

The key issues are:

Size and Numbers
 Need/Mix/Tenure
 Impact on Conservation Area
 Impact on Trees

Neighbour Amenity
Highway Safety and Parking
Drainage/Flooding
Ecology
Open Space

Size and Numbers

43. Development in Bassingbourn may exceptionally comprise up to about 15 dwellings where this would make best use of a single brownfield site. However, although this site is within the village framework it proposes 100% affordable housing and should be considered as an exception site under Policy HG/5. It is therefore possible that this figure could be exceeded provided the scheme were to satisfy the criteria of that policy.
44. The issue of housing need, mix and tenure is dealt with below.
45. Policy HG/5 requires that exception schemes should be on 'small' sites. Whilst the policy does not define what is considered to be small, officers have taken the view that schemes of up to 20 dwellings for affordable housing in Group Villages such as Bassingbourn could be considered as small. This scheme exceeds that number.
46. Any site is required to be well related to the built-up area of the settlement and the scale of the scheme should be appropriate to the size and character of the village. I consider that the site meets this part of the policy as the site is well related to the built-up area of Bassingbourn and the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the size of the village as a whole.
47. However, I am of the view that the development will harm the character of this part of the village. The site currently comprises an attractive 19th Century detached house in well planted grounds with an area of orchard land to the north. The current undeveloped form of this area contributes significantly to the character of the Conservation Area and the village as a whole and in my view development in the form proposed will harm that character.
48. Although the density of the scheme, at 27dph, is below the minimum of 30 dph required I consider there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment in order to make best use of land and retain local character.

Need/Mix and Tenure

49. The Housing Development and Enabling Manager supports the scheme. 35% of the properties would be for rent. The application states that the Council would be given full nomination rights and that the housing would be for people in the village. This would need to be controlled through a Section 106 Agreement.

Impact on Conservation Area

50. During pre-application discussions the Conservation Team expressed concern about the development of this site in the manner proposed, being of the view that the existing dwelling and its garden make an important contribution to this part of Bassingbourn Conservation Area. Although the proposed scheme retains the existing Cedars building the number of dwellings proposed and the proximity to The Cedars neither preserves nor enhances the character of the Conservation Area.

51. The layout has been designed to incorporate the existing house and where possible to accommodate existing trees. I am of the view however that the scale of the dwellings, all of which have a ridge height of 8.7m is out of character and scale with the area, and particularly with those properties to the rear in Brook Road.
52. The scheme proposes the removal of existing outbuildings for which Conservation Area Consent has been refused.

Impact on Trees

53. The application is accompanied by a Trees and Development Report. The Trees and Landscapes Officer has considered this report and has visited the site. Although the proposal will require the removal of some existing trees and work to others within the site the Trees and Landscapes Officer does not object to the majority of the scheme. However there are 3 key areas of concern.
54. An objection is raised to the loss of Yew tree to create the new access to the site. This tree is covered by a Tree Preservation Order. There is also concern about the need to raise the crowns of other trees to allow construction vehicles to enter the site which will have an adverse impact on the character of the frontage and the street scene.
55. There is concern about the impact of the development in the longer term of the Lime tree in Plot 7. This tree is also covered by a Tree Preservation Order and is an important feature within the site.
56. Suggestions are made to reduce the impact of the scheme of the Beech tree in the proposed communal space to the rear of The Cedars. Again this is an important tree and covered by a Preservation Order.

Neighbour Amenity

57. I am concerned that the proposed layout has an unreasonably adverse effect on adjacent properties. The proposed dwelling on Plot 13 is within 4m of the rear boundary of Nos 37 and 39 Brook Road, which are chalet style properties with shallow rear gardens. I am of the view that the proposed building on this plot, 8.7m high, will be visually overbearing when viewed from these properties and will result in an unreasonable degree of overlooking of part of the garden area of No 39. In addition there is a parking area for 6 cars shown within 1.5m of the rear boundary of No 37 and although some planting on the boundary is shown I am of the view that the use of this area for car parking will have an unreasonable impact on the amenity of the occupiers of that property by reason of noise and disturbance.
58. I share the concerns of the occupiers of 31 Brook Road, about the proposed loss of the existing outbuilding which forms part of the southern boundary of that property. Notwithstanding the objection of the Conservation Team to the loss of the building, the absence of an appropriate alternative boundary treatment for No 31 will result in an unreasonable loss of amenity. No 41 also has a shallow rear garden and although the section of wall closest to the boundary with the application site has no openings I am concerned that the aspect from the garden will be dominated by the four 8.7m high properties which will be at a distance of between 17m and 23m from the boundary, although existing planting within the orchard that is shown as being retained will reduce this effect.

59. I am also concerned that the four dwellings proposed on Plots 3 to 6 will have an overbearing impact on the rear garden of No 36 South End, a dwelling sited within the grounds of Bassingbourn Village College, although the properties have been designed so that there will be no first floor windows overlooking in that direction.

Highway Safety and Parking

60. The Local Highway Authority has not objected to the application. It has accepted that reduced visibility splays can be provided following the results of a traffic survey carried out prior to the submission of the application.
61. Given the number of objections received to the scheme on highway grounds I have asked the Local Highway Authority to consider the comments received and let me have its further views. These should take into consideration the local concerns about the level of parking in South End and opposite the site, the junction of South End with High Street, car parking within the site and, the proximity to the Village College
62. I will report the further comments at the meeting.
63. The car parking provision within the site meets the Councils adopted standards

Drainage/Flooding

64. There has been a considerable amount of local concern about the ability of the existing foul water drainage system to cope with the demands that would arise from the proposed development.
65. I have written to Anglian Water outlining these concerns and will report its response at the meeting.
66. There is also local concern about existing storm water drainage problems experienced in South End and the submitted information included photographic and video evidence of this problem. There is concern than surface water drainage from the proposed development will exacerbate this existing problem.
67. The application proposes the use of a Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme for surface water drainage which it states should ensure that the development does not add to existing problems. The Environment Agency standing advice applies to this application but I have asked the Building Control Section to consider the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application and have made it aware of the local concerns.
68. I will report the comments of the Building Control Section at the meeting.

Ecology

69. The Ecology Officer has expressed concern that some survey work referred to in the applicants submission may still not have been carried out although a subsequent site meeting has been held at which these matters were discussed and a further report will be made by the Ecology Officer at the meeting.
70. The applicant has been requested to carry out an evening survey of the site to look for bats.

Open Space

71. The site is in very close proximity to the existing recreation ground and I am therefore of the view that an Informal Play Space need not be provided. However a Local Area for Play (LAP) should be provided within the site. This should be of an area of approximately 196m². Whilst the current areas of amenity space will provide informal open space within the development they are either not suitably located or designed to provide the LAP and the scheme will need to be redesigned so that this can be incorporated.
72. The applicant has stated that the scheme viability will not facilitate additional financial contributions which could prejudice the delivery of a sustainable development of affordable homes and is therefore not offering the required open space payments. However no detailed information has been submitted to support this position.
73. In my view it is not necessary to consider the point raised as to whether or not the orchard should be considered brownfield land as this application is being considered as an exception site.
74. In conclusion, whilst I support the principle of trying to provide 100% affordable housing on this site I am of the view that the scheme in its current form cannot be supported. The number of units proposed exceeds the number that can reasonably be considered as being small for the purposes of Policy HG/5 and given the concerns about the impact of the development on the Conservation Area, trees and neighbour amenity I do not consider that it would be appropriate to consider a departure from that policy for this scheme.
75. It is crucial that the application adequately addresses the issues of ecology and biodiversity within the site and the further comments of the Ecology Officer will be reported at the meeting.
76. I note the local concern about the access and traffic in South End but at the present time there is no objection to the scheme from the Local Highway Authority. I will report its further comments.
77. I will report the comments of the Building Control Section and Anglian Water in respect of surface and foul water drainage. These issues should be adequately addressed before consideration is given to granting any consent on the site.

Applicants Representations

78. An additional letter has now been submitted by the agent in support of the application, which also responds to some of the points raised by officers, consultees and local residents. A full copy of the letter can be viewed on the website as part of the application documents. This letter was received on 24 July after the other sections of this report had been prepared but in time to report its receipt, so its contents are not reflected in the Planning Comments above. I will comment on the contents of this letter if necessary at the meeting
79. The letter refers to the submission of amended drawings which will be reported at the meeting. These involve a reduction in the height of some of the dwellings in an attempt to address the concern about overbearing impact, and the erection of a car port type structure over the car parking spaces to the rear of No 31 Brook Road, in an attempt to reduce noise but again are not reflected in the Planning Comments. I will

comment on these revisions at the meeting but the basic recommendation of refusal will remain.

Recommendation

80. That the application is refused on the grounds that the scheme does not fully comply with the criteria set out in Policy HG/5; that it neither preserves or enhances that character of the Conservation Area, will result in the loss of, or prejudice retention of important trees within the site, and will have an unreasonable adverse impact on neighbour amenity.

Any further issues raised by the Local Highway Authority, Anglian Water, Building Control Section and the Ecology Officer may also need to be included in the above.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007
- Planning Files Ref: S/0883/08/F, S/0872/08/CAC, S/1291/04/F and S/1687/03/F

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