

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

10th June 2009

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

S/0177/03/F - MELDRETH
Increase in the Number of Plots from 11 to 17 (Condition 9)
Biddalls Boulevard, Kneesworth Road for Mr J Biddall

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 27th February 2009

Notes:

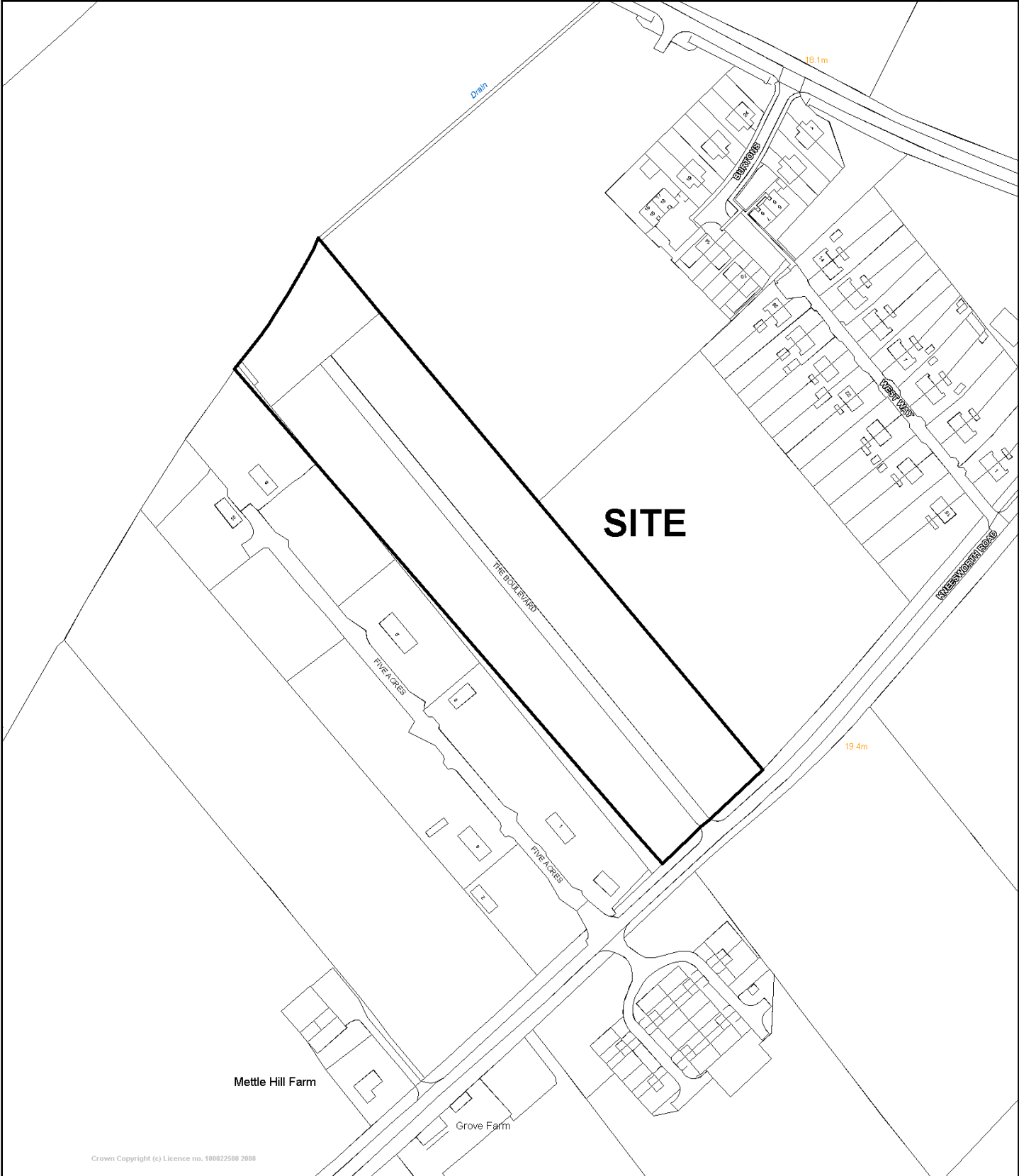
This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the recommendation of officers is contrary to the recommendation of refusal received from Meldreth Parish Council

Site and Proposal

1. Biddalls Boulevard is a 2.11 hectare showpersons site to the north west of Kneesworth Road, Meldreth. Immediately to the south west of the site is Five Acres, a similar size showpersons site.
2. To the north east and north west is agricultural land. There is existing planting on the south east, north east and north west boundaries of the site. Opposite the site is agricultural land and the former Cambridgeshire County Council Travellers site.
3. The submission, as amended by details received on 7th May 2009 seeks, under condition 9 of the planning consent, to increase the number of plots on the site from the permitted 11 to 17. The submitted plan identifies a 480m² area of land within the site which is to be provided as open space. At the front of the site two areas are identified for possible medium to long term use by the applicant and his immediate family.
4. There are currently 15 occupied plots on the site. An earlier submission had proposed an increase in the number of plots to 16.

Planning History

5. Planning consent was granted at appeal in 2004 for the use of land to travelling showpeople's quarters (**Ref: S/0177/03/F**). That consent included conditions requiring the submission of a plan detailing the layout of the site, including the means of enclosure of individual plots; and restricting the number of plots for the stationing of mobile homes and caravans to no more than 11, with each individual plot being occupied by a maximum of 3 mobile homes or caravans, unless the Local Planning Authority were to give its written approval to any increase in these numbers.



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Scale 1/2500 Date 28/5/2009

Centre = 536681 E 246116 N

JUNE 2009 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Planning Policy

6. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Control Policies 2007:**
DP/1 (Sustainable Development)
DP/3 (Development Criteria)
DP/7 (Development Frameworks)
7. **Gypsy and Traveller DPD** (Consultation Draft).

Consultation

8. **Meldreth Parish Council** recommends refusal. It states that “it does not feel that it can approve the proposal of increasing the plots, to any more than the original figure of 13. The revised map shows that subdividing of plots has already taken place and that the actual number of plots/pitches now stands at 16 and not the original 11, as first thought. The Parish Council stands by its original letter dated 9 January 2009 whereby it states that 13 plots/pitches should be the final amount. The reasons being that the site would become overcrowded, and the matter of landscaping is still a concern. The Parish Council would like to see landscaping with native species trees and appropriate hedging thus making the site more presentable and to include some open spaces.”

The comments in respect of the amended details will be reported to the meeting.

9. **Cambridgeshire County Council**, as Education Authority, advises that adequate capacity exists at both Meldreth Primary School and Melbourn Village College to cater for any demand arising from the proposed increase in the number of plots.
10. Any comments received from the **Planning Policy Team, Local Highways Authority** and the **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** will be reported at the meeting.

Representations

11. In response to the original request to increase the number of plots from 11 to 13 several letters were received from the occupiers of existing plots on the site expressing concern that the submitted drawing did not accurately show the existing number of individual plots within the site, as sold to various parties.
12. In respect of the revised plan for 16 plots one letter was received suggesting that an area of open space and a communal turning area be provided.

Applicants' Representations

13. In a letter dated 6th May 2009 the applicants agent states that the submitted plan shows what the applicant envisages as the number of showman's plots that will be developed on the site looking ahead 5 to 10 years. The areas marked A and B are owned by the applicant and members of his immediate family and these will not be needed as showmen's yards over the next five years, or possibly for as long as 10 years ahead. The applicant appreciates that, in the event that a further planning application is made for development of showmen's yards on parcels A and B, this will need to be considered on its merits having regard to circumstance at that time.

14. A landscaping scheme has already been approved and implemented. The north east boundary that faces the nearest houses in Meldreth has a substantial screen of hedgerow and hedgerow trees along it. It is intended that this screen will remain permanently. The screen was reinforced by additional planting when the site was first occupied for showmen's quarters. This new planting consists predominantly of hawthorn and field maple. Not all the new planting has taken and it is proposed that where plants have died these will be replaced.
15. Where the hedgerow is thin within parcel B, then it is proposed that further planting with indigenous trees and hedgerows should occur as shown on the submitted plan. It is also proposed that the planting in the north east corner on the Kneesworth Road frontage of the site should be reinforced and any plants that have died will be replaced. All new planting will be in accordance with a planting schedule that will be submitted shortly.
16. As the site is intended for permanent residential occupation, a play area for children of showmen resident on the site has been provided and this is shown on the submitted drawing. This area will be kept permanently available for that use by site residents.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. The key issues for members to consider with this application are whether the proposed increase in the number of plots within the site will materially change the impact of the existing site on the surrounding countryside and the need for additional showpersons plots.
18. The site benefits from an existing planning consent for use as a showpersons site, although the number of plots currently permitted within the site is restricted by condition to 11. There is currently a breach of that condition as there are 15 occupied plots within the site. A layout plan for the site was not approved previously as required by condition.
19. The site is well contained with effective planting on three site boundaries. The other boundary is with the showpersons site to the south west. Plots are divided within the site by close-boarded fencing. In my view the increase in the number of plots within the site will not materially affect the visual impact of the site on the surrounding countryside given existing boundary planting, which the applicant has agreed to supplement as specified above. An area of open space is to be provided within the site for use by the occupiers of the plots.
20. Officers have encouraged the submission of a comprehensive plan for the future uses of the site, hence the current proposal for 17 plots. Any future submission for the use of the areas marked A and B on the submitted plan would have to be considered on its merits at that time.
21. The Gypsy and Travellers DPD is likely to identify a need for a modest number of plots for occupied by showpersons and an increase in the number of plots on this site could help meet that need.
22. Cambridgeshire County Council as Education Authority has confirmed that adequate capacity exists for education provision.

23. Any comments of the Local Highways Authority, Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services). Planning Policy Team and any further comments from Meldreth Parish Council will be reported at the meeting.

Recommendation

24. Subject to the response of outstanding consultees that the proposed increase in the number of plots from 11 to 17 is supported, subject to the provision of the area of open space identified on the submitted plan, and additional landscaping

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Gypsy and Traveller DPD (Consultation Draft)
- Planning File Ref: S/0177/03/F

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