

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th November 2009

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services)/
Corporate Manager (Planning and Sustainable Communities)

S/1251/09/F - LONGSTANTON

Landscape Works, Phase 3A, Land off High Street for West Longstanton Ltd

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 27th November 2009

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the application is a major development and the officer recommendation conflicts with representations that have been received.

Major Development

Site and Proposal

1. This full application, received on 28th August 2009, proposes landscaping for Phase 3A of the Home Farm development off High Street, Longstanton.
2. The development comprises 87 plots.
3. Reserved matters approval exists for the layout of the site (see history below), however details of landscaping within the site did not form part of that consent.

Planning History

4. Outline planning consent was granted for the Home Farm development in October 2000. Applications for approval of reserved matters were to be submitted within 7 years of the date of the permission.
5. In April 2007 reserved matters approval for the siting, design, means of access and landscape structure only was given for Phase 3A (87 plots) (**Ref: S/0625/06/RM**).
6. Details of landscaping within the site were not submitted within the 7-year period allowed.

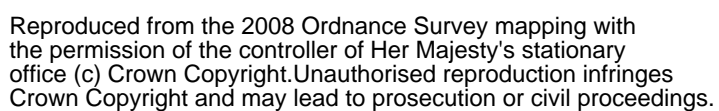
Planning Policy

7. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007

DP/1 – Sustainable Development

DP/2 – Design of New Development

DP/3 – Development Criteria



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8. Trees and Development Sites SPD adopted January 2009.
9. Open Space in New Developments adopted January 2009.

Consultation

10. **Longstanton Parish Council** comments, “we are supplied with the application form and a drawing. There is little detail (such as on the types of hedging, etc.). We suspect that the application had more details that were not copied to the PC (it references a covering letter, for example).

Based on the drawing, we recommend approval, subject to clarification.

The drawing indicates one large open space, three smaller open spaces, and numerous bits of hedge (verges etc).

A. On the main space:

1. Overall, we recommend lawn grass amongst trees.
2. There is a play area to be maintained “until installation of play equipment by others”.

We need:

- (a) Clarity on the type of play equipment (and that the manufacturer is the same as for other sites to make the PC’s maintenance jobs easier in the future).
- (b) Clarity on who the “others” are.
- (c) Clarity on what the trigger point is that stops maintenance.
- (d) Clarity on what happens to the play equipment and underlying landscaping once it is no longer maintained.

B. On the 3 smaller spaces:

1. No particular comment, other than the lawn grass rather than meadow.

C. On the bits and pieces:

1. Overall the grass and hedge layout seems fine.
2. There must be clarity at this stage on the ownership of each area. It makes sense for the larger hedges to be community property. Small grass verges should be part of the associated dwellings; there is little value in the PC maintaining them. If there are small hedges that make sense to put under home owner control, then deeds must reflect requirements on their maintenance (ie, they provide softening of the landscape; home owners should not have the option to remove them without deed modification or seeking similar approval. This must be formalised now and encoded in the deeds to avoid confusion we are having with Phase 1.”

11. The comments of the **Landscape Officer** and **Ecology Officer** will be reported at the meeting.

Representations

12. The occupier of **The Retreat, Few's Lane** comments that the large willow tree may need to be removed in view of the proximity to the proposed dwelling. Why should the tree have to be felled in view to make room for the dwelling as the tree was there long before the house.

Many mature trees were felled on Home Farm Phase 2 to accommodate dwellings and they have not been replaced. There are also three chestnut trees marked for felling as well as two silver birches and a cherry. Longstanton has suffered the loss of a great majority of its trees due to development projects on the village and it is time for this to end. It takes many years for these trees to grow and develop plus a great deal of wildlife is lost each time it happens.

The hedgerow between The Retreat and Plot 3 of the development site is an ancient hedgerow and should be preserved. The applicant seems to be claiming it as part of the development site but this is disputed, as it is a boundary hedge that should be retained and preserved and not ripped out. There is also an ancient right of passage through the hedge to draw water from the well sited on the development site.

The hedgerow alongside Few's Lane plots 1 and 2 seems to be excluded from the site. This is the boundary hedge for the land and ditch which runs along Few's lane and has always formed part of Old Farm.

There is an objection to Plot 16 having its frontage overlooking the front garden of The Retreat and intruding on privacy.

There is concern that the application form is incorrect as the 'no' box is ticked to the questions concerning pedestrian and vehicle access, roads and public rights of way. There is also concern that the applicant did not engage in pre-application discussions with adjoining neighbours.

13. The occupier of **Striplands Farm** draws attention to a very important habitat that has been created following the excavation of an ancient well by the archaeologists. For the last two years it has been successfully breeding large numbers of Broad bodied chaser dragonflies along with ruddy darter dragonflies and damselflies. Also present during the summer months are a large number of newts.

If this pond could be enlarged and turned into a feature in one of the open green spaces it would be an enormous natural habitat in an otherwise built up area.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

14. The site benefits from a reserved matters approval for the siting, design, means of access and landscape structure. The layout of the site is therefore not something that Members can consider with this application, which should be determined purely on the merits of the landscaping scheme proposed. This matter would normally have been dealt with by way of the submission of a landscaping scheme as one of the reserved matters under the original outline consent. As the time allowed for the submission of reserved matters has expired the landscaping details have been submitted as a full planning application.

15. The detailed comments of the Landscape Officer will be reported at the meeting. The submission follows discussions between the applicants landscape consultant and the Landscape Officer.
16. The submitted drawing does show the removal of some existing trees within the site which were shown as being retained on the layout drawing approved as part of the 2006 reserved matters consent for Phase 3A. These include the Willow (Plot 75), three Chestnuts (Plot 69 and open space between Plots 53 and 58), two Silver birches (Plot 83) and the Cherry (Plot 83) which are referred to in the representation from occupier of The Retreat.
17. I have passed on the comments of the Parish Council regarding the areas of public open space. The laying out, equipping and subsequent management of these areas was dealt with by a condition on the original outline consent, and not under the landscaping scheme. I am aware however that there are ongoing discussions about this issue and will report the comments of the applicant regarding the Parish Councils' comments. It may be that the details of the landscaping of the area of open space should be excluded from any consent, until such time as final agreement is obtained to the overall layout of the space.
18. In response to the Parish Council's comments I will ask the applicant to indicate the areas of landscaping which are not proposed to be transferred to individual property owners. As this is a full application it may be appropriate to require the submission of a scheme for the management of areas of landscaping which are not to be transferred to individual properties.
19. I have passed on the comments from the occupier of Striplands Farm concerning the issue of the ancient well and its ecological value to the Ecology Officer and will report his comments at the meeting.
20. Issues of overlooking due to the position of houses within the site were addressed in the reserved matters consent for the layout of the site. I am of the view that the application form is correctly completed as this application relates to landscaping only and not the formation of the roadway/access etc.
21. I will report the response to outstanding consultations at the meeting and any further comments received from the applicant. The views of the Landscape Officer will be central to my recommendation.

Recommendation

22. Subject to the satisfactory response to outstanding consultations, and no objection being raised by the Landscape Officer that consent is granted.

Conditions

1. Submission of scheme for management of areas of landscaping not transferred to individual properties.
2. Exclusion of areas of formal play space from consent.
3. SC6 Landscape Implementation

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Planning Files Ref: S/1251/09/F; S/0625/06/F & S/

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