

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

2 March 2011

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S/2079/10 - LONGSTANTON

Erection of 8 affordable units and cycle/bin store following demolition of two dwellings and garages – Garages 18 & 19, Haddows Close, Longstanton, Cambridgeshire for Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 17 January 2011

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the land is owned by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Site and Proposal

1. The site is located within the designated Longstanton village framework, and seeks the erection of eight affordable dwellings following demolition of two existing dwellings and the block of garages on the site. This would create 2x3 bed dwellings including a bungalow, 2x2 bed dwellings, 2x2bed flats and 2x1 bed flats. The dwellings to be removed are the Airey houses of 18 and 19 Haddows Close, which front the junction within Haddows Close. To the west side of these dwellings is a narrow single track road leading to an area of hardstanding surrounded by 21 garages. There are residential dwellings to the north, west and east of the site. To the south is a drain with some mature trees planted. Beyond this is a public footpath and open countryside. The site is located partially within flood zones 1, 2 and 3a given the proximity of the drain.
2. The full application was validated on 22nd October 2010. It is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, a Flood Risk Assessment, an Ecological Appraisal, and a Landscape Strategy.

Planning History

3. A parking area for residents of 22-25 Haddows Close was granted planning permission through application **S/1010/05/F**, extending the cul-de-sac to allow vehicle access.
4. Parking bays between 27 and 28 Haddows Close were granted consent through application **S/1411/97/F**.
5. An application for a residents parking bay to the south of 13-16 Haddows Close (**S/1703/94/F**) was withdrawn.

Planning Policy

6. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007: ST/6 Group Villages**
7. **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (LDF DCP) 2007:**
DP/1 Sustainable Development, **DP/2** Design of New Development, **DP/3** Development Criteria, **DP/4** Infrastructure and New Development, **HG/3** Affordable Housing, **SF/10** Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments, **SF/11** Open Space Standards, **NE/1** Energy Efficiency, **NE/6** Biodiversity, **NE/11** Flood Risk, **NE/15** Noise Pollution & **TR/2** Car and Cycle Parking Standards.
8. **Open Space in New Developments SPD** – adopted January 2009, **Affordable Housing SPD** – adopted March 2010, **Trees and Development Sites SPD** – adopted January 2009 & **District Design Guide SPD** – adopted March 2010.
9. **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions:** Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.
10. **Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations:** Advises that planning obligations must be relevant to planning, necessary, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and reasonable in all other respect.

Consultation

11. **Longstanton Parish Council** recommends approval subject to attention paid to flooding potential and the effect of flooding on the foul drainage system. Off street parking is considered essential for 30 Haddows Close.
12. The **Environment Agency** objects to the proposal as submitted on grounds of flood risk and the risk of contamination to groundwaters. The first objection is based on the flood risk assessment not complying with the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 25. The proposal does not have a safe means of access during floods, is not currently defended to appropriate standards, would impede flood flow and reduce storage capacity, and is inappropriate in a flood risk vulnerability category. With regards to groundwaters, the Environment Agency object as inadequate information has been provided to demonstrate that risks posed to groundwater can be satisfactorily managed.
13. The **Council's Trees Officer** notes the trees are already compromised by the hardstanding on the site, and area that would become garden. There would be potential pressure on the trees from shading, but the trees are not considered of a quality worthy of a Tree Preservation Order.
14. The **Local Highways Authority** note they would not adopt the road as it does not serve five or more individual dwellings. Conditions are requested seeking a traffic management plan for the demolition and construction phase, pedestrian visibility splays to be retained, materials to be used for the access,

and drainage mechanisms for the access. An informative regarding works to the public highway is also proposed.

15. Members will be updated on comments from the Housing Development and Enabling Manager.

Representations

16. Letters of objection have been received from occupiers of 16 dwellings on Haddows Close. The objections are based on the following:

- Flood risk
- Proposed drainage and waste disposal methods
- Design of the dwellings
- Impact upon the character and appearance of the area
- Impact upon the trees along the southern boundary
- The proposed tenure mix
- Parking provision in Haddows Close
- Highway safety along Haddows Close and High Street
- Lack of public consultation

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. The key issues to be considered in the determination of this application area are the principle of development, flood risk, impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, impact upon the street scene, impact upon the trees, open space provision, and highway safety and parking provision.

The Principle of Development

18. The application site lies within the Longstanton village framework. The village is classified as a Group Village under Policy ST/6 of the Core Strategy 2007, where residential development or redevelopment up to a maximum scheme size of eight dwellings will be permitted within village frameworks, subject to site-specific issues. The proposal is for 100% affordable housing but given Policy ST/6 of the Core Strategy, the proposal is not an exceptions site.
19. The site has an area of approximately 0.198 hectares. Policy HG/1 of the LDF DCP 2009 seeks residential developments to make best use of a site by achieving average net densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment, and higher densities of 40 dwellings per hectare should be achieved in more sustainable locations close to services. The development provides 40 dwellings per hectare. I do not consider that the site could be defined as a more sustainable location. However, the density figure is large due to the proposal for the flats on the site. I consider the local need for such units would overcome the higher density in this instance. Members will be updated on comments from the Housing Development and Enabling Manager.

Flood Risk

20. The site is located within varying flood zones. Plots 1 and 2 and the majority of the access road lie within flood zone 1. The majority of the rest of the site falls within flood zone 3a including the area where six of the dwellings would be located, although there is a strip of land approximately 4m in width within flood zone 2. Flood Zone 3a is defined in the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as an area with a high probability of flooding. The zone comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding (>1%). Only water-compatible and less vulnerable uses of land are considered appropriate to the zone. Dwellings are classified as a “more vulnerable use”, and the SFRA states such uses should only be permitted in zone 3a if the Exception test is completed. The SFRA notes that Councils should seek to reduce overall level of flood risk in such area, relocate existing development to land in zones with a lower probability of flooding, and create space for flooding to occur by restoring natural floodplains and flow paths.
21. The applicant has provided a Flood Risk Assessment with the application. However, the comments from the Environment Agency are noted. They object on grounds of flood risk and risk of contamination to underground waters. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment is not considered appropriate to the site. With regards to flood risk, the proposal does not include a safe means of access in flood events, the site is not defended to an appropriate standard, the site would impede flood flow and reduce storage capacity, and the development is inappropriate in zone 3a. Regarding risk to contamination to groundwaters, it is considered not enough information has been provided to demonstrate the risks posed. Reference is made to the relevant Government Guidance (Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk and Planning Policy Statement 23: Planning and Pollution Control).
22. Given the views of the Environment Agency, the application is recommended for refusal. The comments have been fed back to the applicant, and Members will be updated on any further comments received on this matter. There is no objection to the redevelopment of plots 1 and 2 that are located in flood zone 1.

Impact upon the Amenity of the Occupiers of Adjacent Properties

23. Plots 1 and 2 would replace the existing two-storey properties on this part of the site. The existing two-storey dwelling lines up with 17 Haddows Close. The bungalow on the adjoining plot would extend deeper into the plot by approximately 5m and would be set 1.8m from the shared boundary. Whilst the dwelling would be visible from the rear garden of 17 Haddows Close, the eaves height of the proposed bungalow is 2.3m, with the roof sloping away from the shared boundary. The highest point of the roof at 5m in height would be 7m from the shared boundary. Plot 2 is set a considerable distance from 17 Haddows Close and would not have any impact. I do not consider the proposal would create any material harm to the amenity of the occupiers of 17 Haddows Close.
24. The existing properties of 13-16 Haddows Close currently have garages forming their rear boundary. Removal of these garages allows the potential for land to be given to the occupiers of these properties to create longer rear

gardens. This land does fall outside of the application site. Plot 3 would be located 6.4m from the existing rear boundary of 13 and 14 Haddows Close. This distance would be reduced to 1.8m if the additional land were given to these properties. The eaves height of plot 3 would be 5m. This dwelling would be clearly visible from the rear gardens of the 13-16 Haddows Close. However, the harm created by its proposed proximity is countered by the additional land being offered to these properties. If the land were to remain with the site, the 6.4m gap would be acceptable. I therefore do not consider the proposal would be viewed as overbearing when viewed from the houses and rear gardens of these adjacent properties. If the land was not transferred, it would still provide relief from the development, and therefore no condition insisting this should take place would be required.

25. A condition would be required to ensure that no further windows are added at first floor level to the first floor side elevation of plot 3. There is a proposed bathroom window that would require a condition to be obscure glazed. There would be some overlooking of the rear gardens of 15 and 16 Haddows Close from the front bedroom window to plot 3. However, these properties would have long gardens given the extra land to be passed on, and they will both retain private amenity space that would not be overlooked. I do not consider the proposal would unduly harm the amenity of the occupiers of 13-16 Haddows Close. It should also be noted the occupiers of 16 Haddows Close would benefit from the removal of 18 Haddows Close, which does cause some overlooking to its rear garden. The replacement bungalow in this location would not cause any overlooking. I do not consider that any noise and disturbance from the use of the access would harm surrounding properties, especially given the potential for journeys to the existing garages.
26. The occupier of 20 Haddows Close would lose half of the rear garden to allow for the turning and parking area to the rear. The dwelling would still have a rear garden approximately 11m in length although this would include the newly created parking space. Given the existing road to the garages, I do not consider the occupier of this property would suffer any significant noise and disturbance from vehicles passing. Nor would they be overlooked by any of the proposed dwellings although a condition would be required to prevent first floor side windows to plot 2 that could overlook the rear garden of 20 Haddows Close. I do not consider the proposal would result in any serious harm to the occupiers of 20 Haddows Close.
27. The rear gardens of plots 3-7 would be between the unit and the drain to the south. These gardens would measure between 10-14m in length. The trees along the rear boundary would be located mostly outside the application site. However, given the size of the trees, they would overhang the rear gardens, and would cause a large amount of overshadowing in this area. Some loss of light would occur to the dwellings particularly at ground floor level. Whilst the overshadowing is unfortunate and would detract from the use of some of the gardens, I do not consider it would seriously harm the amenity of the occupiers of these dwellings.

Impact upon the Street Scene

28. The proposal seeks to replace two Airey houses at 18 and 19 Haddows Close. These dwellings are not considered of any architectural merit, and there is no objection to their removal. The two dwellings proposed are a three-bed two-storey dwelling linked to a three-bed bungalow by a carport.

The two-storey dwelling would total 7m in height, and its bulk would be reduced by the introduction of hips to the roofs. The bungalow would total 5m in height at its highest point. The Airey houses are located at the end of the main road into Haddows Close and are relatively prominent in the street scene. Whilst a bungalow would be a new feature, I do not consider that any serious harm would result to this element of the street scene.

29. Plots 3-8 are located at the end of the proposed widened road. These dwellings would be viewed in the back drop of the existing housing on the site. They would be taller than the frontage plot, with a roof height of 7.6m. There is a gap of 1m between plots 4 and 5 that will break up the bulk, as would the frontage gable to the flats and the hipped roofs. I do not consider that the design of these rear units would harm the existing street scene, and nor would they create a negative street scene in their own right for plots 3-8.
30. It is noted there is local concern about the use of hipped roofs. The majority of properties do not have hipped roofs, but they are evident at the residential block south of 17 Haddows Close and at the bungalow of 3 Haddows Close in close proximity to the site. The hipped roofs would not therefore be an alien feature in the street scene, and they will reduce the bulk of the development, particularly to plot 3. There is also local concern about the brick to be used. The applicant has stated their desire to use a red/orange brick. A condition can be added to ensure details are appropriate to the area. A lighter brick may well be more appropriate, but this can be negotiated post decision where necessary. The removal of the ageing garages is also likely to be a visual improvement for the area.

Impact upon Trees

31. The southwestern boundary of the site has a large tree belt that is growing in and around the drain. This tree belt provides a green edge to the village when viewed from Haddows Close, and the trees are clearly visible above the existing garages. The trees are also important given the views from Hattons Road to the northwest. There is a break in the boundary hedging along this road, with the trees clearly visible across the adjacent agricultural land. There is a footpath that runs to the south of the tree belt, further increasing the importance in the street scene.
32. The Council's Trees Officer notes that the trees are already compromised by the existing garage block and the associated hardstanding. This area would be reverted to garden land and therefore the pressure on the root systems would be reduced. The trees are not considered of being of a quality worthy of a Tree Preservation Order. The location of the gardens to the north of the tree belt is likely to increase the pressure on the trees to reduce shading, and the trees are also likely to drop branches in the rear gardens. However, retention of a significant tree belt is considered to be achievable.

Open Space Provision

33. The proposal does not include any on site provision of open space in lien with Policies DP/4 and SF/10 of the LDF DCP 2007, the Open Space in New Developments SPD and the Longstanton village audit. The applicant is aware that a financial requirement is required in lieu of on-site provision. This would

be to the sum of £10,467.24. Members will be updated as to whether the applicant is willing to make such a contribution. The pre-application advice prior to submission did not make reference to community facility provision, or the Section 106 monitoring and waste receptacle provision. It is considered unreasonable to now add these requirements.

Highway Safety and Parking Provision

34. The comments from the Local Highways Authority are noted. The access would be designed as a shared surface 6m in width, with a 4.5m roadway and 1.5m footway to one side. There would need to be some delineation between the two, details of which could be provided through a planning condition. The Local Highways Authority recommend conditions regarding a traffic management plan for the demolition and construction phase, pedestrian visibility splays to be retained, materials to be used for the access, and drainage mechanisms for the access. These could be added to any approval. An informative regarding works to the public highway can also be added.
35. Parking provision in the area is tight given the narrow roads and dense form of development. There are on-street parking areas for residents use and a number of dwellings do have off street parking. Plots 1 and 2 would each be provided with two designated spaces each, and the proposal would also provide an additional off-street parking space for the occupiers of 20 Haddows Close, which would be accessed from the new road into the site.
36. The proposal would also provide an additional eight dwellings at the end of the new access road to serve plots 3-8. It should be noted that these dwellings are a pair of two-bed semi-detached properties, two one-bed flats and two two-bed flats. The Council's maximum parking standards seeks 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling, although members should be aware of the recent changes to PPG13 (Transport) where maximum standards are no longer provided. The site as a whole provides twelve spaces for the eight units, which is in line with the current maximum standard. The scheme also provides the additional space for 20 Haddows Close. There is large local concern about parking provision in the area. However, I consider that the scheme provides adequate parking for the units. The dwellings are also shown to have a store or a shed, which would provide a secure covered area for cycle storage to encourage cycle use.
37. The proposal does remove the existing garages from the area. The occupiers of neighbouring properties note the garages and hardstanding area are regularly used as an overflow area given parking pressures in the vicinity. It is however noted that the garages are not specifically let to occupiers of Haddows Close. The applicant states that of the 21 garages, two are let to residents of Haddows Close, one is let to another Longstanton resident, two are let to occupiers of other villages, whilst the remaining are vacant. Whilst the loss of the hardstanding itself may reduce parking options, I do not consider the loss of this area in itself would cause any serious parking issues in the local vicinity.

Other Matters

38. There was local concern regarding the tenure mix proposed for the development. The proposal seeks all dwellings to be social rented. The Affordable Housing SPD seeks a 70/30 split between social rented and

intermediate housing where possible. Given the funding mechanism at this moment, a flexible approach should be taken to ensure the provision of affordable housing. Should the dwellings all be rented, such tenure type is considered acceptable at this time.

Conclusion

39. While I am satisfied the development is acceptable in principle and the impact upon residential amenity, the street scene and highway safety is acceptable, this does not outweigh the risks caused by flooding and contamination.

Recommendation

Refusal, for the following reasons

1. Plots 3-8 of the application site are located within Flood Zone 3a as defined in the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) that has been submitted with the application is not considered to comply with the requirements set out in Annex E, paragraph E3 of Planning Policy Statement 25 (Development and Flood Risk). The FRA is not therefore a suitable basis for assessment. In particular, the proposed development does not have a safe means of access and/or egress in the event of flooding creating an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of future occupiers, the site is not currently defended to an appropriate standard and no provision is made to compensate for the loss of floodplain. The development would impede the flow and/or reduce storage capacity of water, and is classified as a more vulnerable use in the flood zone. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy NE/11 of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007, which states applications will be judged alongside national policy, and advice within PPS 25 which provides the minimum requirements for FRA's.
2. With regard to the risk of contamination to groundwaters, the applicant is not considered to have supplied adequate information to demonstrate that the risks posed to groundwater can be satisfactorily managed. The proposal is therefore contrary to advice within PPS 23 (Planning and Pollution Control) which notes the key role the planning system plays in determining the location of development which may give rise to pollution directly or indirectly, and in ensuring that other uses and developments are not affected by major existing or potential sources of pollution.
3. A further reason for refusal could be added if the applicant is unwilling to contribute towards open space provision.

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

- **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007**
- **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007**
- **Open Space in New Developments SPD, Affordable Housing SPD, Trees and Development Sites SPD & District Design Guide SPD.**
- **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions**
- **Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations**
- **Planning Ref Files: S/2079/10, S/1010/05/F, S/1411/97/F, and S/1703/94/F**

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