

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

1 August 2012

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

S/0571/12/FL - MELBOURN

Erection of 13 affordable dwellings and community building following demolition of four existing dwellings, police station and outbuildings (garages), High Street for Hundred Houses Society

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 15 June 2012

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Head of Planning is of the view that the application should be presented to Committee for decision.

Members visited this site on Tuesday 3 July 2012

Conservation Area

To be presented to the Committee by Paul Sexton

Site and Proposal

1. Members will recall deferring this application at last month's meeting. Members are asked to refer to the main officer report for last month's meeting however the update report to the July meeting is replaced, being incorporated into the revised update below.
2. Since the July meeting further information has been submitted by the applicant and meetings held with officers, including a site meeting with the Trees and Landscapes Officer. A further updated landscape plan and street elevation plans for both ends of the site have been submitted, replacing previous drawings, along with a further supplementary design statement, and drainage and consultation statement. These are referred to in more detail under Applicant's Representations below

Consultations

3. The following replies have been received to the amended drawings received on 19 June 2012. Any further comments on the additional drawings/information received on 17 July 2012 will be included in a further update report or reported at the meeting.

Conservation Manager

"Heritage Statement

4. This Statement responds to points made by English Heritage which highlight the contribution to the conservation area made by the existing landscaping and spaces between the buildings on the site, and notes the apparent and potential heritage significance of the existing development and that this significance should be properly assessed.
5. The Statement says that the development will have a low density and that views through it to the north will be maintained. The density will be significantly increased, however, from the existing and from that which gives this section of High Street its character. Views through to the north will be very restricted and along one 'channel', particularly when vehicles are parked in certain bays.
6. I do not think that the additional information gives the fuller assessment of heritage significance that English Heritage requested or agree with the conclusion that the existing development has little historic interest.

Supplementary supporting statement and revised drawings

7. Moving the community building back by 1.5 metres will reduce its impact on the conservation area and the setting of 32 High Street.
8. The removal of lean-to bin stores from the three bedroom semi-detached units will reduce their complexity which is welcome. However, this gives a modification to the design rather than the more fundamental re-thinking in response to local character that is needed. The cross plan form, deep plan, and relatively shallow roof pitches remain. The projecting front gables look out of place because of their position and sparse and unwelcoming appearance with small windows.
9. The use of natural slates and plain tiles are welcome. Other materials and finishes, however, can seem to give token or, in the case of vertical cladding, questionable references to local character.
10. While the revisions sent on 19 June make some important improvements to the scheme, I believe that the proposals still fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and will be harmful to the setting of nearby listed buildings."

English Heritage

11. "There are a number of design changes included, and while these are to be welcomed they are of a relatively minor nature, refining the scheme rather than fundamentally changing it. The street elevation is also helpful and illustrates that the gable of Unit 1 (at the east end of the site) will be particularly prominent in the streetscape with the gable exposing the deep-plan nature of the house-type which is in stark contrast to the shallow plan depth of the traditional houses found in the Melbourn Conservation Area. As a result I do not believe the design changes provide the mitigation necessary to reduce the harm to the point at which it might then be considered to be offset by the wider public benefit arising from the provision of a community facility and affordable housing. Such mitigation would probably only be delivered through a reduction in the number of units. However, it will be up to the members of your planning committee to weigh the harm v public benefit for themselves when determining the application."
12. The **Housing Development and Enabling Manager** has submitted updated comments as follows.

13. "The lack of affordable housing continues to be a problem for many villages in South Cambridgeshire. Over the years we have seen the character of many of these villages change, many of which have become populated by commuters and second home owners. Whilst this brings money into the local economy, it also pushes up property prices beyond the means of local people. As a result local people are forced to move away breaking up networks of families and friends.
14. Whilst a small percentage of the housing need can be met on growth sites, it is important not to forget that the people who this authority are statutorily required to assist have a right to express where they would like to live. They have a choice, and if their choice is to live in the village where they have a local connection this authority has a statutory duty to assist in meeting this demand.
15. There are currently 3450 housing applications registered with South Cambs. In relation to Melbourn, of that 463 people have indicated that they would like to live in Melbourn.
16. Icen Homes and Hundred Houses have agreed to allow the initial allocation of these new homes to go to people with a local connection to Melbourn. This will have a very positive influence on the scheme meaning that local people will be able to remain or return to the village where they grew up. The Housing Strategy and Development team are working with Hundreds and Icen to draft a local lettings policy in this regard.
17. This scheme is providing a mixture of affordable rented and shared ownership accommodation, which is (as the figures suggest), much needed in Melbourn. The biggest demand remains for affordable rented in every part of South Cambridgeshire, but with the lack of public subsidy available to help bring affordable schemes forward, almost all schemes now have an element of shared ownership to help cross subsidise the cost of the overall development. I am aware that the parish are very supportive of a mixed tenure scheme and there is sufficient demand for this produce from the evidence that we have.
18. Icen Homes and Hundred Houses have worked hard to ensure that they can also help meet the communities' aspirations by providing a community hub. The Hub was not part of the original plans for the site, but in the spirit of partnership working the Housing Association were happy to help in this case.
19. The Housing Strategy and Development Team are very much in support of this project, not only is it providing new affordable and good quality energy efficient homes, it also goes a little further in providing a community asset that will be available and accessible to all residents who live in the village.
20. The scheme is fully supported by the Housing Strategy and Development Team which has been working with Hundred Houses Society on this project for some time.
21. The **Trees and Landscapes Officer** commented in respect of a report submitted by a Landscape Consultant on behalf of local objectors prior to the last meeting. Since that time the Trees and Landscapes Officer has made further comments on the site, which are referred to under the applicants representations below.
22. "*Beech Hedge with Kay's Close & T24 Maple:* There was in the original submission some ambiguity about the boundary with Kays Close. This has now been addressed in the amended tree report from Hayden's in terms of the crown spread and overhang of T24. This has resulted in a reduction of the amount of crown reduction initially

proposed. T24 was historically on the edge of a ditch which was filled in, this is reflected in the buttress root which is an indication of an anchoring root, the extent of this root is clearly unknown but should be considered in the proposed root pruning.

23. The Beech hedge has been managed as a formal hedge and it has been discussed in a meeting with the applicant that a 1.5-2m strip should be afforded to the hedge allowing a rooting area not to be compacted, in relation to any trees not included in the Arb report the several ash referred to by Ms Dickinson if no larger than T24, T12 or T23 will be protected by the Root Protection Areas of these three trees. Noted on the plan drawing number 2782-D both ground protection during construction and a no dig area are proposed. These are perfectly acceptable compromises in accommodating trees within development, combined with root pruning and the appropriate foundation design for the gable end of unit 13 and the community building.
24. *Silver birch*: The silver birch are a feature of the site located on the frontage however they are mature specimens and as stated in Ms Dickinson's report have a limited life expectancy of 10+ years. There is a discrepancy on the plans of whether T4 & 5 are to be retained. If retention is desirable then as stated details of tree protection and foundation design need to be agreed. However my understanding is that the parish council are looking to manage the green space on the frontage and the footprints may be moved back into the site increasing this space thereby providing the opportunity for replacement future feature trees.
25. T6 Ash, T8 Whitebeam, T10 Ash: These trees are of a nice rounded form at the rear of the site and have all been 'open grown' and by their form and growing conditions have developed broad spreading crowns, trees of such a form are not always suitable for retention within developments due to conflict with the canopy and need to be provided with the appropriate space to negate this. Due to the various constraints of the site, the limit of development line reducing the area available for development space is going to be an issue. This constraint reflects on the removal of T8 & 10. If these trees were retained within the rear gardens of units 12 & 13 they would dominate the gardens and post development pressure for their removal would be significant. The trees do provide an element of screening from 3 Kays Close across into the proposed development. However there may be the opportunity to replacement plant with trees that can be managed for the space, or given the adjacent land being a school playing field outside of this planning application there may be scope for some planting within the corner to provide screening lost by the loss of T6 & 8. The issue raised over light into unit 8 is questionable given that T6 is on the northern aspect of the property. While the tree will have some impact the rear garden(s) are always going to be shaded.
26. *H5 Hedge*: Ms Dickinson states the ash trees as being 'off-site'. While any tree adjacent to a development site that is within an influencing distance (e.g. the Root Protection Area encroaches or canopy overhangs) should be plotted and noted for reasons of protection, any trees off site that are outside the control of the applicant cannot be considered a part of the larger landscaping scheme as they could be removed. It is acknowledged that this adjoining area is a school playing field and therefore unlikely that the trees will just be removed.
27. *Conclusion*: As with any boundary trees/hedges or trees/hedges in the ownership of a third party the law of 'Common Law Right' needs to be acknowledged and considered, this means that any overhang of both canopy and roots can in theory be cut back to the boundary and no further, with or without development pressures. The proposals use accepted Arboricultural practices to reduce the overhang of T24 & 12

while using root pruning, ground protection and no dig to accommodate the roots. However due to the form of T24 careful site investigation to make an assessment of the rooting habits needs to be undertaken due to the anchorage root that has developed due to the tree historically growing on the edge of a ditch.

28. The Silver birch at the front of the site are mature specimens and while they are a significant landscape feature with high amenity trying to retain them may place them in a situation of conflict and post development pressure for extreme works or removal, as suggested consideration of a phased replacement and removal needs to be considered, taking into consideration that this area on the frontage may be increased in size if the footprints are modified.
29. The loss of T8 & 10 does open up a view into the site from the top of Kays Close. However due to their form, the trees will be in direct conflict with a dwelling and the rear garden. It would be unreasonable to retain these trees if the layout of the site stays as currently proposed. Replacement planting, or if possible off site mitigation with the co-operation of the school for planting on the playing field, could be achieved (it is acknowledged that this would clearly not be a part of any decision notice condition as it is outside the planning application).
30. In relation to trees not being plotted, I am unable to comment directly. However industry guidance does request trees off site if influencing a development site to be plotted and RPA's determined, however if the trees are smaller than others in the immediate vicinity that have been plotted their RPA's will probably overlap and therefore any protection afforded will cover those not plotted."

Representations by members of the public

31. The report to the previous meeting, at paragraph 33, should have included The Long House, 2 Meadow Way in the list of properties from which representations had been received. The issues raised in the letter were covered in the report.
32. Additional letters of support have been received from the occupiers of 110, 122 High Street, 87 Beechwood Avenue, 1 Cedar Close, 25 Hale Close, Bespoke Furniture, Saxon Way, 54 High Street, Meldreth (library volunteer) and a company based at Dunsbridge Turnpike, Shepreth on the following grounds:
 - I. Melbourn has a great need for affordable housing
 - II. This is the only realistic way to retain the library
 - III. There is a great need for the hub. It is important to have a central heart to the village, providing library, Parish Council room, meeting rooms, coffee shop, Citizens Advice Bureau and an ATM. A central facility will benefit the community.
 - IV. Existence of modern houses in Kay's Close negates any concerns about the conservation aspects of the proposal
 - V. Benefits to the village clearly outweigh and perceived disadvantages and must take precedent
 - VI. If no community building is provided as part of the scheme it will mean that more houses are included, which will still create more noise and traffic. The site could be developed in a way which does not enhance the community

- VII. Central facility will increase attractiveness of village for businesses and customers, and will strengthen bonds between the business and residential communities in the village.
 - VIII. Small businesses would be able to hire a smart meeting room, when they do not have suitable rooms of their own.
 - IX. The Hub would be used for local job fairs and exhibitions which would have huge benefits for the local business community, which will ultimately benefit the whole population.
 - X. There is already a village owned car park opposite the site, which is ideal.
33. In addition a petition in support of the proposal has been organised. The petition explains states that it is firmly believed that the creation of a Village Hub on the site of the former police station will enhance Melbourn tremendously. It urges the District Council to pass the planning application to build affordable housing plus the Village Hub. At the time of writing the report the petition contained 320 signatures.
34. Prior to the July meeting Members received an electronic representation from County Councillor van de Ven strongly supporting the application, and a representation and accompanying documentation from Strutt and Parker on behalf of objectors to the scheme.
35. A letter has been received from the Acting Principal, Melbourn Village College clarifying its position. It takes the view that developments within the village are a matter for villagers and their representatives. Comments about the development would be limited to hoping that any new neighbours were fully aware that they were backing onto a school playing field and therefore to expect some accompanying noise during term time. Whilst the felling of trees would be a shame they do not belong to the college and are therefore a matter for the community in the wider context. It is conformed that discussions have taken place with the Parish Council about the possibility of drainage running across college land and verbally agreed to support this if the plans are agreed. It is conformed that the college does not currently have facilities equivalent to those proposed and that the existing library building on the college site has been condemned and therefore has a very limited lifespan.
36. Additional letters of objection have been received from households already listed in paragraph 33 of the July report.
37. The occupier of 3 Kay's Close has written further to publication of the committee report. He stresses there are only four police houses on site at present; that his boundary is marked by a virtually 100% deciduous mix of trees and hedges rather than yew as set out in the report; and the section on trees needs to take account of a tree and landscape report prepared on behalf of himself and other residents (see below). This report suggests that officers have given insufficient consideration to the impact of the proposal on trees on the site.
38. The occupier of 57 High Street objects on the grounds of lack of need for more affordable housing in the village. The site should be used to provide a well-designed building to provide community facilities. The facilities provided should not just be another bookable hall and should benefit not just the village, but services for the wider community.

39. Letters have also been received which, whilst recognising the changes made, state that these do not overcome the fundamental objections to the scheme and expressing concern about the accuracy of the previously submitted street elevation and 3D visualisation drawings. One letter points out that the Parish Council has objected to an application to redevelop the car park/garden of the Old Elm Tree public house and the development at 31 The Moor, and that many of its objections would also apply to the Old Police Station site. One letter points out that the village car park is always full between 8.15am to 9.15am and 2.45pm and 3.15pm.

Applicants Representations

40. It was with some disappointment that the applicant noted the circulated report made limited reference to the amendments made following the latest meeting with the planning authority.
41. The applicant valued the opportunity to meet with the development control manager, principal planning officer, trees and landscape officer and conservation manager. This allowed positive discussions to be had with regards to the concerns and comments raised during the consultation period. From this dialogue the proposals were amended to reflect the areas of concern and the following significant changes have been made and submitted:
- Relocation of the Community Building deeper into the site layout, as requested by the planning officers, to maintain a sufficient margin of planting along the High Street.
 - 'Sit-on' Photovoltaic Panels omitted.
 - Proposed roof finish to the Community Building is clay tiles and slates to the dwellings, as requested by EH and the Conservation Manager.
 - The front elevations to the dwellings have been amended with the omission of the bin stores, indicating a simpler frontage, as requested by the planning officers, to reflect the appearance of listed buildings along the High Street.
 - The side elevations/gables of all dwellings have been amended to show painted render to relate more closely with no.32 High Street, as requested by the Conservation Manager.
42. It was agreed that any detailed landscaping proposals should be developed in close liaison with the trees and landscape officer to ensure that suitable species are specified and that any ambiguity over screening of cars and car parking to the dwellings is correctly implemented.
43. Full copies of the above submissions can be viewed on the website as part of the supporting documentation to the application.
44. Since the July meeting a further meeting has been held between officers and the applicant, followed by a site meeting to look at landscaping issues. Further to those discussions the applicant has submitted the following information:
45. An updated proposed landscaping plan which is further annotated to say that existing trees and planting outside the rear development boundary with the Village College, the south west boundary with Kays Close and the north east boundary will remain untouched. It confirms the intention to retain the two Silver birch at the front of the site to the right of the access. It refers to proposed planting to the rear of the site which is to be the subject of further discussion with the Village College. The drawing states that all new trees will be semi-mature 3-4m and all hedging will be of good specimen, and advice will be sought from the Trees and Landscapes Officer. The

existing Beech hedge running along Kay's Close on the development side of the site is to be regenerated in line with discussions with the Trees and Landscapes Officer

46. A drawing showing 'true elevations of the proposed eastern and western ends of the site, showing part of the proposed Community Hub, in relation to the adjacent listed building (32 High Street), and the houses on Plots 1-7 in relation to the bungalow at 16 High Street. In addition the applicant has confirmed that the previously submitted street elevation drawing and 3D visualisation (south west) are not to be considered as part of the supporting information. (These drawings have now been removed from the website).
47. A revised drainage and consultation statement. In respect of drainage it states that there has been an ongoing flooding issue in the High Street, from The Cross to Drury Lane, which has been highlighted by residents in the area and by the Parish Council. The Parish Council believes one solution would be to upgrade the drains in the area, by installing a relief pipe across the old police site. The drain would run from High Street into Melbourn Village College Playing fields, which in turn discharge into the stream at The Moor. Following discussions between the Parish Council, Local Highway Authority, Hundred Houses/Iceni and Melbourn Village College, the Local Highway Authority has agreed they will work with the developers to install a new drain, should the development go ahead.
48. In respect of consultation it is stated that the need for a Community Hub was highlighted in the Melbourn Village Plan of 2010, which had a feedback of 53%. High on the list was a central library, café, information centre and central parish office. To ensure residents understood the proposal for a Community building, on 5 September 2011 the Parish Council took the unprecedented step to consult with the village on the specific question "*Do you think the village would benefit from a Community Centre/Hub*". A consultation letter and form was hand delivered to every household in the village. Checks were made to ensure all houses in the Parish had received the consultation document.
49. The letter explained the history of the development and the reasons behind the project. A description of what the Hub could provide and outline costs were also included. On the reverse of the letter was a voting form and an opportunity to comment on the proposal, as well as commenting on the other activities that the village could benefit from. An identical explanation letter and form was also available on the Parish Council website. Simple security measures were undertaken to ensure there was no duplication of either the printed form or online version.
50. Eighty five per cent of respondents to the Community Hub consultation voiced a desire for the facility that could be met by a suitably designed and equipped Community Building. In the consultation residents asked overwhelmingly for the Hub to provide a café, a place where local information is easily accessible, new premises for the library (which loses its present site in 2013 due to County Council changes at Melbourn Village College), access to the internet, an area where people, young and old alike could meet for a chat and space for local artistic exhibitions to be held.
51. On 21 November 2011, the developers and Melbourn Parish Council also held a Public Consultation, in the Vicarage Close Community rooms, which saw a significant turnout of residents and a very positive and useful feedback for the site and design.

Supplementary Design Statement

Community Building

52. Roof Lantern: English Heritage raised comment over the possibility to 'simplify the ridge-light' to something more akin to a patent glazing system that would follow the pitch of the roof. During the design stage alternatives were considered, however the current configuration provides additional daylight and natural ventilation into the double height space without creating problems with solar gain or complicated high level maintenance regimes.

53. Dormer (Clerks Office). English Heritage referred to this feature as 'fussy' and detracting from the simple agricultural form. Again various studies were undertaken to provide daylight to this office space; windows, rooflight, sun pipe etc. In conclusion, and in discussion with the Parish Council, it is felt that what has been included is the most appropriate and fits the need of the space/occupant. This has also been confirmed by the planning officer, as it is considered that it is sufficiently well hidden to the rear of the building so as not to cause a visual distraction.

Dwellings.

54. As requested by the planning officer, the front elevations of the dwellings have previously been amended with the omission of the bin stores, indicating a simpler frontage. Further improvements have now been made to the fenestration both in terms of proportions and positions, and these are reflected in the recent changes.

Landscaping

55. The following information has been supplied by the Council's Tree Officer following a further site meeting:

56. T004 and T005: Silver Birch to the right of access

These trees can be retained with careful tree protection; the proposed new dwelling has a footprint along the same as existing. The front elevation is as the existing with the gable end coming to the edge of the tarmac path. There is little or no evidence of the tree roots being active under the tarmac and therefore there is no significant reason that the new dwelling will directly conflict with roots. The footprint of the building accommodates the trees due to the recess in the corner. Tree protection will need to be installed and there will be a requirement for some crown reduction to allow for construction however this gable end will need to be constructed from inside the footprint. With care and tree protection in place there is no reason this tree should not be retained.

57. G001: Planting on boundary with 16 High Street

In the rear corner planting will be retained as per Hayden's report, there is a mix of species which can be retained, the conifers and Norway spruce are to be removed. There are two Silver birch trees and unfortunately they are not suitable to be retained within the layout as they will be too close to the buildings and be a nuisance.

58. T006: Ash tree to be retained

The Ash tree to be retained requires dead wooding and will require crown lifting. Due to drainage on the site a service run may be required to pass through the Root Protection Area of this tree, if this occurs then a condition is to be placed on any decision notice that this will be dealt with in detail at the time if it occurs.

59. H005: Rear Hedge with School

To one end of the hedge there is Beech hedging that has clearly not been maintained as part of the hedge, along with some smaller vegetation – these will need to be cut back to allow car parking spaces to be installed – this is not an issue as the trees need to be brought back into management.

60. The Kay's Close end of the hedge there are some Ash saplings which were raised by local residents as not having been plotted – the hedge and these saplings are off site and all identified for retention. The saplings would have a small root protection area and given the no development line on the site the hedge and saplings would be protected.
61. T008 and T010: Ash and Sorbus
These two trees have been identified for removal. The Sorbus is a significant specimen with a broad spreading and low canopy. It is unfortunate that due to the form of the tree with many scaffold branches all emanating from the same point that to reduce and crown lift the tree to accommodate it within the garden of the proposed would leave a poor specimen with on-going maintenance requirements. The Ash is of poor quality with a sparse canopy and much dead wood and once again to achieve retention of this tree within the proposed layout would require significant works to the canopy leaving the tree of a poor form requiring on-going management.
62. Neither specimen are suited to the proposed layout even though they are located within the development area of their canopy's spread into the gardens of the proposed dwellings and would take over the gardens.
63. Beech Hedge adjacent to Kay's Close
The Beech hedge from Kay's Close side has been maintained as a formal clipped hedge. On application site side the hedge has not been maintained in a formal manner and has spread some 1.5 - 2m into the site along with self-set elder, planted ornamental conifers and other planting. I would propose to bring the hedge back into management by reducing it back by 1 – 1.5m sympathetically by hand to a bud. While this will initially leave bear 'twigs' once the hedge comes back into bud burst over a couple of seasons this side of the hedge should flourish and provide a good screen as it does from Kay's Close side.
64. This reducing back of the hedge will allow for a better working space without compromising the hedge through ensuring a 1 – 1.5m space is left. The proposed bin store is within the same footprint area as an existing shed which is covered by this hedge therefore I can see no reason why the bin store cannot be located in this area. Given the light nature of what the structure is to house foundation details need not be intrusive into the rooting area and this can be clarified at a more detailed stage.
65. T001, T002 and T003: Silver birch to the left side of the access
It has generally been accepted that these trees will need to be lost for development. They are mature specimens and their longevity is limited.
66. Given that the Parish Council will be responsible for the frontage of the site proposals for replacement planting have been discussed and there is to be a replacement hedge to the right hand side to replace the section of hedge being lost. To the front of the Community Building there is a requirement for some defensive planting, however there will be replacement trees planted.
66. The potential to plant a small copse off site on Melbourn Village College side is outside this planning application however it would provide a screen in the future and have the potential to significantly obscure the views.

Material Planning Considerations

67. The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application set out and considered in the July report and have not been rehearsed here.

68. Officers are conscious that comments in the July report focus mainly on the proposal as originally submitted, and that comments received in respect of the revised drawings received in the middle of June were not available at the time of writing the report
69. The amendments made to the layout and design of the buildings as highlighted in the applicant's representations above have improved the scheme as a whole and are therefore welcomed. Members will note however that both the Conservation Manager and English Heritage, whilst recognising that the changes made are to the benefit of the scheme, are of the view that these do not address their fundamental concerns about the impact of the scheme.
70. The further clarification of proposed landscaping is welcomed and it appears as though it could be possible to retain the two existing Silver birch to the right of the access. Any additional planting that can be secured in the grounds of the Village College to further soften the impact of the development is to be welcomed, although that land is not within the control of the applicant and therefore that area of possible new planting does not form part of this application.
71. Officers recognise that there are existing drainage problems along High Street, and if the development of this site can be utilised to provide a possible solution to these existing problems it is to be welcomed, although these proposals are not a formal part of the application.
72. The applicant's agent refers to the latest revisions containing further improvements to the fenestration of the proposed dwellings, although the plans appear to contain some discrepancies between elevations and floor plans and this will be clarified in the update report. Whilst any further improvements to the appearance of the proposed dwellings is to be welcomed it does not however address the officers concerns about the overall impact of the scheme.
73. Officers are of the view that the recently submitted drawings showing a 'street elevation' at either end of the site are representative in terms of the relative heights of the respective properties shown. The previously submitted full street elevation and 3d visualisation looking south west along High Street no longer form part of the application.
74. Members will note the additional letters of support that have been received and the petition in support that is currently being raised, Officers will update any further information on the number of signatures obtained.
75. Any comments on the recently received additional information and drawings will be reported at the meeting.
76. As stated in the original report, a balance needs to be struck between the perceived harm to heritage assets and the community benefits of the proposal.
77. While officers remain keen to support proposals that deliver such benefits, the view remains somewhat reluctantly that the harm arising from the scheme as amended is still sufficient to outweigh the public benefits it would deliver.

Recommendation

78. That the application is refused for the following reason:

1. The site in its current form, with a mixture of buildings in a low density setting, with landscaping and open grassed areas either side of the access road, enhances the character and appearance of this part of Melbourn Conservation Area, and forms part of the setting of adjacent Grade II listed buildings at 32 High Street, The Longhouse, 2 Meadow View, and Lordship Farm.

The redevelopment of the site by the number of buildings proposed will result in an increased density of development on the site, bringing development closer to the High Street frontage, leading to the loss of trees and open spaces within the site, and a cramped form of development, which in respect of the housing element, will be dominated by the car parking areas at the front of dwellings. As a result the development will neither preserve nor enhance the existing character of the Melbourn Conservation Area, and will detract from the setting of adjacent listed buildings, contrary to the aims of Policies CH/4 and CH/5 of the adopted Local Development Plan Policies 2007 and advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Local Planning Authority recognises that the harm identified above needs to be balanced against the public benefits which will accrue from the provision of 13 affordable houses and a community building for the village, however in this case the Local Planning Authority is of the view that these benefits do not outweigh the harm and that the application should be refused.

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)
- Planning File Ref: S/0571/12/FL

Case Officer: Paul Sexton – Principal Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713255