

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

A. Update to the report

Agenda report paragraph number 32 - Representations by members of the public

A further letter of support has been received from the occupier of 3 Pryor's Orchard referring to issues already outlined in support of the application in the main report.

Agenda report paragraph number 33 - Representations by members of the public

The number of signatures on the petition in support of the application is now 475.

Agenda report paragraph number 39 – Representations by members of the public

In response to consultation on the amended details received on 17 July 2012 further letters have been received from the occupiers of Nos.1, 2 and 3 Kays Close, Lordship Farm, 16 and 57 High Street. The following additional comments have been received. Concerns previously reported in the main report have not been rehearsed in the update report.

Amendments are minor and do not address main objections. A number of dubious red herrings have been introduced, such as disposal of flood water onto the sports field (a full independent technical report is required).

A deliberately planned open green space in the centre of the village will be exchanged with a densely built urban landscape. This space is unique and should be preserved as an amenity for future benefit of all.

The ownership of the hedge with Kays Close is ignored. It is not an arbitrary line and belongs to Kays Close. The amended site boundaries are not correct and should be properly established. They are clearly shown on the 1952 conveyance plan.

There are at least two clusters of trees shown on both the site location plan and the landscape plan which are shown on the tree survey impact assessment (G001 and T004, T005) as to be removed. The documents regarding trees and planting are not consistent and are misleading, with fictitious trees being shown.

The proposed site plan now has the wording “Existing Trees and Planting outside development boundaries will remain untouched” along the SW, NW and NE boundaries. Does this mean that all roots inside the development boundaries of these trees and planting will be protected and remain untouched? If not the proposed intent is unacceptable

Trees shown on the street view are out of scale and incorrect

There is no indication as to what the proposed barrier between the site and Kays Close and between the site and the Playing Fields will be. The covenants of the 1952 conveyance state that these boundaries should be fenced off with “chain link fencing” and not any kind of other fencing.

The new landscaping plan shows a strip of what would quickly become weeds along the centre of each parking space – showing what little meaningful space is available for planting.

The plans, 3D visuals and street view do not show any cars or bins and are therefore misleading. Parked cars and bins will have a detrimental impact on the street view.

A 3D visualisation showing the listed Longhouse on the other side of High Street is not provided, and the impact on this building is dismissed in the applicant’s Supplementary Supporting Statement, with incorrect and misleading comment about the relationship of the Community Building to the Longhouse.

No plan is provided showing the proposed plan superimposed on the existing site and location plan, which is misleading as it makes it more difficult to appreciate the huge increase in buildings and tarmac. The built area would be around 70% of the total area, with only around 8% of the total area not built on being visible from High Street, whereas the existing is only around 18%, with around 74% of open green space visible from High Street.

It seems that a short-term view has been taken by some concerned with promoting the interests of those awaiting housing that this provision is now an overriding concern that should suppress all other concern, including preserving conservation areas. The Police Houses site is now a key case that will set a precedent. If this Conservation Area is severely damaged in the manner proposed, what of the other Conservation Areas in South Cambs.

The Drainage and Consultation Statement is vague and gives no assurance to residents of Melbourn that the development of the site and the proposed new drain through the site, if it were to happen, will be done in such a way so as not to make the once in 5-10 years flooding problem worse, and result in water entering adjacent gardens, which are at different levels to the site itself. There seems to be little detailed knowledge from the applicant’s point of view whether substantial sealing the site with tarmac and concrete will increase Melbourn’s intermittent flooding problem, and whether the consultations with the College would result in a solution. The existing drainage patterns for the area are being overlooked. Assurance is sought that floodwater problems will not arise as a result of the proposed drainage for the site.

One letter states that the drainage section of the latest submission (in so far as it relates to the possible new drain from High Street), should be put to one side in

terms of it being a possible influence over the planning decision. The drainage needs to be considered by the technical experts.

It is noted, following previous comments, that the sheds have been placed away from the inside of the hedge in Kays Close.

The occupier of Lordship Farm suggests a preference that this site is used for affordable housing only and that the Parish Council look elsewhere in the village for its Hub and perhaps be less ambitious.

There are a number of affordable homes already in the pipeline for Melbourn which should be taken into consideration when judging whether the need for affordable housing outweighs the need to preserve the conservation area, and the need for centrally placed community facility to support them and the wider community.

The Village Plan of 2010 stated that 59% of villagers did not want any further infill housing, 9.75% of potential voters consulted responded with 305 individuals voting for the project and 57 against. The Hub project therefore went forward based on approximately 8% of villagers wishes, and the correct information is not that 83% of the people of Melbourn want a village hub, but that 83% of 8% of the village want a hub. The information in the application is therefore highly inaccurate and deliberately misleading.

The occupier of 3 Kays Close states that he supports the Community Hub and accepts that there could be some housing on the site but that his concerns are the unacceptable density and poor design of the scheme, impact on the conservation area and complete loss of the last green and open-fronted space on Melbourn's High Street.

Officer Comment

The further concerns raised about the site boundaries and trees have been passed to the applicant's agent for further comment/clarification.

Officers pointed out in the main report that the proposals for a new drain through the site do not form part of this application, but would support the view that these should be the subject of a full technical appraisal. A full surface water drainage scheme for the site would be required if development were to be permitted.

The officer recommendation remains as per the main report.

Additional Background Papers: the following background papers (additional to those referred to in the agenda report) were used in the preparation of this update:
None

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