

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

9 January 2013

**AUTHOR/S:** Planning and New Communities Director

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### **S/2133/12/FL - LINTON**

**Erection of 4 one-bedroom houses following the demolition of a block of 10 garages  
at land between 76 and 92 Chalklands  
for South Cambridgeshire District Council**

**Recommendation: Delegated Powers to Approve**

**Date for Determination: 01 December 2012**

**The application has been referred to the Planning Committee as the application is made by South Cambridgeshire District Council for land in its ownership.**

**Committee Members will visit the site on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013.**

**To be presented to the Committee by Dan Smith.**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application site is a block of ten flat roof garages situated parallel to the road on a plot totalling approximately 560m<sup>2</sup>. The site is approximately 32 metres wide on the road frontage and the garage block is located towards the rear of the site with hardstanding in front. Along the rear boundary of the site are trees, shrubs and hedging. The site slopes down to the south side and falls away steeply at the rear towards the public footpath which runs north-south on the line of the Icknield Way. At the south side of the site there is a link path from Chalklands to the public footpath to the rear of the site which includes a stepped portion towards the rear of the site. The neighbouring properties on either side of the site are semi-detached houses. The property opposite the front of the site is also a semi-detached house which has its gable end facing the site. The site lies within the Development Framework of Linton.
2. The proposed development is the erection of four one-bedroom dwellings in the form of two pairs of semi-detached houses, following the demolition of the existing garage block. The houses would be retained by the Council as affordable housing.

### **Policies**

3. **ST/5** Minor Rural Centres  
**DP/1** Sustainable Development  
**DP/2** Design of New Development  
**DP/3** Development Criteria  
**DP/4** Infrastructure and New Developments  
**HG/1** Housing Density  
**HG/2** Housing Mix  
**HG/3** Affordable Housing

**NE/6 Biodiversity**

**NE/15 Noise Pollution**

**SF/10 Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments**

**SF/11 Open Space Standards**

**TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards**

### **Consultations**

4. Parish Council – has recommended approval and has put forward the following suggestions:

- The doors near the bedroom will collide if opened at the same time.
- Internal doors leading to the Hall could be arranged better e.g. the door to the kitchen should open outwards, so as not to block fittings. They could be vertically split doors to save space
- The landing area should be improved for use as a home office. It is likely that these houses will be used for a variety of age groups with variable needs. Working from home is to be encouraged and is an increasingly common style of working. Home office space (desk top and double electric sockets) could be created rather than have cupboards on the landing. Alternatively, windows (suitably obscured) could be added to the area designated for potential lift space. Home office space is probably more suited to these houses than future disabled access (there are other homes in the village better suited to disabled use). Flexibility in use is essential.
- The ancient hedge at the rear of the properties must be retained and replanted with suitable native species. These houses back onto the Icknield Way, and the ancient hedge-line should be retained and restored
- The planting scheme should be referred to the SCDC tree officer, as there have been recent instances of the wrong species having been planted by SCDC Housing Dept, which have had to be removed.
- Due to the loss of one public footpath, the alternative path adjacent to 90 Chalklands must be upgraded. The access from Rivey Lane is currently an informal earth bank leading to a tarmac footpath. This access must be upgraded to enable access for pedestrians, bicycles, buggies and wheelchairs – all of whom currently use this rather unsafe informal access.
- All roads should be kept clear of mud, during construction. Tyres of construction vehicles should be washed before exiting the site (to avoid a repeat of the current problems in relation to three sites on Back Road, Linton).

Council Building Control Inspector – has no objection to the proposed development.

Council Housing Development Officer – supports the proposed development noting that there are currently 3,275 applicants on the housing needs register and that the scheme will provide much needed single persons accommodation for which there is a high demand across the district.

Council Ecology Officer – has no particular concern regarding the principle of the development subject to the provision of nest boxes and the prevention of any removal of vegetation during the bird breeding season. He does however, have

concerns regarding the wholesale removal of planting to the rear of the site adjacent to the public footpath.

Council Scientific Officer – does not object to the proposed development but requests a condition requiring the investigation and remediation of any contamination on site.

Council Trees Officer – does not object to the removal of trees identified in the submitted arboricultural report and requests that tree protection is installed as per the report.

Local Highways Authority – has not objected to the proposed development but has raised concern regarding the width of the crossovers and the length of the dropped kerbs. It has requested that those crossovers be minimised in width and that the kerbs be raised where not adjacent to the crossovers. It has also expressed concern regarding the fact that the drive lengths are not equal multiples of 5 metres, which it is concerned will result in irregular parking which may lead to vehicles overhanging the footway. It has asked for the drive lengths to be shortened to multiples of 5 metres and has also requested conditions relating to visibility splays, drainage, hardsurfacing and the provision of a Traffic Management Plan. The LHA also notes the potential for increased demand for parking due to the loss of the garages and requests information as to how this would be mitigated. (This information has been provided in the application documents). It also notes the position of the existing lighting column and that this will need to be relocated at the cost of the applicant.

County Archaeology Team – notes that the site is within an area of high archaeological potential and that it is considered likely that important archaeological remains survive on the site and that these would be severely damaged or destroyed by the proposed development. It therefore considers that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation and recommends that this work should be commissioned and undertaken at the expense of the developer. It requests that such a programme of work is secured through the inclusion of a condition on any permission granted.

Council Environmental Health Officer – does not object to the proposed development but requests conditions relating to hours of construction, piled foundations and external lighting.

## **Representations**

5. No representations have been received in respect of the proposed development.

## **Planning Comments**

6. The main planning considerations in this case are the principle, the impact on the streetscene, Parking and Highway safety, Trees, Ecology, Archaeology, the impact on Residential Amenity and the provision for open space and community facilities in Linton.
7. Principle – The proposed dwellings would be located within the Development Framework of Linton and the provision of dwellings is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle. The site is approximately 560m<sup>2</sup> and the four dwellings proposed for the site would result in a density of approximately 70 dwellings per hectare. This is significantly above the required density of 30 dwellings per hectare of policy HG/1 – Housing Density and it is the proposed development therefore complies with the requirements of the density policy.

8. The application proposes four one-bedroom dwellings and this is above the minimum proportion of small (one or two bedroom) dwellings required by policy HG/2 – Housing Mix. The housing mix is considered to comply with that policy and given the identified need for such accommodation in the district, the provision of additional smaller units is welcomed.
9. As the scheme is for four dwellings, policy HG/3 – Affordable Housing is applicable and this requires a minimum of 40% of the housing provided to be affordable. The Council as applicant is however proposing that all of the units be affordable and will enter into a legal agreement prior to the issuing of permission to ensure the units remain in that tenure in perpetuity. The application is therefore considered to comply with the requirements of policy HG/3.
10. Impact on the Streetscene – The proposed dwellings would be two storey semi-detached situated behind short front gardens. The layout is similar to existing properties on either side, particularly to the South. The dwellings are considered to be of a simple, balanced design and would occupy a similar building line to neighbouring properties, albeit that the northern pair would be sited slightly behind the neighbour to the north as a result of the curve in the road. The dwellings would sit comfortably in the existing streetscene with separation from the boundaries of the site and between the two pairs and are considered to be acceptable in terms of their impact on the visual amenity of the area.
11. Parking and highway safety – The proposed development would result in the loss of a block of 10 garages. While not all garages in the block were rented and of those that were not all were used for the parking of cars, the impact on parking provision has nonetheless been considered by the applicant. It notes that the provision of on plot parking for many properties in the area has resulted in a diminished demand for communal garage areas and has offered those tenants still renting garages the option of renting other garages in the locality. It is considered that the loss of the garage block will have a limited impact in terms of parking provision and although it may result in a small amount of additional on street parking, the level of such additional parking would not cause any harm to highway safety or amenity.
12. The Local Highways Authority has requested that the existing dropped kerb be lifted where it is not adjacent to a proposed crossover and this will be the subject of a planning condition. It has also expressed concern regarding the length of drives stating that they are not strict multiples of 5 metres and may therefore encourage irregular parking and overhanging of the pavement. While it is accepted that some of the drives are in excess of 10 metres long, it is not considered that reducing the drive lengths would significantly reduce the likelihood of irregular parking in this instance.
13. The Local Highways Authority has also requested conditions relating to visibility splays, drainage, hardsurfacing and the provision of a Traffic Management Plan, all of which are considered appropriate and would be applied to any permission granted.
14. In terms of the level of parking provided for the proposed dwellings, two parking spaces are provided for each dwelling. This is slightly in excess of the Council's parking standards and is likely to be more than adequate for the needs of the single bedroom dwellings. Given the loss of garaging on site, it is considered that a slight over provision of spaces for the dwellings, which would reduce the need for visitors to the new dwellings to park on the street, is beneficial.
15. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its

impact on parking and highway safety.

16. Trees and Ecology – The proposed demolition of the garages and erection of the dwellings would require the loss of several of the trees at the rear of the site. The Council's Trees Officer is content that such removal is acceptable in accordance with the recommendations of the submitted arboricultural report. The Council's Ecology Officer does however have concerns regarding the potential removal of small trees and shrubs on the bank to the rear of the site adjacent to the public footpath. He suggests some of the existing planting should be retained and supplemented with native hedging. This is considered appropriate and given the location of the planting this would not impact on the ability of the site to be developed. A landscaping condition would be placed on any permission requiring the submission of further details relating to the retention of some of the existing planting and its supplementation with additional native hedging. He also requests the provision of nest boxes to enhance the site's ecological value and this would also be the subject of a condition. On that basis, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on trees and on the ecological interests on site.
17. Archaeology – The County Council's Archaeology Team has identified the site as lying within an area of high archaeological potential and that it is likely that significant archaeological remains survive on the site and would be damaged by the proposed development. It therefore recommends a programme of investigation prior to the commencement of development and on that basis does not object to the application. The request for that investigation to mitigate the harm to the archaeological interest of the site is considered reasonable and a condition will be attached to any permission to ensure such work is undertaken. On that basis the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on archaeology on site.
18. Impact on residential amenity – The proposed pair of dwellings to the South of the site would be located due North of the gable end of No. 92. They would be set off the common boundary by over 3 metres and it is not considered that they would cause any significant loss of light, visual intrusion or overshadowing to that neighbour. The windows in the front of the pair would face the gable end and rear garden of No. 74 opposite which is sited perpendicular to Chalklands. However, it is not considered that they would result in any significant overlooking or loss of privacy to the neighbour, given the separation between the properties and the existing estate location of No.74 which is already obliquely overlooked from other properties.
19. The proposed pair of dwellings to the North of the site would be located behind the rear elevation of the neighbour directly to the North, approximately a metre from the boundary. It is considered that the two storey gable end located to the South of the neighbour would cause some loss of light and overshadowing to the garden and rear windows of the converted garage element of the dwelling closest to the common boundary. The application site is however lower than the neighbour to the north by approximately a metre with a steep bank on the northern boundary of the site. There is also an existing sycamore tree close to the boundary which shades some of the garden at present. On balance, given the lower land levels on the application site, the shading caused by the existing tree and the reasonable width of the garden of the neighbour, it is not considered that the proposed dwelling would cause any significant harm to the residential amenity of the neighbour to the North.
20. Neither of the northern or southern dwellings have first floor windows proposed in their side elevations and a condition would be applied to any permission to ensure this remained the case, given the overlooking which could result to neighbouring

properties were windows to be inserted into those elevations.

21. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on residential amenity.
22. Open Space and Community Facilities – The proposed development would not provide open space or community facilities on site and would therefore be required to contribute to their provision off site, in order to mitigate the additional burden that the occupants of the four proposed new one-bedroom dwellings would place on such facilities locally. The applicant has agreed to enter into a Section 106 legal agreement to make such contributions. At present the amounts would be as follows: Public open space - £2,975.28; Community facilities - £1,136.32; Waste receptacles - £278 and a Section 106 monitoring fee of £250. The legal agreement would be prepared and entered into prior to the decision being issued.
23. Other matters – The Parish Council has commented on several matters relating to the internal design of the dwellings. While the detailed internal design of the houses may be able to be improved to suit some end-users, it is considered to be acceptable in planning terms as it stands. The Parish Council's comments have therefore been passed on to the Council's Housing Development Manager for her to address as she feels necessary.
24. The Parish Council also raises the question of the possible upgrade of an access link to the public footpath in light of the closure of the link which currently runs across the south side of the site. Negotiations with the Council's Housing Section on the possibility of such works are currently on-going and a verbal update will be provided to Committee on this matter.

### **Recommendation**

25. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is recommended that the application be granted Planning Permission, subject to a S106 Agreement and conditions relating to:
  1. Timescale for implementation
  2. Approved Plans
  3. Programme of archaeological investigation
  4. Investigation and remediation of contamination
  5. Materials
  6. Hard and soft landscaping
  7. Restriction on windows in side elevations
  8. Tree Protection during construction
  9. Boundary treatments
  10. Provision of nest boxes
  11. Provision and retention of parking areas
  12. Works to kerbs and crossovers
  13. Drainage of parking area
  14. Provision of visibility splays
  15. Provision of Traffic Management Plan
  16. Wheel washing of construction vehicles
  17. Hours of demolition and construction
  18. External lighting scheme including moving of existing lamp-post
  19. Pre-development checks during bird breeding season

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

- **Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007**
- **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007**
- **Planning File ref: S/2133/12/FL**

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