

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

27 February 2015

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

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<b>Application Number:</b>	S/1344/14/FL
<b>Parish(es):</b>	Great Eversden
<b>Proposal:</b>	Proposed development of 10 affordable dwellings
<b>Site address:</b>	Site known as OSP 148, Church Street, Great Eversden
<b>Applicant(s):</b>	Accent Nene Ltd
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Refuse
<b>Key material considerations:</b>	Principle of development/Green Belt; Landscape character; Heritage Assets; Highway Safety; Ecology; Archaeology; and Other considerations
<b>Committee Site Visit:</b>	Yes
<b>Departure Application:</b>	No
<b>Presenting Officer:</b>	Andrew Fillmore
<b>Application brought to Committee because:</b>	The application site is owned by South Cambridgeshire District Council
<b>Date by which decision due:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2015

### Update to Report

### Representations

1. Further comments have been received from the Parish Council relating to 'two parishes one village', along with a response from the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Parish Council to the representations from Cllr Page.

#### Two parishes one village

2. Some who oppose the houses on OS148 now argue that any affordable homes built should be in Little Eversden Parish which may have the greater need. The Parish council make no distinction between the two parishes and believe the suitability and availability of any site is the appropriate criterion.

3. The Eversdens have been closely connected from late Saxon times and are described as a “unit” in Domesday Book in 1088. Parish Records, Vestry records and Annual Village meetings, are recorded from 1852. These were mostly annual but with other occasional meetings if village events demanded. The Parish Council Act of 1949 prompted gatherings in both parishes. Resolutions were proposed that the Parishes should form a Council serving the whole community. This was put to the County Council who suggested four residents from each Parish would suffice. The joint Council was proposed and passed as; “The Eversdens Parish Council”, with five representatives from each Parish. The first Council Meeting was held on 15th October that year and they have been held every six weeks or so thereafter.
4. In the thirty years I have been a Parish Councillor I cannot ever recall this ‘separateness’ being mentioned or discussed for any other issue. At present one Councillor lives in one Parish but stood to “represent” the other. This has been common over the years. When I and my colleagues debate and vote we do so corporately for THE EVERSDENS. We have one set of accounts, prepare the budget and set our precept as one.
5. This joint community is reflected in where we live. A few moments thought brings to mind 9 families, who in their lives have swapped homes between Parishes. This has been particularly prevalent when families occupy social housing as their needs change and houses become available.
6. The Eversdens Parish Council owns the Village Hall, the Allotments and a central Recreation Ground with Sports Pavilion and Play Area. We have a Table Tennis Club, an Eight O’clock Club, The Eversden Players, a monthly coffee morning, the Café Creative for families, one Toddler group and so on.
7. Our two Churches are supported by joint fundraising; one Church fete. We hold one Christmas Fair fundraising for our facilities. We have one requirement for affordable housing. This attempt to split our community is artificial, and unwelcome.

Response to representations from Cllr Page from the chair and vice chair of the Parish Council

8. *There are also indications that various meetings took place at which no minutes or notes appeared, for example 17/9/2013, and there were numerous meetings between the Parish council Chairman, the developers and SC staff which by passed me completely and were not reported to me.*
9. Neither the Chairman or other Parish Council members attended, we can recall no other meetings. On 8th July the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the late John White (who was the Parish councillor dealing with OSP148 on behalf of the PC) did meet with Schuyler Newstead at SCDC offices to discuss the way forward given the impending withdrawal by SCDC of the original planning consent. At this time on 5th July there was an email exchange between Councillor Robin Page and John White which Robin will no doubt have.
10. *Astonishingly in emails the present Chairman Mr Paul Tebbit refers to opponents of the plan to build on OSP148 as Nimbys.*
11. The email shows no lack of respect for those that are against the proposal. It was

sent by the Chairman to Mark Deas thanking him for his attendance at our Parish Council meeting the previous evening, and asking questions that had been raised. Dictionary definition of Nimby; "a person who objects to the siting of developments in their neighbourhood." Whilst rather a shorthand description in the context of the email it infers no lack of respect.

12. *It should be also said that in my view Mr Tebbit actually owns a brown field site where it is highly likely that planning permission for social/affordable housing could be obtained.*
13. Only Councillor Page has been repeatedly suggesting this site. It is a working farm and is not available.
14. *As an open space between the two villages it is also important and it is thought likely that there are important historical aspects that need to be properly explored.*
15. The site is not between the two villages but within Great Eversden. There are three other fields between the villages. No one has yet mentioned the possibility of "important historical aspects".
16. *But yet a document produced for some residents by Bidwells demonstrated quite clearly that other sites could have been considered.*
17. The "consortium" against OSP148 did apparently in Autumn 2013 identify further sites through a survey by Bidwells Land Agents. This information has not been shared with the Parish Council to date.
18. *Interestingly my Freedom of Information revealed that the Council had already received an offer of £50,000 for the site – this offer was apparently refused by the legal officer, Gary Duthie without appearing to refer it to the Planning Committee (email from Gary Duthie to staff 17.6.13) and without reporting it to me as the local member.*
19. The application for OSP148 had already been approved by the Planning Committee in February 2012.
20. *It is interesting to note that objectors to OSP148 carried out a survey. They collected 53 signatures on Great Eversden against the development representing 31 households.*
21. The survey mentioned was carried out in 2006 by 'doorstepping'. The PC carried out an anonymous survey in both villages in the same year and found at that time there were 32 Households in favour and 15 against the development of OSP148.
22. Mr Page does not mention the very detailed survey by Cambridgeshire ACRE conducted in January 2014 which confirms a need for 12 affordable houses and finds considerable support for them to be on OSP148, although were not asked to name particular locations.
23. *the hedge along the roadside of the plot should have been declared "important countryside frontage"*
24. The site report notes that the hedge is diseased (elm suckers which grow up and die. A newly planted and well maintained hedge established after the development along with the Orchard and landscaping will be welcome. The proposed scheme

includes a Community Orchard, a children's play area and a new footpath linking to the Community Village Hall. Importantly this will allow public access to the view of the church especially now that a section of the roadside hedge was surprisingly cut off last spring.

### Planning considerations

25. On 28 November 2014, the Minister announced changes in the development thresholds for planning obligations. The statement provided that 'Due to the disproportionate burden of developer contributions on small scale developers, for sites of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of 1000 square metres, affordable housing and tariff style contributions should not be sought.' These changes were further explained in updates to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
26. The updated PPG goes on to advise: '**The restrictions on seeking planning obligations contributions do not apply to development on Rural Exception Sites**'. As such, should the committee resolve to approve this application, it is officer recommendation that this be subject to the completion of a S106 agreement securing the councils standard contributions (as per table below) towards community facilities, public open space and waste receptacles (£69.50 per dwelling) along with appropriate monitoring fee.

Number of bedrooms	Community facilities	Public open space*
1	£284.08	£625.73
2	£371.00	£817.18
3	£513.04	£1130.04
4+	£703.84	£1550.31

\* Figures take into account of onsite open space including Local Area of Play

### Recommendation

27. The updates to the Planning Practice Guidance relate solely to the issue of securing financial contributions and do not alter the officer recommendation, which is that the development is inappropriate for the reasons set out in the main report.

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