

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee    2<sup>nd</sup> November 2005  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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### **S/1651/05/RM - Impington 6 Flats (Affordable Housing) Land Parcel A1 Arbury Camp, Kings Hedges Road for Willmott Dixon Housing**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for Determination: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2005**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. Arbury Camp is situated south of the A14, north of the Kings Hedges Road and between the B1049 Histon Road to the west and the former St Ives railway line to the east. The application site is to the western end of Arbury Camp and will front Kings Hedges Road, separated by a gap reserved for the proposed Guided Bus route.
2. This reserved matters application received on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2005 seeks approval for the first 6 flats (affordable housing, key worker shared ownership) of the proposed total 900 houses (270 affordable). Siting, design, means of access and landscaping form part of the application.
3. 6 No flats are proposed in two linked contemporary style three storey blocks containing 3 No 2 bed flats and 3 No 1 bed flats. Two mono pitched roofs will cover the development set at 90 degrees to each other. 6 car parking spaces and communal gardens are proposed. Access will be via roadway No 4 which will follow a semi circle serving the proposed primary school.
4. The block of flats will form the western most point of the proposed housing and will be on a highly visible site at the front of the development. The site area is 880m<sup>2</sup> and the density equates to 73 dwellings to the hectare.

#### **Planning History**

5. Outline planning consent was granted 14<sup>th</sup> June 2005 following the signing of a Section 106 Agreement that covered the full range matters including education, transport, affordable housing, sustainability, community facilities, public open space and design guidance. The affordable housing is to be provided on 13 sites spread across the site with ownership transferred to the approved RLS consortium.
6. Full planning consent was granted 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005 for strategic infrastructure comprising spine roads and footways, cycleways, surface water drainage, foul water drainage and strategic services.
7. An application for a further 25 affordable houses on adjacent site, Area A3, has received and remains the subject of consultation and future determination.

#### **Planning Policy**

8. The development of the Cambridge Northern Fringe (CNF west) is the first of a number of major developments on the edge of Cambridge. The site was allocated for mixed use development in the 2004 Local Plan.
9. Structure Plan 2003 Policy P1/3 requires a high standard of design for all new developments, provides a sense of place which creates distinctive sky lines, focal points and landmarks, includes variety and surprise within a unified design.
10. Gallaghers have prepared a Design Guide which shows the site for a 3/4 storey housing, and it is also identified as a key building. The Design Guide is an evolving document but has the broad support of officers and has been reported to Members' via the Bulletin in June 2005.

### **Consultations**

11. **Impington Parish Council** recommends refusal.
12. This is a key building and the Parish Council would expect the Design Guide to be followed. The Council would ask whether all 900 dwellings are likely to be put forward for consultation in such small numbers (6 flats this time).

### *Recommendation based on:*

- a) Difficult to see in context of site
- b) Drainage not specified. Parish Council would need to know what is to be supplied
- c) Concern over services vehicles and parking for these
- d) Living area/bed windows facing and guided bus, to run every 3 minutes at peak travel times (detail of double glazing, or appropriate noise prevention measures required)
- e) Some colours specified and roofing materials (should be "natural") were not per the Design Guide.
13. **The Local Highway Authority** has raised only one issue in relation to the required visibility splay for the access. An amended layout to accurately reflect the approved infrastructure plan is requested.
14. **The Landscape Design Officer** has raised a number of detailed questions. Is there to be a "railings type" for Arbury. Is there only one access through the car park, no separate pedestrian access. Additional trees should be proposed. With the access point will visibility splay requirements affect street trees?
15. **The Arts Officer** has commented, as a key building within the development there are opportunities for the incorporation of public art. The developer should consult the document "Arbury Park - Public Art and its role in the new community" and consult the appointed lead artist.
16. **The Ecology Officer** has objected on two grounds. The Design Guide for this whole development has not yet been completed. This is what we judge it against. No biodiversity gain is provided by the application. Thus it does not meet the key principles of PPS9.
17. **Cambridge City Council** has no significant comments to make. The location of the blocks and size of the units are considered to be acceptable.
18. The car parking provision indicated is slightly less than the City Council's standards would normally require but is considered to be satisfactory in this context. However, it

should be noted that the City Council's cycle parking standards require the provision of two secure cycle parking spaces for dwellings with two or more bedrooms.

19. You are advised that, normally, the City Council would require lifts in blocks of affordable housing of more than two storeys in height. However, further to discussions between officers at Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the RSLs (Registered Social Landlords ie housing associations) it has been agreed that for shared ownership blocks, such as this one, no lifts would be provided. (Nevertheless, lifts should be provided for blocks of social rented housing and near market rent.)
20. The views of the shared ownership purchasers should be monitored on the impact of the lack of lifts, once they have been living in the units for 6-12 months.
21. Ideally, it would be desirable that the flats should have reasonable-sized, useable balconies. As this scheme has been under way for some time and these are shared ownership units, it is accepted that it may be difficult to insist on these. However, it is considered it is important that good-sized balconies are incorporated on future blocks, particularly for social rented units. City Council officers will be having further discussions with the RSLs on this subject.
22. **The Police Architectural Liaison Officer** has requested revision to the boundary fencing treatment.
23. If the railings between the communal garden and the easement are to remain at 1200mm then the hedge running along the southern boundary should be augmented by a weldmesh fence (1.8m min). The railings should also continue beyond the east elevation of the 2 bed block to link up with the perimeter fence running parallel with Road 5.
24. If public access to the easement area is not suitably controlled the gate to the communal garden should be removed.
25. The parking court and pedestrian access should be provided with column mounted white down-lighters while care must be taken that planting neither impedes opportunities for natural surveillance nor provides potential hiding places. Planting associated with parking areas should be of low growing thorny species.
26. To reduce opportunities for theft by bogus officials utility metres should be located outside the dwellings and, where possible, in multi occupancy developments should be on the ground floor between access controlled doors so that access can be restricted to the meters.
27. **The comments of the Environmental Health Officer** are awaited

#### **Representations**

28. None received

#### **Planning Comments - key Issues**

29. The principle of residential development on the site has already been established by the granting of the outline permission.

30. The gross density is 73 dwellings to the hectare which accords with the Design Guide which seeks in this area a mid to high density (60-90 d/h) of mixed town houses and flats. The proposed mix is for 1 and 2 bedroom units which is welcomed as the development is intended to produce a higher proportion of smaller dwellings. The Design Code for this plot which accompanies the Design Guide seeks a key building and a height of 3/ 4 storeys. The height is therefore acceptable. With regards to whether or not this is a key building design this is a debatable point bearing in mind the application is the first and in isolation from its neighbours. I agree with the Parish Council it is difficult to judge such small plots without the physical context but the road pattern has been established (planning consent May 2005) and the Design Guide sets the context. The provider of this affordable housing had intended to submit this application together with the adjoining plot A3 (a further 25 dwellings) but separated the applications possibly because the draft proposal for Area A3 includes two storey where the Design Guide seeks three storey, and is therefore more controversial.
31. Nevertheless a single perspective drawing is available to show the proposed context. Clearly if a contemporary design as currently proposed predominates then the application for A1 may not have the distinctiveness sought for a “key building”. The idea is to create an identifiable point to assist legibility and character for future occupiers and visitors. The correct attention to detail, which is likely to require changes to the proposed building materials, boundary fences, landscaping and public art should achieve this.
32. Further discussions with the applicant will be necessary to ensure appropriate consideration is given to energy saving methods of construction and appropriate energy/ECO Humos standards are achievable.
33. The car parking proposed is appropriate for small units on this highly accessible site. If the Guided Bus gets the go ahead (expected November) then its accessibility will be further improved. I am seeking further cycle parking in accordance with the standard adopted by the City Council. I am also seeking appropriate measures to encourage biodiversity gain.
34. It is not considered necessary to add balconies on this scheme, as a significant garden space has been provided.

### **Recommendation**

35. Subject to the receipt of an amended plan in response to the comments of the Local Highway Authority revising the detail of the access and visibility splays, **approve** reserved matters (siting and design of building, layout of site and access detail) pursuant to outline permission S/2379/01/O. With the agreement of the applicant detailed landscaping is to be subject to a further condition.

### **Additional conditions**

1. SC5a - Details of materials for external walls and roofs and surface treatment. RC5a
2. SC51 landscaping RC51.
3. SC52 Implementation of landscaping RC52.
4. SC60 Details of boundary treatment (to include details of all fencing). RC60
5. Surface water drainage details.

6. Bio diversity gain.
7. Public art.
8. Parking and cycle parking.
9. Lighting scheme.

#### **Reason for Approval**

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:

**Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**

P1/3 -Sustainable Design in Built Development, P5/3 - Density, P5/4 - Meeting locally identified housing needs

**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**

HG2 - 900 dwellings Cambridge Northern Fringe West

HG12 - Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings within Frameworks

HG22 - Energy Conservation

CNF1 - CNF West (Arbury Camp)

2. The development is not considered to be sufficiently detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise: appearance and relationship to proposed adjoining development; drainage; parking/cycle/service provision; boundary treatment

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning file Ref. S/1651/05/RM

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