

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Development and Conservation Control Committee held on
Wednesday, 2 March 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr JPR Orme – Chairman
Councillor NIC Wright – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	RE Barrett
	JD Batchelor	RF Bryant
	Mrs PS Corney	SM Edwards
	Mrs A Elsby	R Hall
	Mrs EM Heazell	Mrs CA Hunt
	SGM Kindersley	RB Martlew
	MJ Mason	DH Morgan
	Mrs JA Muncey	Mrs CAED Murfitt
	CR Nightingale	EJ Pateman
	JA Quinlan	Mrs DP Roberts
	NJ Scarr	Mrs DSK Spink MBE
	JH Stewart	RJ Turner
	Dr JR Williamson	

Councillors Dr SA Harangozo and Dr SEK van de Ven were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs J Dixon, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs JM Healey, HC Hurrell, A Riley, JF Williams, TJ Wotherspoon and SS Ziaian-Gillan.

1. PLANNING FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES

The Committee considered a report seeking its views on the proposed response to the consultation document entitled *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites* from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) before the Cabinet finalises the Council's response at its meeting on 10th March 2005.

In paragraph 6.2 of the report, the word "sites" in the fifth line should have been "pitches". In paragraph 9.5 of the report, the word "not" between the words "enhanced by" and "allowing..." in the third line should have been omitted.

Members and officers discussed the following points:

- (a) There was an urgent need for greater partnership working. For example, Utility providers should be encouraged to notify South Cambridgeshire District Council when requested to connect services in areas not identified for lawful development. The Deputy Director of Development Services agreed that reference to this should be made in the Council's response, and undertook to investigate a methodology.
- (b) District Councils' responsibilities in relation to taking action against unlawful traveller encampments should be funded by central Government. The cost of dealing with an, essentially, national issue should not fall disproportionately on individual local authorities.
- (c) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister must address the issues of lawlessness, and the Human Rights of settled communities. The Police must be seen to be enforcing the law effectively and even-handedly.

- (d) Local Members were welcome to submit responses to the ODPM from a local viewpoint, but were encouraged to attach copies of those submissions to the finalised response from the District Council.
- (e) The District Council should liaise closely with relevant parish councils in order to involve local communities at the earliest possible stage.
- (f) A more precise definition was needed of both the terms "Traveller" and "Showman".
- (g) Density, land use issues and the categorisation of villages in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 should all be issues in establishing a relationship between the number of travellers' pitches in a particular village and the number of settled residents in that village.
- (h) Travellers applying for planning permission in the countryside should have to provide evidence of their status and identity in line with normal planning practice relating to development outside village frameworks.

It was essential that the Council's response should strike the right balance, seeking to reduce the tensions that currently exist between travelling and settled communities. The Council should be proud of its achievements in making provision for travellers within its district, and the ODPM should give it due credit.

The Committee **ENDORSED**, in principle, the draft response to the ODPM's consultation paper, as set out in paragraphs 6 – 10 and Appendix B of the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to amendments relating to:

- (1) the definitions of the terms 'Traveller' and 'Showman'
- (2) partnership working and proportionality
- (3) the need for a national strategy on Travellers' needs and sites
- (4) the need for central government funding
- (5) a database showing provision made by each local authority in the UK

2. **S/0082/05/F - GRAVELEY**

DELEGATED APPROVAL subject to negotiations to resolve design issues relating to the dormer windows and cat-slide roof, and to address the concerns of Cambridgeshire County Council in connection with the adjacent Public Footpath.

3. **S/1964/04/RM - SAWSTON**

APPROVAL of Reserved Matters of siting, design, external appearance and means of access in accordance with application dated 22nd September 2004, as amended by plans date stamped 1st December 2004 and 1st February and 14th February 2005, and in accordance with outline planning permission dated 2nd June 2004, reference S/2392/02/O, for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services and subject to the Conditions referred to therein and to a delay in issuing the Decision Notice until the expiry of three weeks or until the developers and Sawston Parish Council have concluded their negotiations over the extent of the commuted sum on offer for providing the pedestrian crossing, whichever is the sooner.

Councillor SGM Kindersley voted against delaying issue of the Decision Notice.

4. S/2080/04/F - SAWSTON

DELEGATED APPROVAL subject to re-notification in respect of the amended plans received on the 28th February and officers satisfying themselves that the turning heads can be provided without causing serious harm to the amenity of neighbours for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services and subject to the Conditions referred to in the report.

5. S/0076/05/F - TEVERSHAM

REFUSED for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services.

6. S/2316/04/F - SHINGAY-CUM-WENDY

REFUSED for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services.

7. S/0019/05/F - BASSINGBOURN

REFUSED for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services.

8. S/0209/04/F - STEEPLE MORDEN

REFUSED contrary to the recommendation contained in the report from the Director of Development Services. Having visited the site, Members expressed concern with the access and design, and the proposal's conflict with policies HG7 and SE4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

Councillor NJ Scarr did not attend the site visit, was absent at the beginning of the debate and did not vote.

Mr S Travers-Healy from Steeple Morden Parish Council addressed the meeting.

9. S/0134/05/F - WATERBEACH

REFUSED contrary to the recommendation contained in the report from the Director of Development Services. Having visited the site, Members considered that the development would have an adverse and overbearing impact upon neighbouring properties as a result of the proposal's bulk, contrary to Policy HG12 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

10. S/2490/04/F - WATERBEACH

REFUSED for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services.

RESOLVED to take enforcement action on the grounds of both the height and position of the garage.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts voted for approval of the application and against enforcement.

11. S/0042/05/F - THRILOW

DELEGATED REFUSAL in accordance with the amended recommendation contained in the report from the Director of Development Services, for the reason set out therein and subject to clarification of the boundaries.

12. S/0011/05/F - BABRAHAM

DELEGATED APPROVAL subject to the receipt of an amended plan correctly showing the distance between the front of the dwellings and the footway and the proposed on-site parking subsequently omitted and Reason for Approval 1 being revised to read as follows:

Although the development is not in accordance with South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy SE8, it is considered to be acceptable as a departure from the development plan as the development would provide needed smaller units for occupation by employees and/or students working at the adjacent Babraham Institute and, by enabling the occupiers to walk to work, would contribute towards Green Transport objectives.

13. S/2582/04/F - SHEPRETH

DELEGATED APPROVAL for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement ensuring that the affordable dwelling is occupied only by qualifying persons and secured in perpetuity for that purpose, and to the Conditions referred to in the report.

14. S/2517/04/F - MELDRETH

DEFERRED for a site visit.

15. S/2595/04/F - CROXTON

REFUSED contrary to the recommendation contained in the report from the Director of Development Services. Having visited the site, Members expressed concern at the bulk of the extension and adverse impact on the property to the north of the development site, and conflict with Policy HG12 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

16. S/1164/04/F - COMBERTON

DELEGATED APPROVAL for the reasons set out in the report dated 6th October 2004 from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein, deletion of the additional Condition contained in the report dated 2nd March 2005, since this would have resulted in the visibility splays requested by the Local Highways Authority leading to the unnecessary loss of a hedge which makes an important contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area, and removal of Permitted Development Rights.

17. S/2611/04/F - MADINGLEY

Members were minded to **APPROVE** the application, as amended by letter dated 14th February 2005 and plan number F65 03/01 A015 Revision D, for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services and subject to the Conditions referred to therein, to it being advertised as a Departure from the Development Plan, being referred to the Secretary of State and not being called in by him for determination.

18. S/1299/03/F - BOXWORTH

REFUSED contrary to the recommendation contained in the report from the Director of Development Services. Having visited the site, Members considered that the size of the garage and type of materials used conflicted with policies SE5 and EN5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

19. S/2570/04/LB & S/2571/04/F - ICKLETON

APPROVAL of both the planning and listed building applications, as amended by drawings date stamped 7th February 2005, for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services and subject to the Conditions referred to therein. It was reported that the Parish Council had withdrawn its objection to the proposals.

20. S/2554/04/F - LITTLE SHELFORD

APPROVAL for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein.

Councillor CR Nightingale did not take part in proceedings when this application was discussed by Little Shelford Parish Council, although he had been in attendance.

21. S/0559/04/F - GREAT EVERS DEN

DELEGATED APPROVAL for the reason set out in the report from the Director of Development Services subject to confirmation from the Building Control Manager that the proposed conversions can be carried out without requiring major or complete reconstruction, to the receipt of further amended plans addressing the issues of the number of roof lights and extent of the residential curtilage, the prior completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement securing the units as holiday lets, and safeguarding Conditions.

Members noted that the date for determination of this application was 13th May 2004, and not 2005 as stated in the report.

Members received the Appendix to this report as a late item, which had not therefore been in the public domain for the statutory period.

22. S/0651/04/F - GREAT EVERS DEN

REFUSED for the reason set out in the report from the Director of Development Services.

23. APPEALS AGAINST PLANNING DECISIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The Committee **NOTED** the following from the report prepared by the Director of Development Services:

- Decisions notified by the Secretary of State

Councillor SGM Kindersley commented that the results this month (five appeals allowed by the Inspector out of a total of seven) would suggest that some training was needed for members of the Development and Conservation Control Committee.

- Summaries of recent decisions of interest
- Appeals received
- Local Inquiry and Hearing dates scheduled before the next meeting on 6th April 2005

- Appeals withdrawn or postponed
- Advance notification of Local Inquiry and Informal Hearing dates, subject to postponement or cancellation

24. TO CONSIDER MAKING AN ORDER IN GAMLINGAY

The Committee considered a report seeking its authority to make and serve a Tree Preservation Order in respect of land at Little Heath, Gamlingay.

RESOLVED that the Committee authorise officers to make and serve a Tree Preservation Order in respect of trees at Little Heath, Gamlingay and, subject to there being no formal objection, which is not withdrawn and which therefore triggers a site visit, to confirm the Order in due course.

25. TO CONSIDER THE CONFIRMATION OF ORDERS IN FEN DITTON, FOWLMERE AND PAPWORTH EVERARD

The Committee considered a report reviewing Tree Preservation Order nos.09, 10 and 11 of 2004.

RESOLVED that Tree Preservation Orders 09/04/SC at Ermine Street South, Papworth Everard, 10/04/SC at 2 Wrights Close, Fen Ditton and 11/04/SC at the Elms, Lynch Way, Fowlmere be confirmed without modification..

26. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (exempt information as defined in Paragraph 7 of Schedule 12A of the Act).

27. CAMBOURNE TRAILER PARK AND THE EMBARGO

The Head of Legal Services distributed a confidential memorandum from him to Members of the Development and Conservation Control Committee, and a copy of a confidential letter from Solicitors acting for the Cambourne developers to South Cambridgeshire District Council. Members discussed the issues raised.

The Meeting ended at 4.05 p.m.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Development and Conservation Control Committee	2 March 2005
AUTHOR:	Development Services Director	

Response to “Planning For Gypsy And Traveller Sites” consultation paper

Purpose

1. To seek the Committee’s views on the proposed response to the consultation document from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) before it is considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 10 March.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. The need for a fair solution to Traveller Issues in the District is central to the Council’s corporate objective of “Quality Village Life”. It also impacts on the other three objectives: “High Quality, accessible, value for money services”; “a Sustainable Future for South Cambridgeshire”; and “a Better Future through Partnership”.
3. The Council has already set out its case, last May, on the need for changes to planning law, as part of its written evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee on Gypsy and Traveller Sites. This was reflected in the Council’s Policy on Traveller Issues, agreed in July 2004, which sets out its commitment to:
 - a. uphold the rights of all local residents and travellers to live peacefully and safely, with mutual respect for the rights of others;
 - b. lobby for a national approach to traveller issues and planning policy, which takes account of public provision and private ownership of traveller sites, and keeps sites to a reasonable size;
 - c. apply planning policy fairly and firmly in relation to traveller sites;
 - d. engage with travellers and the local community in order to make available appropriate and authorised traveller sites - identifying suitable additional sites, where necessary, and accommodating the service needs of travellers, wherever possible;
 - e. give full consideration to proposed private sites when travellers approach the Council in advance about their proposals;
 - f. safeguard and defend the local environment and local facilities and services from issues flowing from illegal and unplanned travelling encampments/development;
 - g. promote greater community cohesion between the settled and travelling communities.

Background

4. The ODPM published the “Planning For Gypsy And Traveller Sites” consultation paper in December 2004 as part of its plans to revise previous Circular 1/94. A

summary of the consultation paper can be found in Appendix A. The ODPM's consultation deadline is 18 March 2005.

5. The draft response to the consultation paper (see paragraphs 6 – 10 and Appendix B) has been developed by the Strategic Officer Group on Traveller Issues. All Members were invited to contribute their initial views as part of this drafting process. Comments have been received from Councillors Mason, van de Ven and Wotherspoon, as well as from Meldreth Parish Council and Meldreth Residents Association. These have been taken into account in the draft, and there will be further opportunity for views to be added as the response is considered both by this Committee and by the Cabinet.

The Draft Response

6. ***A revision of Circular 1/94 is long overdue and is welcomed.***

- 6.1 Fundamental weaknesses in the current national guidance mean that it has proved to be inadequate at a local and national level in controlling unauthorised developments, particular in the context of significant migratory movements of travellers that have occurred in the last few years. It is largely because of these flaws in planning law that the Council has had to spend in the region of £200,000 in 2004/05 alone on Traveller Issues. This does not take account of the significant costs of any direct enforcement action – possibly hundreds of thousands of pounds - that might be necessary in future if those travellers who are in breach of planning regulations continue to disregard the law.
- 6.2 Changes are also needed to address the fact that this District and a number of others have become a “honey-pot” for traveller incursions in recent years. This Council has addressed responsibly the needs of travellers and gypsies while many others have not. Working in partnership with parish councils, this Council has granted permission for over 300 sites, enabling the local traveller population to gain access to education and health facilities and to integrate with local communities.
- 6.3 Members will not need reminding that travellers and gypsies have a lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and lower academic level of achievement than any other section of society.

7. ***The ODPM consultation paper is a ‘curate’s egg’.***

- 7.1 It is good in the parts that could allow the travellers access to better health and educational opportunities and a clearer assessment of their housing needs. Indeed, it is this Council's experience that, before the influx of Irish Travellers, the local gypsy population had settled down and generally been accepted without significant problems.
- 7.2 In other respects, however, the consultation paper is very disappointing. It represents a missed opportunity to put right the deficiencies of Circular 1/94. by eliminating the significant on-going (and basically unproductive) costs that an increasing number of local authorities are having to bear in relation to Traveller Issues.
- 7.3 The draft guidance is unlikely to reduce the protracted and expensive legal disputes or to restore good community relations. In the context of the

Gershon requirements for year-on-year efficiency savings, this consultation paper is unlikely to promote increased value-for-money and improved effectiveness.

8. The principle problem with the draft guidance is that it does not balance its laudable aims with realistic controls to meet the equally important rights of the settled community to have their communities protected from large, unplanned incursions, which place unacceptable demands on limited local resources.
9. There are five main shortcomings with the ODPM's approach to planning controls.
 - 9.1 ***It places too much reliance on existing enforcement powers, which have proved inadequate.*** There are no other changes, apart from the immediate stop notice and a statement that councils should have 24-hour enforcement cover. We already have 24-hour cover and have served stop notices with immediate effect, yet it has made no difference.
 - 9.2 ***It does not address the 'honey-pot' effect,*** placing more burden on those councils that are doing more than their fair share, and not spreading the load fairly across local government. The need for traveller sites identified in regional spatial strategies runs the risk of being arbitrary and unfair, based on numbers of nationally mobile travellers who claim to be in need of a site, unqualified by any other consideration. Most alarmingly, this means that the draft ODPM guidance is unlikely to prevent what has happened in the past at Cottenham and elsewhere in the district from happening again.
 - 9.3 ***It provides no guidelines on the size of traveller sites.*** This is particularly disappointing, given the overwhelming desire by all parties to avoid concentration beyond a specific number.
 - 9.4 ***It does not recognise important practical constraints and resource implications for councils.*** Identifying specific sites means pre-owning or controlling them or acquiring (control of) them. However, the consultation paper does not properly set out what local authorities can reasonably be expected to do where:
 - the locational criteria, set out in the consultation paper, point to the edge of settlements where the acquisition value is likely to be based on (higher) caravan site value rather than agricultural land value; and
 - councils (like SCDC) have no surplus land of their own available for use as traveller sites.
 - 9.5 ***It still seems weighted against the equally legitimate interests of householders.*** Public confidence in the fairness and consistency of the planning process is not going to be enhanced by not allowing retrospective permission in cases where there has been a disregard of the planning process. In these circumstances, it is difficult to know how councils are to be expected to strengthen community cohesion between travellers and householders when the settled community is aggrieved that their rights and interests seem to count for less.
10. More detailed comments, which will also form part of the Council's response to the ODPM, can be found in Appendix B.

Recommendation

11. Members' comments are invited on the draft response to the ODPM's consultation paper, as set out in paragraphs 6 – 10 and Appendix B. An updated version will then be produced for consideration by the Cabinet on 10 March 2005.

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites*, ODPM consultation paper, December 2004.
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, adopted February 2004.
- SCDC's written evidence to Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry into Gypsy and Traveller Sites from SCDC, May 2004.
- Council Policy on Traveller Issues, SCDC, July 2004.
- SCDC's response to ODPM discussion document *Gypsy Sites and Planning - revision of Circular 1/94*, July 1994.
- *Delivering Efficiency in Local Services*, ODPM, November 2004 and January 2005.

Contact Officer:

G.H.Jones – Deputy Development Services Director. Telephone: (01954) 713151

**SUMMARY OF “PLANNING FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES”
ODPM Consultation Paper, December 2004**

The consultation document can be found on the internet at www.odpm.gov.uk.

Page and paragraph references from the consultation document are shown below in italics.

Introduction (*pages 8 - 9, paragraphs 1 – 10*)

- The Government is committed to ensuring that members of the Gypsy and Traveller communities should have the same access to decent and appropriate accommodation as every other citizen and that there are sufficient sites available to meet their needs.
- A new direction is necessary to ensure that the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers are addressed with the same consideration as is given to the accommodation needs of other sections of the community.

Gypsy and Travellers – a context (*page 9, paragraph 11*)

- Many Gypsy and Travellers wish to find and buy their own sites to develop and manage, but there will remain a requirement for public site provision above the current levels.

Definition (*page 10, paragraphs 12 – 17*)

- Gypsy and Traveller means “a person or persons who have a traditional cultural preference for living in caravans and who either pursue a nomadic habit of life or have pursued such a habit but have ceased travelling, whether permanently or temporarily, because of the education needs of their dependent children, or ill-health, old age or caring responsibilities (whether of themselves, their dependants living with them, or the widows or widowers of such dependants) but does not include members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people, travelling together as such.”

Local Housing Assessments (*pages 10 – 11, paragraphs 18 - 20*)

- Stated to be the key source of information to assess level of provision required, especially for preparing local development documents.
- Must consult with key stakeholders and local communities.
- Under the Housing Act 2004, all local housing assessment needs to take into account the needs of Gypsies and Travellers, including legal sites to station their caravans.
- Have regard to homelessness under part IV of the Housing Act 1996 and obligations under the Race Relations Act 2000 (RRA).
- Allocate sufficient sites in Development Plan Document (DPD) to meet pitch requirements in the RRA can be met.
- Policies to be reviewed regularly to avoid potential for disagreement with settled population over inappropriate location in land use terms or inadequate explanation of proposed development.
- Aim for more certainty when planning applications are determined or appeals considered.

Regional and local strategies – assessing need (*pages 11 – 12, paragraphs 21 - 23*)

- At early stage of preparing Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and DPD, planning authorities will assess accommodation needs with Gypsies and Travellers, representative bodies and local support groups. Gypsies and Travellers to be proactive to ensure their views are taken into account.

- Under the Planning Act 2004, planning authorities have to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, and it needs to set out policy for involving their community. As part of this, communication with Gypsies and Travellers needs to be direct and accessible.
- Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs) need to maintain an up-to-date understanding of the likely needs for Gypsy and Traveller sites in their area to inform the preparation and review of the RSS. A new local needs assessment will be required from the Regional Housing Board so that it will be incorporated into local development documents (LDDs).

Transitional arrangements – before the completion of local housing needs assessments (*page 12, paragraphs 24 - 25*)

- Early data from the local needs assessment will be one element when assessing the required local provision, as well as: a continuous assessment of unauthorised encampments; number and outcomes of planning applications and appeals; levels of occupancy; plot turnover; and waiting lists for local authority sites; status of authorised local sites; and the twice yearly Caravan Count.
- Local authorities will have to show they have considered all this information before any decision to refuse, and to provide it as part of their appeal documentation.

Development Plan Documents - location of sites (*pages 12 – 13, paragraphs 26 - 31*)

- Where an unmet need is identified, DPDs should identify suitable sites and set out fair, reasonable, realistic and effective criteria for suitable site location criteria. The DPD will need to meet current identified need, and as it changes through time.
- If demand cannot be met through identified sites, there should be a reasoned explanation as to why a criteria-based policy is necessary to make adequate provision.
- Criteria-based policies will be needed in a DPD, whether or not there is any current identified need, in order to meet future or unexpected demand. Such policies will be scrutinised to ensure they are fair, reasonable, realistic and effective.
- Sites allocated in the DPD should be either controlled or owned by the local authority or there should be a realistic likelihood that they will come forward.
- If owned by the local authority, they can be disposed of at below market value.
- Local authorities should use the register of unused or under-used land, or land owned by public bodies.

Sites in Rural Areas and the Countryside (*pages 13 – 14, paragraphs 32 - 39*)

- Rural exception policy for sites to be included within the LDD. This will be appropriate where there is a lack of affordable land to meet local Gypsy and Traveller needs that cannot be met by provisions in the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- While new sites within Green Belt continue to be inappropriate development, such development can be accepted where very special circumstances exist, such as out-of-the ordinary educational or health needs.
- Identified land could be taken out of the Green Belt through the plan process to meet need.
- In other areas such as Conservation areas, scheduled monuments, SSSI planning permission for sites can be granted where the objectives of the designation would not be compromised.
- Local landscape designations should not be used in themselves to refuse planning permission.

- On rural sites local authorities need to be realistic about the availability of alternatives to the car, and sites should respect the scale of and not dominate settled communities, nor should they place an undue burden on the local infrastructure.

Mixed planning use (page 14, paragraph 40)

- Sites identified in the DPDs should provide for mixed and residential uses. If not practical, local authorities should allocate separate sites for commercial as well as residential sites.
- Mixed uses are not permitted on rural exception sites that are permitted in perpetuity for affordable housing.

Applications (page 15, paragraphs 41 – 44)

- To encourage private site provision, local authorities should offer advice and practical help with planning procedures. Gypsies and Travellers should consult local authorities before buying land.
- Pre-application discussions are important to resolve problems and avoid misunderstandings. Questions of access, services, conflict with statutory undertakers or agriculture, and significant environmental impact can be resolved.
- Since applications could be received from Gypsies and Travellers without local connections that could not have been reasonably foreseen in their local needs assessment, the LDF should have criteria-based policies against which they can be judged.
- Local authorities should not refuse private applications where there is adequate public provision, alternative provision is available on local authority-owned sites, or the applicant has no local connection.

Sustainability (pages 15 – 16, paragraphs 45 - 47)

- For Gypsy and Traveller sites, sustainability includes: promotion of peaceful and integrated co-existence with the settled community; easier access to GPs and other health services, schools; and a settled base to reduce the needs for long-distance travelling and less environmental damage from unauthorised sites.
- Sites identified by local authorities should have regard to distance from local services.
- Sites should also have regard to the potential for noise and disturbance from traffic and on site commercial activity.

Planning conditions and contributions (page 16, paragraph 48)

- Should be used where necessary.

Enforcement (page 16, paragraphs 49 - 51)

- Planning policies and controls should be respected by all sections of the community, and where breaches occur effective enforcement action should be taken.
- Arrangements need to be in place for out-of-hours emergency cover.
- Other than the new temporary enforcement notices, nothing new is proposed to provide this “effective” enforcement action!!

Appeals (pages 16 – 17, paragraphs 52 - 53)

- Inspectors will need to take account of: existing and planned provision of, and need for sites; accuracy of data used to assess needs; methodology employed in the assessment

and how up-to-date it is, information on pitch availability on public and private sites; personal circumstances; and alternative accommodation options.

- Absence of existing provision may prejudice enforcement action.

Human Rights (*page 17, paragraph 54*)

- European Convention on Human Rights should be an integral part of local authority decision-making, considering whether action is necessary and proportionate. The chosen remedy must have the least interference with the rights in question.
- Facts need to be established before decisions are made (Gypsies and Travellers should co-operate to agree these facts).

Race Relations (*page 17, paragraph 55*)

- The Race Relations Act 1976 prohibits racial discrimination by planning authorities in carrying out their functions. Local authorities also have to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good race relations.
- Local authorities need to assess their functions to identify those that are relevant to race relations and monitor these functions to assess their impact on racial groups. When policies change or new ones made, local authorities should consult on their likely impact.

Monitoring (*pages 17 – 18, paragraph 56*)

- Local authorities should monitor and critically analyse the success rate of applications for Gypsy and Traveller sites and compare them with those for other types of housing and other types of caravan sites, and assess such analysis to inform policy development.
- In order that they can identify any adverse impact on race equality, local planning authorities (LPAs) should monitor Gypsy and Traveller applications.

Financial and manpower implications (*page 18, paragraph 57*)

- None is anticipated.

Annexes

A: Select List of Relevant Organisations (pages 19 – 20)

B: Other relevant guidance and bibliography (page 21)

C: Good practice criteria (pages 22 – 24)

D: Overview of new regional/local planning process (page 25 – 26)

E: Guidance to local authorities in dealing with applications from Gypsies & Travellers (p27)

F: Guidance to Gypsies & Travellers for preparing planning applications (pages 28 – 30)

G: Planning conditions and contributions (page 31)

H: Partial regulatory impact assessment (pages 32 – 41)

South Cambridgeshire District Council

DRAFT RESPONSE (AS AT 23 FEBRUARY 2005)

to ODPM consultation paper on “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Sites”

Page	Para	Comment
7	-	It talks about the reasons for shortage of sites and the inescapable need for creating new ones. The fine particulars of site design are crucial to their success, in terms of integration into the surrounding area. It lays down a number of guidelines that are insensitive to such particulars, and this will only result in lost opportunities. For example, there is inadequate reference to the important role of innovative social housing. The issue of how to assist members of the travelling community who wish to take steps toward settled lifestyles should be better articulated. This may involve existing forms of social housing, or indeed new ones such as permanent group-style housing such as that promoted by the Novas Group and tried successfully in the Republic of Ireland and then in Northern Ireland (and cited in the report of the Select Committee). [SvdV]
8	3	The size of sites matters and should be a material consideration for planning applications and appeals. Large sites have an adverse impact on the local environment and infrastructure (e.g., severe pressures on schools and GP surgeries). The human rights/needs of local households and the indigenous travelling community should not be overlooked. They can feel threatened, frustrated and helpless by unplanned settlements being endorsed via planning appeals”. [Meldreth Parish Council]
8	7	Paragraphs 7 and 22 emphasise the importance of ‘ <i>communication between local authorities and the communities, with particular reference to the Gypsy and Travelling community</i> ’. In both paragraphs, specific directives for communication with the crucial third party – the settled community – are absent. All parties should be included and kept informed at the various stages of planning to ensure the greatest chance of a successful outcome. [SvdV]
9	10	With regard to the last bullet point, there is no mention in the rest of the document about any explicit power given to local authorities that had complied with this circular that would enable them to be more effective in their enforcement. [TW]
10	12	The definition is basically a self-assessment that seems to open up the option of numbers of people who would like to move around the country deciding that they are “travellers”?
10	12-13	It excludes “ <i>travelling show people or circus people</i> ” because “ <i>planning advice relating to travelling show people is given in DoE Circular 22/9.1</i> ” This is a weak explanation, and reflects a failure to bring an up-to-date look at the broad travelling community. Indeed all sectors of the travelling community should be brought under the umbrella of this new circular, which after all is an attempt to redress a number of shortcomings in the wide problem of site provision. Travelling show people face many of the same problems as, and share similar needs to, other sectors of the travelling community. Like Gypsies and other travellers, show people are gradually adopting a more settled lifestyle. [SvdV]

Page	Para	Comment
10	14	The reliability and comparability of caravan counts are questionable, and it is doubtful whether they really provide evidence of need for sites in particular areas. [MM]
10	15-17	The overall approach seems at odds with the treatment of mainstream groups in society. Although planning takes account of mobility issues, surely provision is not so automatic and takes much more account of capacity rather than allowing development in proportion to preferences.
10-11	18-20	Tacking the travellers' needs assessments onto the general needs assessments seems impractical. The methodologies will be quite different. Conventional needs assessments are generally small sample surveys - often postal, which are adequate for the overall population but won't pick up small minorities. In effect, it will be a separate exercise and, if it is carried out at a local authority level, it is likely to happen at different times. As a result, mobile populations could be either double counted or missed. Would it make sense for the regional housing board to do one snapshot exercise itself covering a wide area in order to minimise this problem?
11	20	This paragraph is odd. It starts talking about sites and ends talking about policies - it reads like two ideas that have merged
11-12	21-23	Support for SCDC's existing position that "There needs to be a clear national policy on traveller sites. The Government cannot expect individual councils to cope on their own when faced by a huge influx of travellers in a single locality." [Meldreth PC]
11	23	RHS does not appear in the glossary and is not defined until paragraph 2 of Annex D. [TW]
12-16	-	The "guidance" on site provision is nonsense - with relaxations and exceptions liberally applied to make sure that any inspector will be able to override almost any refusal of permission. [MM]
14	38	Why should it be acceptable for Travellers not to have to bother about availability of means of transport other than private cars for accessing services and facilities when this is a key plank of the ODPM's "Building Sustainable Communities" philosophy? There is considerable resentment in Rampton, for example, that a site in the centre of the village was refused permission, on appeal, for eight houses (three or four to be affordable) but a site for eight caravans on the outskirts of the village was allowed on appeal. [TW]
14	38	Concentration of sites and pitch size of individual sites are of well-known importance to the travelling and settled communities alike. In fact, this is one of the key areas upon which the two communities see eye-to-eye. This paper does not respect the importance of these criteria, and in fact provides contradictory directives. Paragraph 38 states that " <i>sites should respect the scale of and not dominate the nearest settled community serving them.</i> " Similarly, Annex C, number 8, states that sites should ' <i>be of a size to allow integration into the local community.</i> ' Both of these principles are then contradicted in Annex C, number 9, ' <i>Criteria which are unacceptable: "There shall be no more than [x] caravans."</i> Also: " <i>The site, either on its own or in conjunction with other sites in the area does not result in over-concentration.</i> ") [SvdV]

Page	Para	Comment
14	40	Could this guidance on mixed land use lead to a dilution of controls against scrap or reclamation businesses – ignoring the resultant environmental damage to the Green Belt and open countryside. The problem already exists, with local examples of heavy goods vehicles staying overnight loading and unloading tons of metal. PVC insulated cable is burnt on open fires with pollution of the atmosphere. [MM]
15	45	It does not acknowledge the need to control and eliminate criminal activity and the anti-social behaviour of some travellers. The reference to "peaceful and integrated co-existence" is meaningless to existing village residents who have to suffer from lawless behaviour in their streets, shops and pubs. [MM]
17	55	Incompatibility of certain sectors of the travelling community: show people and Irish travellers are socially incompatible and should not be asked to live side-by-side. Leaving show people out of the parameters of this circular means allowing the potential for inadvertently situating them adjacent to people with whom cooperation is unlikely. The Race Relations Act cited in paragraph 55 states that ' <i>authorities [should] seek to promote good race relations.</i> ' Building bridges between communities should be encouraged, but inadvertently putting incompatible groups of people into a common living situation is insensitive and will exacerbate, rather than alleviate, existing problems. [SvdV]
17	56	There can be no possible justification for weighting determination of planning applications for the purpose of seeking some sort of proportionality of refusals to ratio of population of applicants from any ethnic minority. [TW]
23	9	The proposal does not include the recommendation of the Select Committee that sites need to be kept small and proportionate to village communities with a maximum of 18 pitches. This is a recommendation made by MPs, the Gypsy Council and the Travellers' Law Reform. The proposal comments that it does not want to give hard and fast rules on site size, as this is arbitrary. However, open-ended statements, such as " <i>being of a size that enables integration</i> " is equally arbitrary and does not meet the government's objective of creating "certainty" in the planning process. [Meldreth Residents Association, with similar points made by Meldreth PC]
23	9	We agree with the Government's view that "any control over size should be a matter for local planning authorities and made in relation to local need, amenity and environment and that site size could be controlled by planning conditions associated with any planning permission." However, we are concerned that, in our experience, inspectors appointed by ODPM can overrule the local planning authorities in such issues. There needs to be a better balance between the rights of the settled community and the travelling community. [Meldreth Parish Council]
23	9	When it says, " <i>Any maximum should be reached through planning conditions but should be related to circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population size and density</i> ", what does "surrounding" mean. Similarly, when it says " <i>The site, either on its own or in conjunction with other sites in the area does not result in over-concentration.</i> "... <i>This is arbitrary and is not set by reference to local circumstances</i> ", again, define "local". [TW]
26	8	Is it saying that LDF inspectors will be given power to allocate sites? If so, on what grounds? Is the same power given to the Secretary of State in paragraph 9?

Page	Para	Comment
29	4	One of the reasons criteria-based policies are not so ideal as is sometimes claimed is that travellers are unlikely to resist moving on to sites they have purchased before applying for planning permission to do so. And if they were to wait for planning permission before buying a piece of land, they know they would have to pay more for it should planning permission be granted. [TW]
36	26	This Council should be able write a comprehensive paper on costs. Some subjects come to mind: enforcement; building regulations; council tax collection; benefits; policing; service provision etc. [MM]
38		The glaring major omission from this document concern the human rights of residents to peaceful enjoyment of their properties and village facilities and protection from the law of the land applied equally without exception. "Equity and Fairness" says nothing about the law-abiding tax paying public. [MM]
38	40	The Regulatory Impact Assessment understates the drawbacks of the proposed new guidance, though perhaps the most telling "Risk" identified is "that planners do not implement the recommendations of the new guidance and that the current decision-making process remains unchanged." [TW]
41	57	The assessment of Option 3 (New Circular) seems to be based on no more than wishful thinking that this guidance will solve the problems. Where is the evidence to back up this notion? [TW]

Key to contributions from Members:

MM = Councillor MJ Mason

SvdV = Councillor Dr S van de Ven

TW = Councillor TJ Wotherspoon

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 5th January 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/1964/04/RM - Sawston
Erection of Medical Centre and Ambulance Station together with Car Park and
Associated Works at Allotment Site, London Road for
Primary Asset Management

Recommendation: Approval
Date of Determination: 17th November 2004

Site and Proposal

1. The site is a 0.6 hectare (1.5 acre) area comprising the southern section of allotment gardens on London Road. To the east of the site, beyond an established hawthorn hedge, is a large area of public open space beyond which lies a residential estate. A footpath leading to the recreation area runs along the southern boundary and separates the site from the closest residential property that fronts London Road. There are some significant trees along the west side of the site, close to the southern end, that are protected by TPO and an approximately 1.8 metre high hawthorn hedge that forms the entire western boundary of the site. The northern boundary is unscreened.
2. This reserved matter application, submitted on 22nd September 2004 and amended on 3rd November, 1st December and 7th December 2004, seeks to erect a two storey medical centre on the site to replace the existing medical practice in Link Road.
3. A design statement submitted with the application states that the new building will house the basic GP requirements for the local practice along with extensive PCT accommodation and primary care clinics. The scope and scale of the services generate an extensive schedule of accommodation and the size of the building created is therefore far larger than the existing health centre. The site sits approximately 1 metre below the level of the road. This, together with the minimal ceiling heights, creates a structure that sits low in the site. The building will predominantly be constructed of buff brickwork with a slate roof.
4. The medical centre would have a total floorspace of 2757m² and would employ 93 people (26 full time and 67 part time). It would be open between the hours of 8am and 6.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Planning History

5. **S/2392/02/O** – Outline planning permission was granted for the medical centre with all matters being reserved for further consideration. This consent was subject to a number of conditions including the widening of the footway at the front of the site.

Planning Policy

6. The site lies within the village framework and also within a Protected Village Amenity Area.
7. **Policy SE10** of the Local Plan states that development of such areas will not be permitted if it would be harmful to the distinctive qualities and functioning lying behind their inclusion in the Protected Village Amenity Area.
8. **Policy Sawston 2** of the Local Plan resists the change of use of recreational land unless the land is no longer required for public recreational use or an alternative area of land, equally suited to the purpose of public recreation, will be provided as a replacement.
9. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") stresses the need for a high standard of design and a sense of place which corresponds to the local character of the built environment.

Consultations

10. **Sawston Parish Council** recommends refusal of the application stating:

"The Parish Council still wish to have traffic calming measures in place to control the traffic flow in London Road. Suggestions:

 - A roundabout;
 - Traffic calming measures;
 - Pedestrian crossing with central refuge

This application does not address any of these issues."
11. **The Local Highways Authority** states that there are off-site works required in relation to this proposal, namely the footway along the entire frontage of the site needs to be increased in width to a minimum of 1.8 metres. Similarly the existing footway to the northeast between the site and Johns Acre needs to be widened to a minimum of 1.8 metres. The access should be a standard access crossing of the footway/verge with no upstand radius kerbing to be used. The passage of pedestrians on the footway adjacent to London Road should not be interrupted by the access. There is a difference in level between the site and the public highway and cross sections should be submitted indicating how the continuation of the footway is to be achieved.
12. Cross sections have been submitted and I am awaiting further comments from the Local Highways Authority.
13. **The Environment Agency** comments that this Authority will be required to respond in respect of surface water drainage related issues. (Relevant conditions were imposed on the outline planning permission.)
14. **The Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** raises no objections, stating that additional water supplies for firefighting will not be required.
15. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections in principle although does express concerns about potential noise disturbance to residents during the construction period. As such, it is recommended that a condition restricting hours of use of power operated machinery be applied to any planning consent. (This condition was imposed on the outline planning permission.)

16. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** is satisfied that the scheme, as amended, affords the oak trees along the frontage of the site sufficient clearance. A condition requiring protective fencing and submission of a landscaping scheme should be attached to any planning consent. Some concern is expressed about the car park encroaching into the hedging at the front of the site and its practical long term retention and about the footpath around the building encroaching into a proposed area of planting to the rear. Furthermore, the proximity of the building and its windows would increase pressure to avoid planting to some sections. (Landscaping is an outstanding reserved matter and a scheme is still required to be submitted.)

Representations

17. Letters of objection have been received from Nos. 14, 22, 39 and 72 London Road as well as from the Orchard Park Residents Association. The main points raised are:
- The health centre should be located in the centre of the village;
 - London Road is not suitable for such a public building;
 - The car park must be controlled. Shoppers take up spaces at the present health centre forcing patients to park elsewhere;
 - The windows on the first and second floors of the southern elevation should be fitted with obscure glass to prevent overlooking of No.39 London Road;
 - The two parking spaces nearest to no.39 should be removed;
 - The entrance gates should be locked at all times when the medical centre is not in use;
 - The trees to be planted adjacent to the southern boundary should be of an evergreen variety;
 - The large amount of parking will ruin the rural aspect from the main London Road;
 - A safety audit should be submitted as part of the application;
 - The building is 10.8 metres high and not of domestic scale;
 - No off road access for buses has been made and no crossing has been provided. This will result in highway safety problems;
 - There is no safe walkway to the centre of the village;
 - The number of employees will increase the traffic flow and accident rate;
 - The galvanised vertical bar fence will ruin the rural appearance of the area;
 - Drainage issues need to be resolved;
 - Concerns expressed with regards to the financing of the project.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

18. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application relate to:
- The principle of the development;
 - The design/visual appearance of the building and its impact upon its surroundings;
 - Residential amenity;
 - Highway safety.

The principle of the development

19. The site lies within a Protected Village Amenity Area where development is contrary to the aims of the Local Plan which seeks to protect open spaces for recreational uses. The principle of erecting a medical centre on this site has, however, previously

been considered and established. The outline application was considered by Members at Committee in March 2003 where it was agreed that the benefit of providing such a facility outweighed the harm caused by the loss of part of the allotment site.

20. The proposed medical centre has a total floorspace of around 2700m², a figure well in excess of the 1800m² suggested in the illustrative layout accompanying the outline application. I would like to stress that all matters were reserved for further consideration under the outline consent and the overall size of the building has not therefore previously been agreed.

Visual impact of the development

21. The proposed building is a 2 storey structure standing approximately 10.6 metres high and comprising buff walls and a slate roof. It would be set around 0.5 metres lower than the road level. Although the structure would undoubtedly be a dominant feature in the streetscape, I am satisfied that the design is of sufficient quality to ensure that the development would not result in material harm to the character of the area.
22. The initial application sought to erect a 2 metre high steel fence around the entire site and this was considered by Officers to be unduly intrusive. The plans have therefore been amended to set the fence at least 2 metres in from all boundaries of the site thereby enabling some room for planting along the currently open northern boundary of the site as well as providing sufficient space to access the existing hedges along the eastern and western boundaries. The amended plans are still indicating that the boundary fence would be of vertical steel bar design and, although it would be screened to a large extent by existing and new planting, I have strong reservations about the visual impact of the style of fence proposed. I have discussed the matter with the applicant's agents who have indicated verbally that they would be happy to consider alternative fence designs and I would suggest that a condition requiring boundary treatment details be attached to any planning consent.
23. The Trees and Landscape Officer has expressed some concerns about the proximity of some of the paved areas to the hedge. These parking areas adjacent to the western boundary and footpath next to the eastern boundary, however, do not encroach into the existing hedge but rather into an area of additional planting shown between the existing hedge and new fence. Furthermore, there are additional pockets of land within the site between the building and northern, eastern and southern boundaries that have been set aside for further landscaping.

Residential amenity

24. The occupiers of No.39 London Road, located to the south of the site, have requested that all south facing first floor windows be obscure glazed. The south elevation of the proposed medical centre is sited approximately 30 metres away from the north side elevation of No.39. This distance, together with the fact that it is intended to plant trees along the southern boundary of the site, leads me to conclude that such a requirement would be unduly onerous. I am also satisfied that the parking spaces nearest to no.39 are sufficiently distant to prevent any undue loss of amenity to the occupiers of this neighbouring dwelling.
25. Concerns have been expressed about the ambulance garage adjacent to the frontage of the site and its implications for highway safety as well as the amenities of nearby residents if sirens are started on site. The applicants agent has clarified that

there would be no ambulances accommodated on the development and that the garage is intended for paramedic cars only.

Highway safety

26. Concerns have been raised by the Parish Council and local residents about the highway safety implications of the development. The Local Highways Authority has been consulted on the application and has not raised any objections to the scale of the building/use and its implications for highway safety, subject to the widening of the footpath from the site to John's Acre to the north. The requested footpath widening is a condition of the outline consent and therefore does not need to be reapplied to any reserved matter permission. Cross sections through the vehicular access (to ensure a smooth transition of the footpath across the access) have been requested and I am awaiting the Highways Authority's response to the submitted drawings.
27. The Parish Council's request for traffic calming together with the provision of a pedestrian crossing was also made in response to the outline application and was reported to Members at the March 2003 Committee meeting. Members resolved to approve the application subject to discussions between the Highways Authority, applicants and planners to establish the extent of highway/footway improvements required to improve pedestrian access between the medical centre and the centres of Sawston and Pampisford. A meeting was subsequently held on site where it was agreed that the footway should be widened to 1.8 metres for the length of the site and as far north as John's Acre. No further improvements/measures were considered to be necessary.
28. The provision of a pedestrian crossing and traffic calming measures cannot now be introduced or conditioned as part of any reserved matter consent. The feasibility of providing traffic calming/a pedestrian crossing would need to be explored separately between the applicants, the Highways Authority, Parish Council and local residents and can only be implemented if the local residents are fully supportive of the measures.
29. This Authority's car parking standards require the provision of 2 spaces per consulting room together with 1 space per 2 members of staff whilst the cycle parking standards require 2 spaces per consulting room. There are a total of 31 consulting rooms and 93 members of staff resulting in a requirement for 109 car parking spaces and 62 cycle spaces. The scheme as amended provides a total of 90 and 30 spaces respectively. Whilst these figures fall short of the requirements of the Local Plan, I must stress that the car parking standards are maximum rather than minimum standards. Bearing in mind the number of part time staff intended to be employed at the medical centre together with the fact that the medical centre lies on a bus route and is within cycling/walking distance of the centres of both Sawston and Pampisford, I am satisfied that the shortfall in provision is not likely to result in undue highway safety problems.

Recommendation

30. Subject to no objections being received from the Local Highways Authority in respect of the cross sections, approve the reserved matters of siting, design, external appearance and means of access in accordance with the outline planning permission, ref. S/2392/02/O dated 2nd June 2004, as amended by plans date stamped 3rd November, 1st December and 7th December 2004, subject to the following additional conditions:

1. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5aii);
2. Sc5 – Details of the solar thermal collectors (Rc5aii)
3. Sc56 – Protection of trees during construction (Rc56);
4. Sc57 – Landscaping (protection of existing trees) (Rc57);
5. Sc58 – Retention of hedges along the eastern and western boundaries of the site (Rc58);
6. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment, including details of the type of boundary fencing to be erected (Rc60);
7. Para B10 (Rc10)

Informatives

Reasons 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);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE10** (Protected Village Amenity Areas) and Policy Sawston 2
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Residential amenity including noise disturbance and overlooking issues
 - Highway safety
 - Visual impact on the locality
 - Impact upon setting of adjacent Conservation Area

General

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
2. During demolition and construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

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 Refs: S/1964/04/RM and S/2392/02/O

Contact Officer: Lorraine Casey – Senior Planning Assistant
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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 5th January 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/2080/04/F - Sawston
7 Houses and Garages - Land r/o 16-20 Cambridge Road for Park Hill Homes Ltd

Recommendation: Approval
Date of Determination: 7th December 2004

Site and Proposal

1. The application site is a 0.17 hectare plot of land located to the rear/east, and situated within the garden areas of, three detached two-storey dwellings, Nos. 16, 18 and 20 Cambridge Road. To the east are detached bungalows whilst to the south is the police station site. This is currently being redeveloped and comprises a police station and 8 dwellings. The dwellings directly adjoining the application site are 2¹/₂ storey brick and tile properties.
2. The full application, submitted on 12th October 2004, and amended on 26th November 2004, seeks to erect seven dwellings on the site. These would be two storey brick and tile dwellings designed to match the general design of the properties on the adjoining site to the south. Access to the site would be via Cambridge Road and the existing point of access serving the adjoining police station and eight dwellings. The density of the development equates to 40 dwellings per hectare.

Planning History

3. **S/0014/03/F** – Planning consent granted for the police station and 8 dwellings on adjoining land to the south.

Planning Policy

4. Sawston is designated within the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 as a Rural Growth Settlement where **Policy SE2** states residential development will be permitted providing, amongst other matters, the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenities of neighbours. There should be an appropriate mix, and a minimum density of 30 dph should be achieved unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.
5. **Policy HG11** of the Local Plan states that development to the rear of existing properties will only be permitted where the development would not :
 - Result in overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of existing residential properties;
 - Result in noise and disturbance to existing residential properties through the use of its access;
 - Result in highway dangers through the use of its access; or
 - Be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.

6. Policy HG10 of the Local Plan requires a mix of types, sizes and affordability and a high quality design and distinctiveness.
7. **Policy P1/3** of the County Structure Plan 2003 stresses the need for a high standard of design and a sense of place which corresponds to the local character of the built environment.

Consultation

8. **Sawston Parish Council** objects to the application for the following reasons:
 - It is a back garden development;
 - It is overdevelopment of the site;
 - There will be traffic problems associated with this development.
6. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections in principle although does express concern about noise disturbance to nearby residents during the construction period. As such, a condition restricting the hours of use of power operated machinery during the construction period needs to be attached to any planning consent.
7. **The County Archaeologist** states that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential. As such, the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation and this can be secured by a condition of any planning consent.
8. **The Environment Agency** advises that the application falls to this Authority to respond in respect of flood risk and surface water drainage issues. Informatives are therefore appropriate in this instance, where the site is not in a high or medium flood risk zone.
9. **The Local Highways Authority** raises no objections to the application as amended. However, the developer has not proceeded with an Agreement to facilitate the adoption of the section of access road given permission under S/0014/03/F. Is the Council happy with a further seven dwellings served off a private access road and who will be responsible for the future maintenance of the road that also serves the police station?
10. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** raises no objections although comments that a large, mature apple tree in the rear garden of No.18 will be lost. However, this contributes only in a visual sense to adjoining gardens and does not therefore merit a TPO. A coppiced walnut in the far corner of Plot 15 could be retained although the semi-mature ash and sycamore trees, all of mediocre quality, will be compromised by Plot 15.
11. **The Building Inspector** advises that the road layout is acceptable and of sufficient width for emergency vehicles.

Representations

12. Letters of objection have been received from 5 local residents, 14 and 22 Cambridge Road, 7a Babraham Road, 166 Woodland Road and 4 Eccles Close. The main points raised are:
 - Loss of privacy to bungalows to rear;
 - Loss of view from bungalows to rear;

- If approved, the walnut tree should be maintained;
- There is a restrictive covenant on No.16 Cambridge Road making it impossible for any building to go ahead;
- The access road cannot support the amount of cars that would use the road if the new houses were to be built and cannot support refuse collectors and emergency services;
- Extra houses will increase drainage problems associated with the adjacent site;
- Development will increase traffic problems at the Cambridge Road/Hillside/Babraham Road/New Road junction;
- First floor window in the side elevation of the dwelling adjoining No.22 Cambridge Road should be fitted with obscure glass and a close boarded fence erected along the boundary.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

13. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Impact upon character and appearance of the area;
- Residential amenity;
- Highway safety;

Impact upon character and appearance of area

14. The proposal seeks to erect seven dwellings on the site comprising one 4-bedroom detached property, a terrace of four 3-bedroom houses and a pair of semi-detached 3-bedroom dwellings. The terrace and semi-detached dwellings are approximately 7.7 metres high whilst the detached house has a total ridge height of 9 metres. The properties would be constructed using a combination of brick and render for the walls and natural slate for the roofs. The design of the dwellings reflects those of the properties being constructed on the adjoining site to the south (which were approved under planning ref: S/0014/03/F).
15. Concerns have been expressed regarding the principle of allowing backland development on the site. Given that housing of a similar design has been permitted on the site to the south, I consider the development would not be out of keeping with the character and pattern of housing in the vicinity. In addition, the site is set well back (approximately 60 metres) from Cambridge Road and the dwellings would not therefore be dominant in views of the site afforded through the gaps between the detached dwellings sited along Cambridge Road.

Residential amenity

16. Objections were received from No.166 Woodland Road, a bungalow sited to the rear/east on the grounds of overlooking from first floor windows in the rear elevation of the northernmost plot. I have viewed the site from this neighbouring property and, whilst there is a reasonable amount of screening along the common boundary, it is predominantly deciduous in nature. The plans have therefore been amended to site the northernmost dwellings 30 metres away from the rear elevation of the adjoining bungalow. This distance, together with the fact that there is sufficient space to ensure the retention of the walnut tree in the north-eastern corner of the site and to provide additional planting if necessary, leads me to conclude that the impact of the development on No.166 Woodland Road is now acceptable.

17. The distances from the front of the dwellings to the rear of Nos. 16, 18 and 20 Cambridge Road is sufficient to avoid any undue harm to the amenities of the occupiers of the existing and new properties. I do, however, concur with the concerns expressed by No.22 Cambridge Road and would advise that the first floor window in the north elevation of the northernmost plot be obscure glazed given the proximity of this dwelling to the common boundary.
18. The occupiers of No.14 Cambridge Road have commented that there is a covenant attached to No.16 Cambridge Road preventing the development of this site. The applicant has signed the relevant certificate and served notice on No.16. In addition, this Authority has notified No.16 and has not received any direct comments or objections relating to this matter. I have sought further clarification from the applicant's agent. However, the granting of planning permission does not convey an automatic right to develop land and the provisions of any covenant would need to be resolved separately by the developers.
19. With respect to the walnut tree in the north-eastern corner of the site, whilst the Trees and Landscape Officer has advised that it is not of sufficient quality to require its retention, it does provide visual protection of the development to the occupiers of the bungalows to the east. As such, I would recommend that any consent be subject to a landscaping condition with a view to incorporating the retention of the tree into a landscaping scheme for the site.

Highway safety

20. The measurements of the access to the site comply with the Highways Authority's requirements although the road has not been adopted. No specific objections have been raised by the Highways Authority to the use of the access by a further seven dwellings. I have asked the applicant's agent to clarify responsibilities for maintenance of the road and this will be reported verbally to Members at the Committee meeting.

Recommendation

21. Approval, as amended by drawings date stamped 26th November 2004, subject to the following conditions:
 1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
 2. Sc5a – Details and samples of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5a);
 3. No development shall take place until a 1.8 metre high close boarded fence has been erected on the northern site boundary. (Reason – To protect the privacy of adjoining residents);
 4. Sc23 – First floor window in north elevation of Plot 15 to be obscure glazed (Rc23);
 5. Sc5b – Details of surface water drainage (Rc5b);
 6. Rc5c – Details of foul water drainage (Rc5c);
 7. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
 8. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
 9. Sc60 – Boundary treatment details (Rc60);
 10. Sc66 – Archaeological investigation (Rc66);
 11. During the period of construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 hours on weekdays and 08.00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18.00 hours on weekdays and 13.00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays) unless otherwise

previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions (Rc26);

Informatives

Reasons for Approval

1. The approved 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);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** SE2 (Development in Rural Growth Settlements), HG10 (Housing Mix and Design) and HG11 (Backland Development).
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Residential amenity;
 - Visual impact on the locality
 - Highway safety/parking issues.
 - Impact on trees.

General

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, before works commence a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
2. During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Local Plan, Structure Plan, File Refs: S/2080/04/F and S/0014/03/F.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Development and Conservation Control Committee	6 th October 2004
AUTHOR/S:	Director of Development Services	

**S/1164/04/F - Comberton
Erection of dwelling and garden/summer house; Land rear of 4 and 8 West Street,
for Mr B Obank.**

Recommendation: Approval

Conservation Area**Site and Proposal**

1. The application relates to part of an area of former open grazing land in the middle of the village that is bounded on all sides by other development. There are views of the site across the village pond from the crossroads of Green End and West Street. The land lies to the rear of No.2 West Street, a grade II listed building, and the dwelling at No.8. A barn to the rear of these dwellings has recently been converted to a dwelling, which has views from its rear elevation over the application site. The site also forms part of the setting of No.10 West Street, a grade II listed building. To the west, the site is adjoined by the house at No. 11 Green End. The boundary of this garden with the application site is marked by a row of mature Beech trees that overhang the applicant's land.
2. The site lies within the conservation area, whose boundaries coincide with the northern and western boundaries of the site.
3. The application, registered 4th June 2004, is for full planning permission for the erection of a single storey dwelling and a detached summer house, with vehicular access being gained from the existing track to West Street. The plot has a depth of 49m, and has a width that increases from 18m in the south to 33m in the north, giving a site area of 0.13ha. The positioning of the house was originally shown to be 2.2m from the western boundary with No.11 Green End. Amended plans were received 1 September 2004 to show the distance to the boundary increased to 5.0m in order to accommodate the spread of the adjacent Beech trees. The design shows a long timber-clad 2-bed dwelling with a low ridgeline (4.2m) with eaves overhang supported by timber posts. A pantiled roof is proposed. The length of the house has been reduced from 29.0m to 25.0m in response to comments made by the Conservation Manager. The applicant states that the L-shaped dwelling is designed in the style of a converted agricultural building. The density equates to 7.7 dwellings per hectare.
4. A detached summer/garden house, with dimensions width 3.0m x length 5.0m x height (to ridge) 3.0m, is shown to be sited adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, within the proposed garden area.

Planning History

5. There is no planning history on the application site itself. However, outline planning permission for the erection of a detached 5-bedroomed house to the rear of the converted barn was dismissed at appeal in 2000 (S/0995/99/O). The Inspector concluded that the open grazing land formed 'an intrinsic part' of the conservation area's character and appearance. It formed a part of the 'pleasing and appropriate

setting' to the listed buildings at No.2 and (to a lesser extent) No.10 West Street, and to the village pond. As the proposed house would be visible from the crossroads, it would 'destroy much of the open and rural character of the grazing land'.

6. The extension and conversion of the barn adjoining the southern boundary of the site and the boundary walls, were the subject of planning permissions S/0754/01/F and S/0676/03/F.

Planning Policy

7. In the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003, **Policy P1/1** (Approach to Development)- development should be located where travel distances by car can be minimised, walking and cycling encouraged and where good transport accessibility exists or can be provided.
8. **Policy P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas) – small scale housing developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account the need for affordable rural housing, the character of the village and its setting, and the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport provision in the immediate area.
9. **Policy SE4** (Group Villages) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that redevelopment up a maximum scheme of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework provided that the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; and the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenities of neighbours.
10. **Policy HG11** (Backland Development) – Development to the rear of existing properties will not be permitted where development would: 1) be overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of an existing residential property, 2) be noisy or disturbing to an existing residential property through use of its access, 3) give rise to highway dangers through use of its access, 4) be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
11. **Policy EN30** (Development in Conservation Areas) – proposals in conservation areas will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area, especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. Schemes that do not specify traditional local materials or details that do not fit comfortably into their context will not be permitted.
12. The **Village Inset Plan** states that development at the north-western corner of the crossroads will not be permitted, as it would further erode the linear character of this part of the village (para.17.20).

Consultation

13. **Comberton Parish Council** - recommends refusal of the application. The Council has concerns about the precedent for further development on the former pasture land and the use of the access drive to serve it; the potential for a dwelling to be developed on the site of the summer house in the future; and the principle of using the remainder of the former pasture land for development. In response to the application as originally proposed, the Council were also concerned about the adverse effect on the street scene, conservation area and setting of the duck pond from where the roof line could be viewed.
14. **Conservation Manager** – has been in discussion with the applicant prior to submission. He is satisfied that a suitably designed and carefully sited dwelling could

be placed upon the former pasture land without harming the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. He believes that the proposal is modest and largely hidden from view, notwithstanding the re-siting of the dwelling in order to safeguard the adjoining Beech trees. He has provided detailed advice in the preparation of the design of the dwelling.

15. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – was originally concerned at the proximity of the dwelling to the Beech trees, but is satisfied with the amended siting, subject to the use of a suitable design for the foundations of the property.

Representations

16. A letter of objection has been received from the occupiers of 5, Green End, that adjoins the eastern boundary of the former pasture land area. They are concerned about overlooking and deposit of builder's rubble close to their property. They request the erection of close boarded fencing to remove overlooking, and a condition to control builders rubble during the construction period. The occupiers of the listed building at No.2 West Street have expressed concern about the development, and have drawn attention to the Inspector's decision in 2000. They consider that the land forms a pleasant backdrop to their property, and that the existing access is unsuitable to serve any additional development. They are concerned that the applicant will seek to develop the remaining land in the future.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. The main issues to be considered are whether the principle of development in this position is acceptable, and if so, whether the detailed design and siting submitted are suitable.
18. The site occupies the western-most end of the open area, where there are few views from public spaces outside the site. The southern end of this land forms a rounding off plot with adjoining development at No.8 West Street and the converted barn. The site is in a sensitive location, being within the Conservation Area and having the potential to affect the setting of listed buildings and the village pond. This has been recognised both in the Village Inset Plan and by an Inspector at appeal. Nevertheless, I believe that a carefully designed low-key dwelling could be accommodated on the site without causing harm to these aspects, and without undue harm to the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties. I am not persuaded that the erection of a single dwelling in this specific location will provide a precedent for further development in this area, because of the unique features of this part of the land, neither do I agree that the siting of the proposed summerhouse will provide a precedent for a dwelling in that position.
19. The proposed building has a low roof line and is designed in materials typical of a traditional farm building. I consider that this form of development, sited close to the converted barn, will not appear to be incongruous and will have little impact upon the street scene, adjoining tree belt, neighbours or setting of the listed buildings or village pond. The character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be preserved, and there will be none of the disadvantages found in unacceptable backland development. I consider that the proposal will conform to policies HG11 and EN30.

Recommendation

20. Approval

1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);

2. SC5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc 5a ii);
3. SC51 – Landscaping (Rc 51);
4. SC52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc 52);
5. Prior to the commencement of any development, details of the design of foundations so as to avoid damage to tree roots shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specifications. (Reason – To safeguard the roots of nearby trees from damage);
6. SC21 – Withdrawal of permitted development rights (Rc 21(a));
7. SC20 (a) – parking and turning space. (Rc 20);
8. SC26 - Limitations on power operated machinery 08:00 “during the period of construction 18:00 and 13:00 hours (Rc 26).

Reasons for Approval

Informatives

1. The approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P1/1** (Approach to Development), **P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE4** (Group Villages), **HG11** (Backland Development), **EN30** (Development in/adjacent to Conservation Areas), **Comberton Village Inset Plan**.
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Impact upon the setting of adjacent Listed Buildings;
 - Impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
 - Impact upon the roots of nearby trees;
 - Residential amenity;
 - Highway safety
3. All other material planning considerations have been taken into account. None is of such significance as to outweigh the reason for the decision to approve the planning application.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Planning applications S/1164/04/F and S/0995/99/F; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

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5/0559/04 1A.

P&M TEBBIT

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REF: THE FOX/ HOLBEIN FARM PLANNING APPLICATIONS – FOR THE RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT FARM BUILDINGS

This application will bring the above buildings into economic use for the farming business. By means of residential and holiday letting.

Red House Farm Background

Red House Farm is a family run working arable farm owned by Paul and Margaret Tebbit. The family has farmed in the area for 5 generations and has been at Red House Farm for 34 years.

This period has seen many changes, the arable land has been increased to try to maintain financial viability whilst beef and pig farming have ceased. The sheep flock has been reduced.

Agricultural economics have always driven change, and farmers have either to react to market forces or be swallowed up by larger farming companies and neighbours, often with access to capital from development.

The recently announced mid-term review of the common agricultural policy will accelerate these changes. Reduced income from actual farming means diversification must take place.

The Farm has a number of valuable environmental assets, including the Bourne Brook, badger sets, and rare species such as, Skylark Lapwing, Bullfinch and Brown Hare. These have been encouraged through the use of DEFRA Countryside Stewardship Agreements and the adaptation of modern farming techniques to enhance the wildlife habitats that we have on the farm.

The Tebbits are now diversifying into rural tourism, with the Grade II listed farmhouse being used as a successful five diamond rated bed and breakfast, and a redundant barn has been converted into two self catering cottages, with the support of the Local Tourist Office, DEFRA Rural Enterprise Scheme and EEDA Redundant Building Grant.

The Tebbits farm is well placed to help satisfy the need for recreation and tourism in the area, as well as residential lettings for those working in the Cambridge. The farms many footpaths linking to local places of interest including Wimpole Hall and Kingston Wood, is to be expanded by a network of field conservation margins to allow visitors access, to their water meadows along side Bourne Brook, and the fishing pools in disused brick pits on the farm.

Red House Farm is one of only two working farms remaining in the Parishes of Eversden and Kingston. These planning applications, if successful will allow the continual adaptation and development of the farm to meet the changing needs of the rural economy.

The Proposed Sites

The Fox and Holbein Farm buildings are located on High Street, Great Eversden, approximately one hundred metres from Red House Farm. Both sets of buildings are on the sites of a redundant pig farm, and are opposite each other, split by the High Street. Both sites have excellent access and visibility onto the Great Eversden High Street, and do not require any addition access points.

The Fox Cottages - For Disabled Use

It is proposed that we convert an old red brick 'swill shed' into two, two bedroom cottages. We aim to convert this building to National Accessible Scheme guidelines, for a facility specifically designed for disabled tourists and their carers. These cottages are adjacent to the farms old 'brick pits', where guests would be able to enjoy the peaceful surroundings, or fish. The remaining buildings, except for a winter sheep barn, will be removed from the site, and the area re-seeded and trees planted.

Holbein Farm Cottages

This planning proposal consists of the conversion of four redundant barns into four two bedroom and one, one bedroom cottages. These cottages will be built to current building regulations.

Visitors to the above developments would have the use of the 'brick pit' fishing ponds and also have access to numerous farm walks, linking the farm to nearby villages, Wimpole Hall and Cambridge. We are currently in the process of having farm walk maps printed for the use of our existing B&B guests.

Traffic Movements

When used for agricultural purposes, these sites are subjected to regular feed lorry deliveries, haulage of livestock, visits by sales representatives, and potential livestock purchasers, tractors and trailers, and up to seven employees driving to the site daily. These movements will no longer take place. The traffic produced from these conversions will not represent any increase, and indeed apart from the construction phase, there will be far less traffic than in the past, and of a less hazardous type.

The Vision

The Fox and Holbein Farm cottages aim to extend on the current diversification initiative undertaken by the business at Red House Farm. We wish to continue to provide high quality accommodation, and will complete the cottages to the highest standard.

The farm is ideally located just seven miles south west of Cambridge and has the advantage of a quiet and peaceful rural environment. This is complimented by the excellent transport links in the area, with the M11, A14, A1M and Stansted airport all within a forty-minute drive.

Market Research

This planning proposal is supported by external market research provided by the East of England Tourist Board, and Acorus Rural Property Services. We commissioned the Tourist Board to carry out a development assessment on our proposal for self catering cottages. This report concluded;

- There is a low supply of existing self catering accommodation in the South Cambs area.
- Out of a total of 21 properties identified just 2 are located within 0-5 miles, and the remainder are within 5-10 miles.
- Few properties participate in a quality assurance scheme, and none are rated as five star, indicating a market opportunity.
- The existing Five Diamond bed and breakfast at Red House Farm may indicate the level of demand for high quality accommodation in the area.

Both reports highlight the excellent amenities that are on offer to visitors in the local area, including the various walks, cycling and fishing available at Red House Farm. In addition they are positive about the high quality disabled accommodation that will be provided. Stating that, Holiday Care Service research has revealed an increasing number of enquiries for disabled accommodation.

The existing Rose Barn Holiday Cottage located at Red House Farm, won local support from South Cambridgeshire District Council, the South Cambs Tourism Liaison Officer, and the South Cambs. District Council with the Portfolio for Tourism, who all highlight the need for quality accommodation in South Cambridgeshire. In addition local businesses such as Pubs and the village shop benefit from visitors to the self catering cottages, as they prefer to use local facilities, within easy walking distance, as opposed to traveling by car.

In addition, Mrs Tebbit has carried out primary research into the market. This involved discussing the factors influencing Bed and Breakfast guests when choosing their accommodation. We believe most of these factors

are relevant to self-catering accommodation. This research concluded that the main factors of choice are as follows:

- Tourist Board Rating
- Location;
 - Distance from Cambridge
 - Distance from Duxford Air Museum
 - Rural location
- Aesthetic Choice
- Availability of local walks/recreational activities

We believe there is also a need for quality residential accommodation in the area, to accommodate those working in and around Cambridge. The easy access to the Madingley Road and Trumpington Park and Ride sites are an advantage, as this helps to reduce the already congested city centre.

National and Local planning Policy

Having carried out some research into National Policy Guidance Notes and the New South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, it is apparent that both National and Local planning policy encourage farm diversification, where it is of an appropriate nature, and sympathetic to the local environment.

The agricultural buildings for conversion are currently unused, but have been assets to the farm for many years. If left redundant they will become an unwelcome maintenance cost to the farming business in the future, and could become unsightly. The barn conversions will be undertaken in an appropriate manner to reflect the architectural style of the area (please see detailed plans), and would be landscaped accordingly.

Both sites are positioned away from other properties, and are surrounded by the rest of the farm. This development would benefit the village of Great Eversden economically, by increased revenue to local retailers.

We feel that Paragraph 3 of Planning Policy Guidance Notes No.7 "The Countryside – Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development" is appropriate in relation to our planning application;

- *3.14 The re-use and adaptation of existing rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development (see paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10), as well as for tourism, sport and recreation. It can reduce demands for new building in the countryside, avoid leaving an existing building vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction, and provide jobs.*
- *3.12 Rural tourism makes a major and growing contribution to rural economic activity and the rural labour market. It needs to develop in a way which draws on the character of the countryside and does not destroy the very asset on which its popularity depends. Given that*

guiding principle, a wide variety of tourist developments, in terms of nature and scale, can be acceptable in the right location.

This application is also relevant to the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, adopted in February 2004. In particular I refer to Chapter 3 – Green Belt, Policy GB2: points 2 and 6.

Section 3.14 states; Proposals to change the use of existing buildings are capable of being 'appropriate' development subject to criterion (6) of policy GB2. Such re-use can assist rural diversification through providing new accommodation for commercial, industrial or recreational users, or for tourism....

Chapter 9 – Recreation and Tourism, Policy RT10: Points 1,2 and 3. I refer to Sections;

- 9.32 *The District Council acknowledges that tourism proposals can assist in diversifying the rural economy.....*
- 9.33 *Accommodation for tourists through the conversion of existing buildings is an important element of rural diversification.....*
- 9.34 *The policy will allow farmers and others to diversify their business while safeguarding the countryside and remaining consistent with the housing policies of this plan.*

In closing, the planning applications for both The Fox and Holbein Farm sites, are in line with both National and Local planning Policy. The development will represent economic value for the farming business and also the local community. It will also allow greater public access and recreational use of an undervalued and attractive area of South Cambridgeshire. It also enables visitors to Cambridgeshire an opportunity to see a working farm that is actively enhancing the environment, to retain the natural heritage of the area.

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