

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

1st February 2006

S/2263/05/F - Foxton

Part Demolition and Conversion of Press Building into 4 Terraced Houses and 1 Detached House, and the Erection of 3 Houses and 4 Affordable Flats Burlington Press, Station Road/High Street for Mr P Ridgeon

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval
Date for Determination: 23rd February 2006 (Major Application)**

Adjacent Conservation Area

Members will visit the site on 30th January 2006.

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.34 hectare site forms part of the extensive Burlington Press site and encompasses the frontages to Station Road and High Street. The Station Road frontage features a range of "Arts and Crafts" factory buildings dating from 1908 and the High Street frontage is open with a substantial 1.8m high brick wall enclosing the site with a substantial yew tree at the mid point. The corner of Station Road/High Street is marked by the Village War Memorial and within the site to its rear is an electricity sub-station.
2. Vehicular access to the site and the modern factory to the rear is off Station Road to the north of the site, alongside a 2 storey office building which is sublet to another company.
3. The full application received on 24th November 2005 and amended on 13th January 2006, proposes the demolition of the Station Road factory buildings apart from most of the façade which is to be retained along with the 2 storey office building at the northern end of the site which does not form part of the current proposal. Five houses are proposed incorporating the façade, the roof being extended and the ridge raised 1.3m compared to the existing, giving an overall ridge height of 7.9m. Vehicular access is to the rear via the existing factory access which will be slightly widened and have improved kerb radii. Each property being provided with a garage and a parking space, the accommodation comprising 1 two bedroom, 2 three bedroom and 2 four bedroom houses.
4. Also serviced from the rear via the existing factory access are a block of 4 affordable dwellings and 3 detached houses fronting High Street.
5. The affordable houses are sited immediately to the south of the modern factory building and comprise 2 one bedroom and 2 two bedroom flats, arranged on three floors. The ridge height of the block is 8.3m, and 4 parking spaces are provided.
6. The three 4 bedroom houses are set gable on to High Street and have ridge heights of 7.2m. Like the affordable houses they are proposed to be rendered. Two garages

and three parking spaces are allocated to them. Only pedestrian access is proposed to High Street. The density of the scheme equates to 35 dwellings per ha.

7. Accompanying the application is a design report. It states Burlington Press is currently having economic difficulties retaining a large outdated building. Parts of the site provide a valuable historic and visual contribution to the village. The war memorial adjoining the site has an electricity sub-station as a backdrop and the opportunity arises to relocate this and have a more appropriate backdrop of foliage and houses. The factory site does not have a street frontage to High Street and does not make a positive contribution to the village street scene.
8. The northern block of the Press will remain with a bay to the rear demolished to accommodate daylight requirements and to create a clear break between the remaining Press building and the proposed houses.
9. The 3 detached houses proposed on High Street are designed to fit in with the existing street layout of detached houses, but are higher density than most of the surrounding village. They are all 2 storeys and set back from the road to retain the "soft" edge to the street. The character of the proposed buildings is designed to compliment the existing housing within the village, using features such as clay tiled pitched roofs, chimneys, render and timber window frames. They also respect the historic context by having small proportioned windows to the street alterations.
10. Vehicle access and parking are accommodated via a new rear access road, with "pedestrian only" access from main roads.
11. 3 large trees on the site are to be retained.
12. All properties are provided with private gardens. Subsequently, a bat survey has been carried out and the results forwarded.

Planning History

13. A full application for conversion of Press buildings into 8 dwellings and the erection of 6 houses together with 20 affordable houses was withdrawn in July 2005.
14. In 1998 a full application to erect 8 houses, a play area and garages north of the Press was refused.

Planning Policy

15. The site is within the village framework and adjacent the Conservation Area. The following policies are relevant:

Cambridge and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:

- Policy **P1/2** - Environmental Restrictions on Development
- Policy **P1/3** - Sustainable Design in Built Development
- Policy **P5/2** - Re-using Previously Developed Land and Buildings
- Policy **P5/3** - Density
- Policy **P5/5** - Homes in Rural Areas
- Policy **P7/6** - Historic Built Environment

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:

Policy **SE4** - Group Villages

Policy **SE8** - Village Frameworks

Policy **HG7** - Affordable Housing on Sites within Village Frameworks

Policy **HG10** - Housing Mix and Design

Policy **HG11** - Backland Development

Policy **EM8** - Loss of Employment Sites in Villages

Policy **EN12** - Nature Conservation: Unidentified Sites

Policy **EN30** - Development affecting setting of Conservation Areas

Policy **ES6** - Noise and Pollution

Consultation (pre amendment)

16. **Foxton Parish Council** objects to the application: The comments are quoted in full.

"The application is for a redevelopment at the heart of the village and if granted, would have a major impact on the structure and nature of the village. It would also have a deleterious effect on traffic and the use of village facilities.

The Parish Council has revisited the response to the canvass of the village carried out last year and received a number of new comments from parishioners. The amended plans were on display and there was an extended discussion at a well-attended Parish Council meeting on 9th January. The Parish Council has had regard to the 28 written submissions received in respect of the previous application and has received, and is aware of, further letters in response to this amended proposal. Notwithstanding the short time available for local consultation (that included the Christmas and New Year holidays) the parish council considers that it has received sufficient feedback from parishioners and has come to an informed judgment. Parishioners again raised a number of strong objections to the application and were overwhelmingly against the proposal.

The Parish Council is aware that this is probably the most important planning application concerning the heart of the village. Whatever ends up on this site will be with us day in and day out for the rest of our and our children's lives. It is in a pivotal part of the village and is a main focal point with the village sign, war memorial and nearby thatched cottages. It perhaps ought to be included in the village's conservation area and we question why this is not so. It is at a junction not only important for its visual impact but also for traffic flow through the village, where serious problems are already being experienced.

From its own deliberations, and taking residents' views into account, the Parish Council recommends that the planning application be **refused**

Considering the size of the village, the application proposes a large number (12) of new dwellings. Foxton is designated a "small" village in planning terms and as a designated Group Village where "housing estates will not be permitted and further development will be limited..." (Policy SE4). Whilst the Parish Council appreciates that any vibrant community requires change and development, it is conscious of the need to ensure that this does not conflict with the heritage of the village. It is evident to us that the Planning Authority views this as a large and sensitive development because it has been dealt with outside the team headed by Paul Sexton.

There has been a substantial development (relative to Foxton's size) of the village in recent years and a number of further planning applications are being considered. Apart from a number of recently developed sites for one or two dwellings, the following developments have either already been, or are likely to be, approved:

- a) The development in the last few years of an estate of 31 dwellings on a site adjoining the recreation ground.
- b) The building of a village school, village pavilion, and village hall associated with 2(a).
- c) An application for 13 houses and one bungalow on Moore's Farm (50% affordable.)
- d) An application for 3 dwellings on Mortimer's Lane.
- e) Furthermore the Parish Council would like to see the development of the former primary school site to meet the housing needs of the village, by the building of 6 to 8 dwellings - of which the affordable element would be particularly suited to older residents.

Including this application, we assess this as an increase of around 15% in the number of dwellings in the village in less than a 5-year period. It is the view of many in the village including the village shopkeeper, that we have reached saturation point so far as the acceptable civilized use of the commercial amenities in the heart of the village are concerned, an area of the village on which this development will impact adversely to a considerable extent.

In view of the above the Parish Council needs to be satisfied that any development would not deleteriously affect the nature of the village, bearing in mind its historical heritage, its limited infrastructure, and its designation in the local plan.

1. Environment

(a) The War Memorial and Burlington Press

The proposed development would have a substantially negative impact on a major focal point of the village, namely the War Memorial site. It is near to listed buildings and abuts (and thereby would affect) the Village Conservation Area. The Parish Council recognises the need implicit in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (February 2004, p.156) that special note be taken of developments next to Conservation Areas "affecting their setting".

The War Memorial intersection is an important part of the Village structure and any attempt radically to alter it should be carefully considered. While there may be some debate over the architectural merits of the Burlington Press buildings, there is widespread agreement that proposed development certainly worsens the position. Maintaining the frontage of the Press building, particularly near to the War Memorial, would do little to offset the overall adverse impact that 12 modern two-storey and three-storey houses built closer to the war memorial would have on this important part of the Village. Moreover, the higher roofline on the Station Road frontage would add to the cold winter impact along this stretch of the path and highway. Because of the heavy shadow, ice does not clear rapidly posing a safety hazard.

Similarly, approaching the War Memorial from the Conservation Area, with the Press site on the left-hand side of the road (with the buildings being set well back) gives an impression of space and openness, which compliments the dovecot field opposite. This aspect would also be lost with any major redevelopment. The development would, the Parish Council consider, deleteriously affect the views to and from the Conservation Area and adversely affect the rural nature of this important focal point of the Village.

The Parish Council notes that the retention of the frontage of the Press building would result in the front doors of the associated dwellings opening

directly onto the street. It is considered that any proposed dwellings should be set well back from the Station Road.

(Please note that these were the words we used in May last year, we did not say that we wanted the front façade retained) see further comments below.

(b) Noise and General Nuisance

The proximity of the Burlington Press would adversely affect the occupants of the dwellings due to undue noise and general nuisance particularly the occupants of the affordable housing. An implication of the 1998 planning decision is that the site is not suitable for mixed commercial/residential use.

The amenities of the occupiers of the Press cottages and other nearby properties are already adversely affected by reason of undue noise and general nuisance through the use of the current access (see also No.2 below). These impacts are contrary to Policy HG11 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004, p.50) particularly as part of the proposed development is to the rear of existing properties.

Policy ES6 pages 193/4 covers noise & pollution and paragraph 11.34 deals with new noise sensitive developments near to existing commercial or industrial activity.

An applicant is required to demonstrate that any noise pollution from the existing commercial or industrial activity will not result in unacceptable noise to noise sensitive development.

Paragraph 11.35 deals with new noise sensitive development constructed near to existing industrial or commercial development will need to be designed and orientated so that as far as practicable windows of sensitive rooms including living rooms and bedrooms face away from major noise sources. Are the noise standards set by the district council met by this development?

The Parish Council considers this to be most relevant to the whole of this application.

2. Traffic Congestion/Access

Since a previous application (S/1476/98/F) was refused in 1998 on the grounds of increased congestion and adverse impact on road safety conditions in Station Road, the road has become more congested. Heavy vehicles, (including continental container lorries going to and from the Press), and buses use this narrow road, which has considerable on-street parking. (Yellow lines have recently been added at the junction with the A10.)

The access road to the site would be too narrow for two cars to pass safely especially if a pavement is required.

The junction of the access road with Station Road will continue to mar the appearance of both the row of historic Press cottages and the setting of the listed buildings virtually opposite.

The Parish Council considers that the development would also greatly contribute to the traffic congestion that already occurs around the War Memorial, especially with respect to the on-street parking in this area. Moreover, the T-junction between Station Road and the High Street is already dangerous and access from the proposed site is bound to exacerbate the situation.

There is already widespread concern by parishioners about the existing level of noise on the site, not only from the Press machinery, but also from the

movement of vehicles at all hours related to the business. There are two bus stops in this section of Station Road including a bus shelter immediately outside the proposed plot number 7. There is further concern that with the marked increase in the number of vehicles (including those from within site) using Station Road to get to the A10, which would arise from this development, there is an unacceptable increase in the risk to pedestrians and children.

The problem of parking in front of the properties in Station Road will immediately arise and will present the village with no alternative but to request an order for yellow lines along this part of Station Road.

The Parish Council notes that the proposed 1998 development (**S/1476/98/F**) was turned down on the grounds that:

“... the development is unacceptable by virtue of its close proximity to the adjacent works, Burlington Press. The occupiers of the houses proposed are likely to suffer from unreasonable loss of amenity due to noise from the works, traffic movement and parking area.”

And

“The proposed vehicular access [using the Press site] as shown is of inadequate standard by reasons of its width, visibility splays and general design to serve the development proposed by reason of its shared use with other industrial and residential traffic and development is therefore unacceptable as it will have an adverse impact on road safety in the area.”

The Parish Council believes that it would be inconsistent not to reject the present proposal on the same grounds.

3. Parking within the site

It is essential to avoid parking on Station Road and we are concerned that there is inadequate parking within the site – for instance, where do cars owned by occupier and visitors to plot numbers 1 and 2 park? Where garages are provided, these are more than likely to be used for storage purposes. We would urge that consideration be given to the provision of more than the statutory minimum of 1.5 spaces per dwelling in this and for that matter, any rural application.

4. Brownfield redevelopment

The proposed housing site would be a large-scale development at the heart of the village and exceeds the maximum 8 houses usually permitted on any single site in the village. The parish council notes “development may exceptionally consist of up to 15 dwellings, if this would make the best use of a Brownfield site” (South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Foxton, p.88). The Parish Council does not accept that the development of 12 dwellings “makes best use of the site”

From the plans we assess that only 5 of the properties would fall within the definition of “brownfield redevelopment”, the remaining development including 7 dwellings would be on greenfield land.

But the proposed development is not on a true "Brownfield site" (a former industrial site), it is on a viable commercial site. Therefore the proposed development would result in a significant drop in commercial capacity and the potential number of jobs in the village.

5. Commercial Capacity/Employment

Policy EM8 concerning loss of employment states:

"The conversion, change of use or redevelopment of existing employment sites to non-employment uses within village frameworks **will be resisted** unless the existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution or unacceptable levels of traffic or where it is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for **any employment use** to continue having regard to market demand." (emphasis added).

These parts of the Press buildings are currently occupied and are used variously as offices and for storage and currently providing employment including for some village people.

It may be that the commercial interests of Burlington Press (the tenant) have been raised with the District Council as they have been with the Parish Council. The Parish Council is minded that this is not really a planning issue, however we cannot ignore it. We are reminded that there have been several changes of occupation of these buildings including a recent sub let to MW Creative. Our view is that the commercial driver to sublet further parts of these buildings, including those parts included in this planning application and which are subject to a further nine years of leasehold, will determine the commercial occupancy of the site in the near future.

We are seeking to ensure the commercial viability of this part of the village.

6. Design Issues

Given the importance of this development within the village framework, we are concerned that insufficient attention has been given to the design of the scheme. It does not come across as a quality design, more an opportunity to maximise the value of a site. All aspects of detail, bricks, tiles, railings, fences etc. need to be carefully considered and the outcomes specified.

The positioning of the flats within a couple of metres of the factory wall and the fact that they directly overlook the garden of number 7 High Street must surely be unacceptable in planning terms.

The retention of the whole of the façade is questionable. The reuse of storage buildings nearest to the High Street/Station Road junction seems hard to justify particularly as the proposed four-bedroom dwelling has no obvious parking provision. This building and its façade seem to have considerably less historical and architectural merit than the original building.

We note that 4 out of 5 front doors open on to the Station Road pavement. We are against this and would like to see a design with less doors opening onto the pavement and, preferably, an elimination of all such doors.

7. Infrastructure

The development of the site would place a strain on the existing village infrastructure. In addition to the volume of road transport already noted, the newly built Village Primary School is already over-subscribed in some classes. The local Melbourn and Harston general practitioner lists are full. There are serious doubts as to whether the current sewerage and water system can cope

with any large development and there are already intermittent obnoxious smells from the sewerage system and flooding in the vicinity of the sewage works.

The Parish Council also notes that part of the proposed development is on the High Street, which already suffers from flooding with even moderate rainfall. The development would be likely to increase the propensity for flash flooding and result in an unacceptable volume of runoff. We also note that it is proposed that the houses on plot numbers 2,3 and 4 be built on the flood plain. (Inset 30, local plan 2004).

The Parish Council considers that the proposal for the development of the Press site does **not** meet all the criteria set out in Policy SE4 and on these grounds alone the application should be refused.

8. Affordable Housing

The Parish Council welcomes the inclusion of 4 affordable flats in this proposal, the location of which to some extent meets the criticism of social and spatial segregation. This represents only one third of the total dwellings in the scheme and is less than the normal 50% required by South Cambridgeshire District Council. Belatedly we have understood this to be due to the cost of retaining the whole of the façade to Station Road. In simple terms the developer's cost for retaining the whole façade is 2 affordable dwellings. If you take the value of houses compared with flats the proportion of affordable housing offered by value will be considerably less than one third and that is not acceptable.

You should know that the reason for this reduction in affordable housing was not known at the time of the Parish meeting and that the village has been left with no time to respond to this new information. The Parish Council and the village have not had the opportunity to assess the cost benefit or otherwise of retaining the façade as opposed to securing affordable housing. You may recall that none of the 31 dwellings referred to above were affordable and as a consequence the village has lost many of its sons and daughters, indeed the lifeblood of a sustainable community. The Parish Council is anxious that this should not happen again and is pressing for affordable housing in small developments including the old school site.

We urge the District Council to re-evaluate the costs and planning benefits (S106) and to insist on a new proposal that retains less of the frontage and secures a greater proportion of affordable dwellings.

In any re-evaluation the District Council should press the developer to take in to account the value of the additional development to the rear of Station Road afforded by the retention of the façade. The end result of which should ensure that the Council secures a greater proportion of affordable houses.

We are also concerned to know whether these flats are truly affordable, are they to be rented and will the village receive exclusive nomination rights?

9. Summary/Recommendation

The Parish Council notes that this is a revision to an earlier submitted plan. It has carefully considered the proposal and has taken into account the views of parishioners. It considers that the development, as set out in the application, should not be approved on the following grounds:

- (i) The proposed development can be compared with an earlier plan, which was refused planning permission in 1998 (**S/1476/98/F**). The reasons given for the refusal of that proposal are even more relevant today with this application.
- (ii) The development would result in an unacceptably adverse impact on road safety and congestion in the area.
- (iii) The development, given its location, would have an adverse impact on the visual quality of the War Memorial site, is out of keeping with the structure of the village as a whole, and is not sympathetic to the historic interests, character, and amenities of the village.
- (iv) Noise issuing both from machinery and traffic would have an unacceptable impact on residents. (Policy ES 6)
- (v) The development would result in an unacceptable increase in the pressure on the village infrastructure and is therefore not sustainable.
- (vi) The Council has not secured 50% affordable housing on this site.
- (vii) The retention of the whole of the façade extended and heightened would have an adverse effect on the quality of the development. Whilst the centre of the façade has historic merit, the rest has considerably less aesthetic value.
- (vi) Policy EM8 (Loss of employment sites in villages) should be adhered to.”

I understand the Parish Council has sent a letter to every household in the village dated 14th January 2006 expressing its concern at the application and urging parishioners to write to the Council. Any further comments received will be reported verbally.

17. **The Environment Agency** states the application does not sufficiently consider surface water drainage, pollution control and environmental impact and conditions are recommended requiring the submission of further information for approval prior to commencement.
18. **Anglian Water** has not commented.
19. **English Nature** has no records to suggest bats are using the building, but agrees with the Council's Ecologist that it is a possibility. A condition requiring emergence surveys and a destructive search are recommended.
20. **The Local Highway Authority** requests minor improvements to the existing factory access which have been incorporated in the amended plans.
21. **The Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** is of the opinion that additional water supplies for fire fighting are not required.
22. **The County Archaeologist** states the site lies on the northern edge of the historic village core. Evidence of Medieval and early Post-Medieval domestic activity is likely to survive. The High Street is also thought likely to follow the line of the Icknield Way, a major prehistoric route way, and the potential for the discovery of prehistoric and Roman remains in the area cannot be discounted at this stage. A condition is recommended requiring the securing of a programme of work before development commences.

23. **The Chief Financial Officer (County Council)** does not require an educational financial contribution as there is capacity in the new village primary school.

24. **The Conservation Manager comments:**

"The existing Press buildings are a fine range of 'Arts and Crafts' buildings, dating from 1908 that make an important contribution to the built environment of Foxton and any alterations will need to be carefully handled. It will also be important to ensure that the demolition will not include any parts of building that are of architectural interest.

Having had the opportunity to inspect the interior of the buildings, I am of the opinion that there is little of architectural interest worthy of retention to the interiors behind the Station Road elevation.

The buildings fronting Station Road form quite an eclectic composition, with classical elements incorporated into an overall asymmetrical arrangement. All elements contribute to the overall strength and architectural impact of the structures on the streetscape. I am pleased to see that the revised scheme now retains the 'saw-tooth' element at the left hand end (nearest the war memorial, House 1), though where this abuts the white rendered central element (House 10) the wall is to be partially taken down and re-built on a new line set back from the existing elevation. This will not achieve anything in practice but will weaken the overall strength of the existing architectural composition. Therefore the proposal should be revised to retain the line of the existing wall and limit the alterations to the introduction of new openings (the head of the wall where it abuts the white rendered central element could also be straightened out without harm to the overall composition). The new window and entrance door that are to be introduced into this wall will need to be undertaken with a degree of care and the detailing should reflect the 'Arts and Crafts' roots of the original building.

The conversion/re-building of the factory unit element to form dwellings includes the introduction of a number of dormer windows on the rear elevation. The elevation is at variance to the plan in that it only shows 3 dormers, whereas the plan indicates 5 dormers. These dormers would appear to follow the form of the existing dormers on the street elevation (and should therefore have lead roofs etc). I would wish to see details of these dormers before work commences to ensure that they are appropriate. The street elevation includes a series of rooflights. These should be 'conservation' type, with a condition requiring the final size and manufacturer to be agreed before work commences.

Finally, there is a war memorial to employees of the Press killed in the Great War and Second World War mounted on the sidewall of the open porch. In the event of planning permission being granted for conversion of the building I would expect a condition to be imposed requiring retention of this memorial in this location and that the porch will remain open in perpetuity. There are also a number of other significant 'Arts and Crafts' elements to the building which should be retained including; the ventilation cowl to the ridge of the roof, the two dated rainwater hopper heads (with initials UTP), the 'Venetian' window and two dormers, the portico complete with ionic columns and open book/sun detail to the pediment. The existing chimney, though simply detailed, is also a key component to the overall composition and should be retained. I am aware that the current scheme proposes the retention of all these items, but I have listed them here for the avoidance of doubt.

Recommendation:

No objection in principle but would wish to see the link-wall revised on House 1 (as outlined above) and conditions as set out above. The roof to House 1 is given as Sarnafil. I assume this to be a single ply membrane detailed with rolls to resemble lead. Such a roof treatment might be acceptable, but alternatives might include a standing seam aluminium or zinc roof. There would also appear to be a panel of patent glazing in this roof facing Station Street, but no information is provided on this. Samples and details of the roof treatment to House 1 should again be agreed before work commences. Finally, a scheme of this size should fall into the criteria for provision of Public Art. Given the design of the existing building, there may be scope for it to be in the form of some further 'Arts and Crafts' detailing or helping to enhance the backdrop to the war memorial'.

25. **The Council's Ecologist** received a bat survey but some parts of the roof space proved difficult to access. Bats may be present and a Condition requiring further survey work is suggested. Provision for nesting birds is also required and can be conditioned.
26. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** has concerns that noise emanating from the existing extraction system located on the southern elevation of the Press factory may have an adverse impact on the 4 affordable flats proposed. The system would have to be relocated, and can be secured by Condition. A further condition regarding the operation of power operated machinery during the construction period is required.
27. **The Environment Operations Manager (Waterbeach Depot)** has no objections. More information would be useful on the proposed bin store adjacent to the affordable homes.
28. **EDF Energy** has not commented regarding the resiting of the sub-station.

Representations (Pre-amendment)

29. 3 objections have been received from Station Road residents. The main points are:
 1. The volume of traffic onto Station Road will increase creating highway danger and increasing congestion of the junction with the A10.
 2. Recent residential developments in the village and those in the pipeline will increase the strain on already stretched village infrastructure e.g. the school is at full capacity and there will be increased pressure on local doctors' surgeries.
 3. There will be a negative impact on visual amenity of a high density scheme in the heart of the village, close to the War Memorial and the Conservation Area.
 4. Inadequate parking is proposed for the 3 new houses fronting onto High Street and the single detached dwelling on Station Road. This would lead to on-street parking near a busy junction.
 5. The ridge height of the Press building is raised and the roof extended, adversely affecting the amenity of the houses opposite in Station Road in terms of decreased light and view.
 6. The number of affordable properties is below the 50% required by policy. A preferred option would be to build affordable housing on the old school site.

7. The proximity of the Press commercial site to the proposed dwellings will lead to environmental problems from noise and commercial traffic. A previous application in 1998 for 6 houses nearby was refused partly on these grounds.
8. More housing will increase the likelihood of water shortages.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

30. The key issues are:
1. The appropriateness of the Conversion of the Press Buildings in design terms
 2. The impact on the scheme on the War Memorial.
 3. The level of provision of affordable houses.
 4. The loss of employment floorspace.
 5. Environmental considerations of building houses close to an operational factory.
 6. Traffic/parking implications.
 7. Impact on neighbouring properties/street scene.
31. The application is a scaled down version of a withdrawn application submitted in April 2005, which involved the conversion of the Press Building into 14 dwellings and the erection of 20 affordable houses.
32. Discussions with officers prior to the current application centred on the desirability of retaining as much of the attractive Arts and Craft frontage to Station Road as possible, improving the setting of the War Memorial and securing an element of affordable housing within the scheme.
33. The Conservation Manager is now satisfied that the application, as amended, will result in a sympathetic conversion of the Press Buildings, subject to conditions concerning the retention of architectural details including a small War Memorial plaque in the entrance porch. The importance of the buildings is solely in their facades, the elements to the rear having been rebuilt to modern standards over the years. More of the façade is retained in the current scheme but the Parish Council is critical of the impact of this on the War Memorial itself.
34. More thought has been given to the setting of the free standing Village War Memorial. Greater clearance is achieved by resiting the proposed unit facing Station Road and removing a garage on the High Street frontage from the scheme. The existing electricity sub-station which currently forms an unfortunate backdrop will be resited. Conditions can be attached to the permission withdrawing permitted development rights for the erection of buildings within the domestic garden area proposed behind the memorial, and a landscape scheme attached to secure the planting of a hedge behind the existing low wall enclosing the memorial. The Parish Council considers the development will damage its setting.
35. The applicant has discussed the provision of affordable housing with the Council resulting in the provision of a block of 4 one and two bedroom flats. This equates to 33% of the units proposed, a shortfall on the Local Plan requirement of up to 50%. A

letter of justification has been received from the applicant's agent which is attached as Appendix 1.

36. As well as the additional costs involved, particularly with regards to the retention of the façade of the building in accordance with the advice of the Conservation Officer and the relocation of the existing sub-station away from the setting of the War Memorial, Members will note the financial problems currently being experienced by Burlington Press, a major local employer. In the circumstances I consider the provision of 4 affordable houses instead of a maximum of 6 acceptable given the planning gain flowing from the redevelopment and the economic advantages for Burlington Press, increasing the likelihood that they will remain in the village. The Parish Council remains concerned at the potential loss of 2 affordable houses and criticises the chosen location adjacent to the modern factory building.
37. Although there will be some loss of employment floorspace with the conversion/rebuilding of the frontage buildings, large areas of the floorspace are available in the modern factory buildings to the rear with changes in technology which will enable the existing office function to relocate into a newly partitioned area within that building. There will be no loss of jobs as a result of the development. The large 2 storey office building, which was also proposed for residential conversion in the previous scheme is being retained in employment use. Further information on the Company's circumstances is given in Appendix 2.
38. The Chief Environmental health Officer is satisfied it is appropriate to build houses close to the modern factory to the rear, with the proviso that extraction vents adjacent to the proposed affordable houses are relocated prior to their occupation. This can be secured by Condition. The Parish Council remains concerned about the juxtaposition of housing with a potential noise source.
39. The Parish Council and local residents have expressed concern about traffic hazards likely to result from increased traffic onto Station Road and fear increased on-street parking. At the suggestions of officers all the parking is now to the rear via the existing factory access. The Local Highway Authority supports this arrangement, subject to some minor widening/improved kerb radii to the Station Road access which has been incorporated in the amended plans. The previous scheme accessed the 3 detached houses off High Street and rear access has the advantage of retaining most of an attractive frontage wall adjacent to the Conservation Area, which will now only be interrupted by pedestrian accesses. More parking has been provided within the amended scheme at the behest of officers. 21 spaces/garages are now provided which exceeds the Government standard of an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling.
40. One neighbour is concerned at the impact of raising and extending the existing roof of the converted building on the light and view from his property, but the overall height will only be 7.9m and the objector's dwelling is set at an angle to Station Road at a distance of 24m. The Parish Council is also concerned that raising the ridge will increase shadowing in Station Road, increasing the likelihood of icy conditions on the road and path. This is unlikely to be a side effect given the orientation and the small increase involved i.e. 1.3m.
41. The Parish Council points out that in the last 5 years there has been considerable housing development in the village, in the order of 15% increase in the housing stock either built or approved. Further residential development on this site will impose an unacceptable strain on the existing limited village infrastructure, particularly the school and the village shop. The school is not at capacity and the County Council is not seeking an Education contribution from the Developer. I am surprised the village

shop is not supporting the proposal as it would obviously be a source of more custom.

42. The frontage to High Street was included in the 2002 indicative flood plain. But no part of the site falls within either the 2005 Flood Zones 3 (high risk) or 2 (medium risk). This is confirmed by the Environment Agency's response.
43. A verbal report will be made of the responses received to the amended plans.

Recommendation

44. Approval, as amended by plans PLO1F, PLO2E, PLO3E and PLO4E franked 13th January 2006, subject to the following conditions:
 1. Standard Cond A - 3 yrs.
 2. No development shall commence until details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - a) The materials to be used for the external walls and roofs of the houses and garages, and the precise detailing of the roof to House 1.
 - b) The materials to be used for hard surfaced areas including roads, driveways and car parking areas.
 - c) The treatment of the High Street boundary wall and the individual plot boundaries.
 - d) Full joinery details.
 - e) The "Conservation" roof lights and patent glazing proposed on the Station Road elevation.
 - f) The dormers to houses 7, 8 and 9.
 - g) Design of bin store.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - To ensure the development is not incongruous.)

 3. SC51 Landscaping (RC51).
 4. SC52 Implementation of landscaping (RC52)
 5. No demolition, site clearance or building operations shall commence until chestnut pale fencing of a height not less than 1.3m shall have been erected around each tree to be retained on site at a radius from the trunk of not less than 3.6m. Such fencing shall be maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority during the course of development operations. Any trees removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased during the period of development operations shall be replaced in the next planting season with tree(s) of such size and species as shall have been previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. (RC56).
 6. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a binding undertaking prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 shall have been entered into with the Local Planning Authority, requiring the transfer of the 4 affordable flats (Nos 5a, 5, 6a, 6) to a Registered Social Landlord approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. (RC - To ensure the development makes provision for Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy P5/4 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy HG7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

7. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), the following classes of development more particularly described in the Order are expressly prohibited in respect of the properties on Plots 1 and 2 unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf:
 1. PART 1 All Classes
 2. PART 2 Class A

(RC - To protect the setting of the Village War Memorial).
8. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of ground contamination investigation, assessment and remediation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme.
(Reason - To prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment.)
9. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme.
(Reason - To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water drainage.)
10. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of pollution control to the water environment shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme.
(Reason - To prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment.)
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.
(Reason - To protect the amenity of neighbouring residents.)
12. Before the occupation of the 4 affordable flats (Nos 5a, 5, 6a, 6), the existing extraction vents in the southern elevation of the adjacent factory building shall be relocated in accordance with a scheme previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To protect the amenity of the flats from an existing noise source.)

13. No development shall take place on the application site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To secure the provision of archaeological evacuation and the subsequent recording of the remains.)
14. No development shall commence until a scheme for public art is submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.
(Reason - In accordance with Policy SF/6 of the Submitted Draft Local Development Framework dated January 2006.)
15. The War Memorial plaque on the sidewall of the porch on the Station Road frontages shall be retained in-situ and the porch remain open in perpetuity, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To ensure the plaque, which has social history importance, is retained and can be viewed by the public.)
16. No development shall take place until details of the provisions to be made for nesting birds, particularly house sparrows and starlings, have been submitted together with details of the timing of the works, and are subsequently approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - To secure appropriate biodiversity features in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9 and Policy EN12 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
17. No alteration or demolition of the existing buildings, or development of the site shall commence until additional survey work has been undertaken for bats. The methodology of such survey work shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any variation to such survey work as a result of seasonality or new information shall first be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The results of the survey work shall be used in the preparation of a suitable mitigation and compensation strategy for bats.
(Reason - All species of bat and their places of shelter receive full protection under the UK Habitats Regulations, 1994. The initial bat survey submitted with the planning application highlighted the potential for bats in parts of the building that could only be assessed through further survey work or during the process of alteration or demolition of the existing building.)
18. The works involving improved radius kerbs and widening of the factory access shown on amended plan No. P101 Rev F franked 13th January 2006 shall be carried out before the occupation of the approved dwellings.
(Reason - In the interest of highway safety.)

Informatics

1. The Environment Agency comments as follows:
 1. The application site shall be subject to a detailed scheme for the investigation and recording of contamination and a report submitted together with detailed proposals in line with current best practice for the removal, containment or otherwise rendering harmless of such contamination, as may be found.

2. All surface water from roofs shall be piped direct to an approved surface water system using sealed downpipes. Open gullies should not be used.
 3. Where soakaways are proposed for the disposal of uncontaminated surface water, percolation tests should be undertaken, and soakaways designed and constructed in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or CIRIA Report 156), and to the satisfaction of the Local Authority. The maximum acceptable depth for soakaways is 2 metres below existing ground level. If, after tests, it is found that soakaways do not work satisfactorily, alternative proposals must be submitted.
 4. Soakaways will not be permitted in contaminated land.
 5. Any culverting or works affecting the flow of a watercourse requires the prior written consent of the Environment Agency under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991/Water Resources Act 1991. The Environment Agency seeks to avoid culverting, and its Consent for such works will not normally be granted except as a means of access.
 6. Surface water from roads and impermeable vehicle parking areas shall be discharged via trapped gullies.
 7. Prior to being discharged into any watercourse, surface water sewer or soakaway system, all surface water drainage from lorry parks and/or parking areas for fifty car park spaces or more and hardstandings should be passed through an oil interceptor designed compatible with the site being drained. Roof water shall not pass through the interceptor. An acceptable method of foul drainage disposal would be connection to the public foul sewer.
 8. Site operators should ensure that there is no possibility of contaminated water entering and polluting surface or underground.
2. The Council's Environmental Health Officer comments that should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before work commences, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the Council so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
3. For further information on the design of the proposed bin store, contact the Council's Environment Operations Manager, Mr S. Harwood-Clark.
4. The Conservation Manager suggests that the provision of Public Art could take the form of some further "Arts and Crafts" detailing or helping to enhance the backdrop to the War Memorial. Contact - David Grech.
5. For the avoidance of doubt, significant "Arts and Crafts" architectural elements should be retained. E.g. the ventilation cowl to the roof ridge, the two dated rainwater hopper heads (with initials UTP), the Venetian window and two dormers, the portico complete with ionic columns and open book/sun detail to the pediment.

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:**
P1/2 - Environmental Restrictions on Development
P1/3 - Sustainable Design in Built Development
P5/2 - Re-using Previously Development Land and Buildings
P5/3 - Density
P5/5 - Homes in Rural Areas
P7/6 - Historic Built Environment
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
SE4 - Group Villages
SE8 - Village Frameworks
HG7 - Affordable Housing on Sites within Village Frameworks
HG10 - Housing Mix and Design
HG11 - Backland Development
EM8 - Loss of Employment Sites in Villages
EN12 - Nature Conservation: Unidentified Sites
EN30 - Development affecting setting of Conservation Areas
ES6 - Noise and Pollution
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents
 - Highway safety
 - The character of the Conservation Area
 - The setting of the War Memorial
 - The shortfall in the provision of affordable houses

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

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning Files Ref: S/2263/05/F, S/0813/05/F and S/1476/98/F

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