

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

1st March 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/0087/06/F – Papworth Everard
Generator and Switch Room at Papworth Hospital for Papworth Hospital NHS Trust**

**Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 16th March 2006**

Site and Proposal

1. The site, located immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the hospital site, consists of an area of gravel and hardstanding which serves as an informal parking area within the hospital estate. Within the hospital compound and located immediately adjacent to the site is a series of connected portable buildings which serve as a temporary pharmacy block. To the north of the application site, along the hospital boundary are a number of semi-mature trees and a 1.8m high chain link fence. Beyond the hospital site boundary is located an area of land currently the subject of an outline consent for residential development.
2. This full application, registered on 19th January 2006, seeks permission to erect two steel container units to house a generator and switch room to provide additional power and emergency back-up power to the growing hospital site.

Planning History

3. Outline planning permission was granted on the land immediately north of the application site under reference number **S/0203/04/O** for a scheme of residential development. The current application site adjoins the southern boundary of the residential site.
4. Refusal of full planning permission for 58 dwellings on the outline site was issued in September 2005 (S/1220/05/F). The layout showed a parking court adjacent to the current application site.

Planning Policy

5. The units are proposed to be located within the established confines of the hospital compound. The site is within the village framework.
6. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 states that development will be restricted where there is an unacceptable risk to the quality of underlying ground or surface water.
7. **Policy CS4** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that development will not be permitted which poses an unacceptable risk to the quality of the underlying groundwater.
8. **Policy ES6** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that the District Council will seek, by means of appropriate planning conditions, to minimise the

impact of noise and pollution on noise-sensitive development arising from new industrial, commercial or recreational activities.

9. Draft Local Development Framework 2006 **Policy DP/3** states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity; from undue environmental disturbance such as noise, in accordance with Policies **NE/16** and on quality of ground or surface water in accordance with policy **NE/8**.
10. Draft Local Development Framework 2006 **Policy NE/8** reiterates the advice contained within policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and policy CS4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which seek to protect the quality of ground and surface water.
11. Draft Local Development Framework 2006 **Policy NE/16** states that planning permission will not be granted for development which has an unacceptable adverse impact on the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment of existing or planned development; and that conditions may be attached to any planning permissions to ensure adequate attenuation of noise emissions or to control the noise at source.

Consultation

12. **Papworth Everard Parish Council** recommends that the application is refused and comments “Papworth Everard Parish Council is not opposed to the principle of providing this generator and switch room, but is recommending refusal of this application as submitted due to the absence of any information about: the hours of operation of the generator, or hours of testing if it is only to be used in an emergency; the noise and pollution levels emanating from the installation and the measures being planned to minimise them; the additional storage that would be required for fuel for the generator. We are aware of an impending application for about 45 dwellings from David Wilson Homes for the adjacent site to the south of North Lodge Drive. Their preliminary plan indicates a dwelling within a few metres of the intervening hospital boundary fence at this point. Assurance is required that Hospital residents and the likely future residents of the adjacent land will be protected from the possibility of excessive noise and pollution.”
13. **SCDC Chief Environmental Health Officer** comments “I have concerns about the potential for the generator to cause noise and disturbance for occupiers of existing and proposed residential properties. This department has received complaints of noise in respect of the recent building work and extraction equipment operating at unsociable hours close to residential properties. I understand the proposed generator will be used in a stand by capacity and would be run for a limited test time initially but that it could be used more intensively if required. In the absence of supplementary information such as the location of similar units to that which is proposed by this application as well as proposed hours of use, it is not possible to comment further. If the application were successful, I would recommend that the following conditions be attached to any consent granted: Sc28 – Before the use, hereby permitted, commences, the building shall be acoustically insulated in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; Sc26 – No power-operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 hours or after 18.00 hours on weekdays (nor at any time on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays) unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions.”

14. **Environment Agency** comments that “the application, as submitted, does not consider sufficiently pollution control. We recommend that the following condition is appended to any approval given: Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of Pollution Control shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans. Reason – to ensure a satisfactory method of pollution control.” The Environment Agency also recommended a number of informatives to be attached to the decision should the application be approved.

Representations

15. The **agent** for the scheme has submitted further representations, dated 13th February 2006, in an attempt to address the concerns of the Parish Council regarding hours of operation, noise emissions and the location of fuel storage. Parish Council comments regarding these points are awaited at the time of preparing this report.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

16. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application relate to:
- a) The visual impact of the development
 - b) The impact of the development upon the amenity of nearby dwellings
 - c) The impact of the development on the environment

The visual impact of the development

17. The proposed generator and switch room are proposed to be contained within two steel container units which have a temporary appearance, unsuitable for permanent location on the site. The units will be largely screened from public view but are only justified so long as the hospital remains on site and requires the power for back-up to the vital services that the hospital provides. I am of the view that the proposed structures are not of a high standard of design that would contribute to a positive sense of place and would therefore normally be considered contrary to Policy P1/3 of the Structure Plan. However, given their temporary nature, the indirect social, health and community benefits by sustaining the use of the hospital and the longer term likelihood that the hospital will relocate I am of the view that the units do not pose a significant undue harm such as to warrant a refusal. A condition is recommended to ensure that these structures are removed as soon as they are no longer required so that this area of the site can be brought into future beneficial use.
18. Further to the above, the applicant’s have indicated that the orientation of the units cannot be decided until the configuration of buried services within the site are located. In order to ensure that the subsequent development does not significantly differ from the format indicated in the application conditions are recommended below to ensure that the precise orientation is agreed and that some level of external screening is installed to minimise the impact of the site on the immediate surrounding area as much as possible.

The impact of the development upon the amenity of nearby dwellings

19. At the present time there are no dwellings in the nearby vicinity that would be affected by the proposal. However, as mentioned by the Parish Council, the site lies immediately adjacent to a site with outline consent for a residential development

(S/0203/04/O). As such it is important to ensure that the development will not pose a disturbance to the amenities of any future residents. The applicant's have provided some information regarding the likely use and noise emanating from the site. However the information provided does not go far enough to ensure that no disturbance will arise as precise details of the level of usage cannot be predetermined as the intention is for the units to act as an emergency backup for the hospital site in general. It is the opinion of the Chief Environmental Health Officer that a suitable scheme of noise attenuation is essential in order to protect the amenities of neighbouring dwellings. As such a condition ensuring that such a scheme is submitted to and approved in writing by the Authority prior to any works commencing on site is recommended to ensure that no disturbance arises from the development.

The impact of the development on the environment

20. As stated by the Environment Agency, the application does not currently sufficiently consider the potential for the development to result in a risk of pollution to the environment. Although the development in itself does not pose a direct threat to the environment, and the applicants have stated that the fuel storage tank will be double skinned for additional security against leaking, given that the proposed generator requires diesel to operate, and includes a fuel store for additional storage there is the potential for fuel to escape into the environment unless suitably contained. I am satisfied that it is possible for the applicant's to undertake a suitable scheme of pollution control to ensure that there is no potential for pollution to the environment and as such have included the Environment Agency's condition in the recommendation below.

Recommendation

21. Approval with conditions

Recommended conditions:

1. SCA (3 Years) – RCA.
2. No development shall commence until details of the precise siting and orientation of the generator and switch room have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (RC5 aii).
3. SC60 (RC60).
4. SC28 (RC28).
5. No power-operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 hours or after 18.00 hours on weekdays (nor at any time on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays) unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions. (RC26).
6. The generator and switch room, hereby permitted, shall remain on site as long as their use is required by the hospital. Shall the need for the units cease or the hospital relocate the units shall be removed from the site and the land restored to its former condition within three months of the use ceasing or at the time of the hospital relocating, whichever is the sooner. (RC – Approval of the proposal on a permanent basis would be contrary to the proper planning of the area and the land should be reinstated to facilitate future beneficial use).

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
- Draft Local Development Framework 2006
- Planning file Refs: S/0087/06/F, S/0203/04/O

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