

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

5th April 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/0116/06/F - Histon
Erection of 63 Bedroom Care Home, Chivers Way
for Carebase Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 25th April 2006**

Site and Proposal

1. Site on the northern side of Chivers Way, immediately before the Chivers factory. There are office buildings opposite and former car park (see PLANNING HISTORY below) to the north. Chivers Way, accessed via Station Road, serves the Vision Park office development as well as the Chivers factory.
2. The site area is 0.33ha.
3. The full application, received 24th January 2006, proposes the erection of a 63 bedroom care home. The building will be arranged on three floors with kitchen, store rooms, laundry, plant room and staff rest room in the roof space. Elevations will be brick and render with a tiled roof; eaves height will be 7.8m with an overall ridge height of 12.4m. (The 3 storey offices opposite have an eaves height of 9.5m and ridge height of 11.4m).

Planning History

4. The site, together with the former car park to the north, and the offices opposite, was part of the original Chivers Jam factory. In developing a more modern factory further back into the site, this area was retained as factory offices (opposite), staff shop/amenity/reception/security (application site) and staff car park (to the rear). With the factory being reorganised several years ago the offices were retained/redeveloped as additional office floorspace by a development company.
5. An application for 57 houses on the application site **and** the former car park was refused in February 2004 and subsequently dismissed on Appeal; the fundamental reason being Kay Hitch Way was inadequate for access.
6. Following this decision the land was divided into two, the car park section being offered to Bovis Homes for a 46 bed retirement home, and the application site to Carebase Ltd for a nursing home. The former has been refused and an Appeal lodged against the decision.
7. An earlier scheme by Carebase for an 80 bed nursing home was withdrawn last year prior to a refusal, based on over-development, being issued.

Planning Policy

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

8. **Policy SE2** lists Histon and Impington as a Rural Growth Settlement.
9. **Policy SG9** states that residential care homes will be permitted where:-
 - a) Design is in keeping with surrounding properties;
 - b) Boundary treatment provides privacy and visual amenity;
 - c) Neighbours privacy is protected;
 - d) Safe and convenient access;
 - e) Parking as per Council's standards;
 - f) Adequate local services.
10. **Appendix 7/1**, Standards for Car Parking Provision, requires 1 space per 3 bedspaces i.e. 21 spaces.

Consultation

11. **Histon Parish Council** objects, stating:
 - a) Overdevelopment with a number of infrastructure constraints:
 - Inadequate car parking
 - Strain on local medical services
 - b) Although it might well offer opportunities for local employment, very likely that a great number of staff will be from outside the village and require to travel by their own transport. This will have parking and transport implications.
 - c) Have not assessed the need for such a facility within the community, particularly now that the 85 bed Etheldred House facility is already coming on-stream this year.
 - d) Unsuitability as a care home - a factory site operating 24 hours a day. Potential of light and smell and noise pollution - do not consider site to be appropriate for a residential home.
 - e) Flooding and drainage issues remain unaddressed. Parish Councils' dossier (September 2005) provided as part of this submission.
12. The **Environment Agency** does not wish to comment directly, the site being outside the flood zone of the nearby watercourse.
13. The comments of the **Land Drainage Manager** will be reported verbally.
14. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no comments other than to ask that the building is protected from noise from the nearby road/rail/industrial premises. A condition will require such details to be submitted and agreed.
15. The **County Archaeologist** has requested a condition requiring an archaeological investigation prior to development.
16. The **Local Highway Authority** refers to the fact that Chivers Way is not an adopted highway. In the interests of permeability/integration it is suggested that a footpath link should be provided through the adjacent site to Kay Hitch Way. The 16 parking

spaces are considered inadequate and, although reference is made to staff cycling, there is no cycle rack provision.

17. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** has advised that additional water supplies for fire fighting are not required.

Representations

18. A resident of Poplar Road to the north is concerned that the size of the 'flood field' may be decreased. (NB: The application site does **not** affect the existing surface water storage facility which is on the adjacent site to the north). The neighbour is also concerned that a three storey building will affect their view, suggesting that it should be two storey.
19. Another resident of Poplar Road refers to the risk of flooding. They also mention access problems with Kay Hitch Way, but **this** scheme is accessed off Chivers Way. Reference is also made to the length of time needed for an appointment at the local doctors' surgery.
20. A resident of Kay Hitch Way objects as the three storey building will overlook their property and block their view as it is bad enough with all the high trees around the estate. Noise will be a problem to residents, access on Kay Hitch Way is a problem, as if flooding.
21. Agents on behalf of Premier Foods plc, owners of Chivers factory, have registered concerns relating to a care home being close to a factory as the 16 spaces appear inadequate, the factory operates 24/7 and there is a significant amount of external lighting around the factory/loading bays, with the amount of traffic generated by the factory, especially HGVs, safety of the residents will be an issue.
22. The occupier of one of the small office units opposite the site objects for reasons of overdevelopment, and inadequate parking. Reference is also made to noise, smell and traffic from the factory and considers it to be an undesirable site for such a facility. Histon and Impington Village Society feels that there is already sufficient accommodation for elderly people in the village, there will be an increase in traffic and that not all staff will be recruited from the village.
23. Councillor Mason has written objecting to the proposal as a comprehensive flood risk assessment has not been submitted. The site drains to the adjacent balancing pond and ultimately to the Award Drain 164. There have been local instances of flooding with the lagoon filling up in 40 minutes with properties both upstream and downstream being flooded.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

24. The various issues relevant to this application are (i) suitability of site, (ii) overdevelopment and size of building, and its effect on neighbours, (iii) access, traffic and parking provision, (iv) need and other facilities in the village (v) flooding and drainage.

(I) Suitability

Whilst recognising that the site chosen is, perhaps, rather unusual for a nursing home, it is obviously considered suitable by the applicants who will be aware that it is adjacent to a factory which operates 24/7 and is served by articulated vehicles. The

Chief Environment Health Officer has asked for a condition to ensure the building is protected from noise.

(ii) Overdevelopment

The earlier scheme for the 80 bed home was considered to be too big for the site and poorly laid out in respect of the site's boundaries. Before a refusal could be issued the application was withdrawn.

This scheme reduces the number of bedrooms by 17 which, in turn, reduces the footprint of the actual building. Being a more simple floor-plan and sited further back into the site, the building is less obtrusive in the street. At the same time there is more space for landscaping.

Neighbours will not be affected, those in Poplar Road who expressed concern are some 100.0m away (with a development site in between), and those in Kay Hitch Way approximately 65.0m distant. The closest building will be the new 3-storey office block on the opposite side of Chivers Way.

(iii) Access, traffic and parking

Chivers Way, whilst a private road, represents an attractive approach through a landscaped business park; the factory entrance lies beyond the application site. Traffic generated will be relatively low. Maximum staffing will be during the daytime with 14-18 persons on duty. There will be shift changes at 8.00am - 2.00pm, 2.00pm - 8.00pm and 8.00pm - 8.00am. Part-time care assistants are not limited to the above shift changes.

Visiting will be at weekends and/or evenings and should not conflict with any commercial traffic.

Sixteen parking spaces have been provided; the SCDC standards require 21. Revised plans showing this number have been received, which also show provision of 10 covered cycle racks.

(iv) Need and other facilities

I have been advised by the South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust that the age profile generated by planning applications is not a material consideration in determining an application and that it is the responsibility of the P.C.T. to ensure that all residents have access to general practice facilities and to ensure practices are funded appropriately to enable this.

(v) Flooding and drainage

As this site lies **outside** the Environment Agency's flood plain, the Agency is not directly involved. The applicants have, nevertheless, prepared a Flood Risk Assessment for the site and this has been referred to the Land Drainage Manager for his comments. No fundamental objection is expected as the building proposed is smaller than that which has been demolished and there is also a large percentage of the site put to garden - previously it was all building or car parking areas. Confirmation has been requested from the agent that the site will connect through with the existing surface water sewers into the adjacent lagoon. It has been confirmed that the applicant has rights to discharge into the balancing pond and will pay 50% of the maintenance cost.

25. For the above reasons I am satisfied that the scheme is acceptable and that the previous concerns have been overcome.
26. Approval is recommended.

Recommendation

27. Approval, as amended by the revised plans showing the additional parking and confirmation from the Land Drainage Manager that surface water disposal is not a problem.
 1. SC'A' - RC 'A';
 2. SC51 - Landscaping Scheme, RC51;
 3. SC52 - Implementation of landscaping scheme, RC52;
 4. The use of Redland Double Roman tiles, colour Farmhouse Red, is specifically excluded from this consent. No development shall be commenced until an alternative tile and colour has been agreed; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details. RC 5(a)(ii)
 5. SC66 - Archaeological investigation, RC66;
 6. No development shall be commenced until details of the fencing/railings on the north-eastern boundary of the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, RC60;
 7. SC29 - Noise attenuation 'protect the proposed care home from noise from traffic, the adjacent factory and the Guided Bus", RC29;
 8. + any conditions requested by the Land Drainage Manager.

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
 - SE2** (Rural Growth Settlement)
 - HG9** (Residential Care Homes)
 - Appendix 7/1** (Standards for Car Parking)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Flooding
 - Drainage
 - Overlooking and loss of privacy
 - Unsuitable site
 - Already sufficient accommodation in village
 - Inadequate infrastructure

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning Files S/1559/03/F, S/1878/05/F, S/1916/05/F and S/0116/06/F

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