

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 5<sup>th</sup> April 2006  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/0177/06/F – Balsham**  
**Erection of 18 Affordable Dwellings and Relocation of Existing Allotments.**  
**Allotments and Agricultural Land Off Hay Close for Flagship Housing Group Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for determination: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006 (Major Application)**

**Members will visit this site on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2006.**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application relates to a 1.1 hectares/2.7 acre approximately site, the northern 0.5 hectares/1.2 acres approximately of which is currently in use as allotments. The southern part of the site forms part of a field. The site rises gently to the south. An electricity line crosses the site. Two-storey dwellings in Bartons Close and Horseshoe Close bound the site to the north. Allotments and two-storey and single storey dwellings in Princes Close bound the site to the east. A field lies to the south and to the west of the southern part of the site. Two-storey residential development in Hay Close (itself an affordable housing scheme) bounds the northern part of the site to the west. No.20 Horseshoe Close to the north of the site has a two-storey extension on its southern side not shown on the O.S. or the application plans.
2. This full application, registered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006 and amended by plan date stamped the 22<sup>th</sup> March 2006, proposes the relocation of the existing allotments to the adjacent agricultural land to the south and the erection of 18 affordable dwellings on the existing allotments. 4no. 2-bedroom flats, 6no. 2-bedroom houses and 8no. 3-bedroom houses are proposed. The flats are in one block. The 14 houses are to be provided in 7 pairs of semi-detached houses. Ridge and eaves heights range from 7.8m-8.5m and 4.5m-4.9m respectively. Roof pitches range from 35 degrees to 50 degrees. Slate and pantiles are proposed for the roofs. Bricks and render as the facing materials and painted timber windows are also proposed. Rear gardens are to be enclosed by close boarded fencing with trellis above. Side and front gardens are to be marked by 1.2m high four rail painted metal 'parkland' fencing. 31 car parking spaces are proposed. The density equates to approximately 36 dwellings to the hectare. The amended plan has been submitted in response to a request from the Parish Council that the access road to the allotments be widened. This revision has necessitated revisions to the turning head and position of dwellings.

### **Planning History**

3. The eight affordable dwellings in Hay Close were granted planning permission in 1991 (ref S/0385/91/F).

## Planning Policy

4. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/3** relates to sustainable design in built development and requires a high standard of design for all new development which responds to the local character of the built environment.
5. Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG8** states that, as an exception to the normal operation of the policies of the Local Plan, planning permission may be granted for schemes of 100% affordable housing designed to meet identified local housing needs on sites within or adjoining villages. The policy states that the following criteria will all have to be met:
  - (1) The development proposal includes secure arrangements for ensuring that all the dwellings within the scheme provide affordable housing in perpetuity for those in 'housing need' as defined in policy HG7.
  - (2) The number, size, design, mix and tenure of the dwellings are all confined to, and appropriate to, the strict extent of the identified local need.
  - (3) The site of the proposal is well related to the built-up area of the settlement and the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the size and character of the village.
  - (4) The development does not damage the character of the village or the rural landscape.
6. It also states that development under this policy must also: be limited to units of types and sizes required to provide accommodation for those revealed to be in 'housing need' by an up-to-date survey; be occupied only by qualifying persons, subject to cascade provisions; and be secured in perpetuity as to the above provisions (or any agreed departure from them) by planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or an alternative form of equally effective provision.
7. Local Plan 2004 **Policy TP1** states that the Council will seek, through its decisions on planning applications, to promote more sustainable transport choices and to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, by amongst other things restricting car parking to a maximum of an average of 1½ spaces plus ¼ space for visitors per dwelling.
8. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EN3** states that, in those cases where new development is permitted in the countryside, the Council will require that (a) the scale, design and layout of the scheme (b) the materials used within it, and (c) the landscaping works are all appropriate to the particular 'Landscape Character Area', and reinforce local distinctiveness wherever possible.

## Consultations

9. **Balsham Parish Council** recommended approval of the original scheme stating "The Parish Council has been in discussion with Flagship Housing for the plans to be slightly amended to include a widened access road to the allotments for future development." Any further comments received in relation to the amended plan will be reported verbally.
10. **Housing Development Officer** is in full support of the scheme stating that the number and mix of units proposed reflect the existing needs and are deemed sustainable in the longer term.

11. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** recommends conditions and an informative to the attached to any approval.
12. **General Works Manager** raises no objections to the scheme.
13. **Local Highway Authority** states that the existing carriageway of both Hay Close and Bartons Close that directly serves the development is private and not maintained by the County Council. It asks what justification there is for further development served off a private road and made no further comments on the original scheme.
14. **Environment Agency** states that soakaways should be designed and constructed to BRE 365 and recommends Highway Engineers Approval.
15. **County Archaeology** states that the site is of uncertain archaeological potential and recommends that any permission is subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation. A suggested early (Saxon) settlement focus lies to the south east of the plot, while the historic village, with its wealth of Medieval remains, lies to the north.
16. **Cambs Fire & Rescue Service** states that additional water supplies for firefighting are not required.
17. An **Affordable Housing Panel** has been convened for the 31<sup>st</sup> March and the outcome will be reported verbally at the meeting.

#### **Representations**

18. None received.

#### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

19. The main issues in relation to this application are: whether there is an identified need for the number and mix of affordable dwellings proposed; the impact on the character and appearance of the area; highway matters; and impact on neighbours.
20. The Council's Housing Development Officer confirms that there is a need for the number and mix of dwellings proposed.
21. The proposed dwellings and flats (which include variety in terms of design, ridge heights and roof pitches and chimneys) are of an attractive traditional design and are considered appropriate for the location.
22. Hedges and planting generally mark boundaries in the locality. In contrast, 1.8m high close boarded fencing with trellis above is proposed as the boundary treatments for the rear gardens in response to the pre-application recommendation of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer. The amended plan does show a new native hedge along the southern boundary of the residential development but it is my view that the close boarded part of the fencing should be no more than 1.5m high with trellis on top on this edge of village site with paths used by the public to the north and east and the proposed allotments to the south. I consider that this would have less impact on the character of the area than 1.8m close boarded fencing and, subject to planting, would also provide adequate security and privacy for the occupiers of the proposed dwellings.

23. A 5.5m wide shared surface road is proposed. Whilst it would be preferable to have a road serving 18 dwellings adopted, it does not appear possible in this instance. In order to secure the benefits of 18 affordable units, I consider that the proposed access and highway arrangements are acceptable. Parking provision is proposed at an average of 1.7 spaces per dwelling which is in accordance with the standards set out in the Local Plan.
24. The layout has been designed so that there is no serious overlooking of neighbouring properties. The bedroom window in the rear elevation of the proposed dwelling on plot 13 faces towards the two-storey extension on the southern side of No.20 Horseshoe Close. The distance between opposing first floor windows is only approximately 20.5 metres but, in view of the angle and existing screening along No.20's southern boundary, I do not consider that the occupiers of No.20 Horseshoe Close would be seriously harmed by the development. The scheme is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact on all other neighbouring properties.

### **Recommendation**

25. Delegated approval (as amended by letter dated 16.3.06 and drawing no. F-206-P01 Rev. A date stamped 22.3.06) subject to further discussions in relation to boundary treatments, revised floor and elevation plans to reflect the revised numbering of units on the amended plan and any further amendments considered necessary as a result of consideration of any representations received in relation to the amended plan.
- a. Standard Time Condition A – Time limited permission (RCA);
  - b. No development shall begin until a binding undertaking in accordance with the requirements of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the provision of 100% affordable housing shall have been entered into with the Local Planning Authority; the affordable housing shall be provided in accordance with the approved scheme (RC To ensure provision of affordable housing in accordance with the requirements of Policies HG7 and HG8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004; the proposal would otherwise be contrary to the Development Plan);
  - c. SC5a and f – Details of materials for external walls, roofs and hard surfaced materials (RC5aii);
  - d. SC51 – Landscaping (RC51);
  - e. SC52 – Implementation of Landscaping (RC52);
  - f. SC66 (the application site) – Archaeological Investigation (RC66);
  - g. SC5b and c – Details of surface and foul water drainage (RC5b and c);
  - h. During the construction period, SC26 (0800, 0800, 1800, 1300) (RC26);
  - i. No windows or openings of any kind shall be inserted at first floor level in the west elevation of the flats on 'Plot 1' as shown upon drawing no. F-206-P01 Rev. A date stamped 22.3.06 unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf (RC To protect the privacy of the occupiers of dwellings in Hay Close).

## 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:**  
**HG8** (Exceptions Policy For Affordable Housing), **TP1** (Planning For More Sustainable Travel) and **EN3** (Landscaping and Design Standards for New Development in the Countryside)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise: highway matters; drainage; archaeology; and water supplies for firefighting.

## Informatives

Should driven pile foundations be proposed, before development commences, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations should be submitted to and agreed by the District Council's Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.

During construction, there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the District Council's 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 files Ref: S/0177/06/F and S/0385/91/F

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