

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation
Control Committee

12th May 2004

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/1926/03/F – GULDEN MORDEN NINE HOUSES (INCLUDING FOUR AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS), LAND ADJ 13 TRAP ROAD FOR MRS F ADLINGTON AND CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Departure Application

Site and Proposal

1. This outline application registered on 8th September 2003, as amended by drawings received on 5th March 2004 proposes the erection of 9 houses, including four affordable dwellings on a 0.33ha parcel of land to the east of Trap Road. The site currently contains a collection of dilapidated agricultural buildings and is accessed from Trap Road.
2. To the north the site abuts agricultural land and to the west the rear gardens of a pair of cottages in Trap Road. To the rear of the site is open agricultural land and to the south, land associated with Morden Hall. Opposite the site are residential properties.
3. A sketch layout submitted with the outline application shows a single point of access at a central point from Trap Road, in the form of a shared access roadway, with properties either side orientated north and south. The four affordable houses are proposed as a terrace at right angles to Trap Road at the front of the site. The other five units are detached dwellings.
4. Public footpaths, which originally crossed the site have been the subject of a diversion order and now run along the east and south boundary of the site. Landscaping is proposed to the east of the site on land owned by the County Council as part applicant.
5. Siting and access are not reserved matters. The application as originally submitted proposed eight dwellings, three units being affordable. The density is 27 dwellings per hectare.

Planning Policy

6. The main part of the site is within the village framework.
7. Policy P5/5 of the County Structure Plan 2003 encourages small scale housing developments in villages only where appropriate subject to affordable housing, village character and setting, the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport provision.
8. **Policy SE4** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") identifies Guilden Morden as a Group Village where residential development and

redevelopment up to a maximum of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework provided that, amongst other criteria, the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village and that the development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenity of neighbours. The village should have the necessary infrastructure capacity and development should not conflict with other policies of the plan. Exceptionally development may consist of up to 15 dwellings, if this would make best use of a brownfield site. All developments should contain an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability.

9. **Policy SE8** of the Local Plan states that there will be a general presumption in favour of residential developments within frameworks where this is also in accordance with Policy SE4.
10. **Policy SE9** of the Local Plan states that development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the countryside.
11. **Policy HG7** of the Local Plan sets out the Council's policy in respect of affordable housing on sites within village frameworks where there is a clear need in the particular local area. In settlements of up to 3000 population affordable housing can represent up to 50% of the total number of dwellings for which planning permission is given.
12. **Policy HG10** of the Local Plan states that residential development will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs.
13. **Policy CS2** of the Local Plan requires adequate water supply, sewerage or land drainage systems to be available to meet the anticipated demands of the development.
14. **Policy CS10** of the Local Plan states that where planning permission is granted for 4 or more dwellings financial contributions will be sought towards education provision where a development would lead to the planned capacity of schools to be exceeded.

Consultation

15. **Guilten Morden Parish Council** recommends refusal. Its comments in respect of the original submission are attached as Appendix 1. In respect of the amended proposal it comments "The Parish Council consider that the applicants have not taken sufficient cognisance of the Parish Council's previous comments regarding the proximity of the dwellings to the recreation ground (proximity of Plots 1+2). The Parish Council recommend that a covenant or other legal document is drawn up to ensure that the future residents of these dwellings cannot object to the legitimate use of the recreation ground e.g. Balls and ball games. A Section 106 Agreement should be drawn up to ensure that the low cost/affordable housing is for those with strong connection to Guilten Morden"
16. **The Local Highway Authority** commented that it was not clear on the original drawings whether the required junction visibility splays could be achieved and recommended that the applicant conduct a frontage survey to see if the splays could be achieved without crossing adjacent land. A new footway should be provided along

the frontage of the site from the new junction bellmouth up to and including the frontage of the existing property No11 Trap Road.

In respect of the amended drawings disappointment is expressed that the visibility splays are not shown in their entirety and that other comments/recommendations have not been addressed.

Comments on the further amended drawings will be reported verbally.

17. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** requests that a condition be imposed in respect of the hours of operation of power driven machinery during the period of demolition and construction. Should driven pile foundations be proposed then details of the method of construction will be required. There should be no bonfires or burning of waste during the demolition or construction period.
18. **The Chief Financial Planning Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council** confirms that while adequate primary school capacity is available in the village to meet the needs arising from this development, further secondary school capacity will be needed at Bassingbourn Village College and a contribution is requested from the developer to cover the cost of 1 secondary school place (£9000).
19. **The Trees and Landscapes Officer** comments in respect of the original drawings that he shares the views of the Parish Council in particular with regards to the relationship of the existing trees to plot 1 and the associated garaging. On the south boundary there is a mature Field Maple that although ivy covered, appears to be a significant specimen. He is also concerned about the proximity of the proposed garage block to that tree. The eastern boundary is completely open with views into the site. It is apparent that planting is intended on this boundary, and in some form is necessary. The proposed footprints do however limit the scope for planting in what would be very small back gardens – this issue should be addressed.

Comments on the amended drawings will be reported verbally.

20. **The Environment Agency** states that it is aware of the local concern being raised in respect of foul water drainage, including the report of raw foul sewage flowing into a local watercourse. The applicant, in conjunction with Anglian Water Services, should investigate the issues raised and demonstrate to the satisfaction of the respective authorities, that the current proposal will not exacerbate the existing difficulties expressed by local residents. An objection is raised to the application as submitted.

Comments in respect of the revised details will be reported verbally.

21. In a letter to the applicant's agent **Anglian Water** has confirmed that it has no objections to the proposal.
22. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** confirms that additional water supplies for firefighting are not required.
23. **The Acting Research and Development Manager** supports the provision of four affordable 2 bedroom units.

Representations

24. The occupier of 18 Trap Road, comments in respect of the original submission that

the access road is, in addition to the farm access, very close to the access to Thompsons Meadow, which will mean that nobody can park in front of 16 or 18 Trap Road, as it is illegal to park 25 metres from a junction. Sight lines are inadequate which will make the proposed junction dangerous. The number of houses seems to be excessive. It should be reduced to six, which would help not to obscure the view from bungalows on the other side of Trap Road. Main drainage is already a problem in the area. Eight more houses can only add to this.

25. The occupier of 16 Trap Road, comments in respect of the original drawings that generally the development is too dense to the area and not in keeping with the planning and design features of dwellings in the immediate vicinity or in the village as a whole. The proposed vehicular access is a relocation of the existing agricultural access. How can this be regarded as an access for eight houses? Parking problems highlighted by 18 Trap Road are rehearsed, as are sewage difficulties. The increase in traffic and intrusion from increased street and vehicle lighting would all significantly reduce the quality of life enjoyed by nearby residents. The proposal is perceived as an opportunity for an elected local authority to make money by seeking to change use from agriculture to residential without taking into account the wishes or requirements of local residents. Is there not a demand for the land locally, with or without buildings, to remain on a commercial tenancy? Who will benefit from the money earned on the sale of the land?

In response to the amended scheme it is pointed out that a further affordable dwelling, without reducing the number of other houses exacerbates the above points.

26. The occupier of 11 Trap Road strongly objects to the original drawings which show the County Council giving land to 13 Trap Road, which extends the garden of that property across the rear of No 11. This land comes right up to the walls of No 11 directly outside two downstairs windows, which seems to result in a very unreasonable intrusion of privacy. There is currently right of access to the land at the rear of No11 for maintenance. The proposal would mean having to enter the next door garden for access for upkeep and repairs.

It is noted that the line of visibility shown cuts across land owned by No11.

The plan lacks elevation details, which need to be known, but regardless of this there is concern about the proposed dwelling closest to No11. The size, 'L-shaped' layout and proximity of this house makes it quite overpowering. The view of this nearest property will occupy three quarters of the width of the living room of No11 and will block out most, if not all of the sky. It makes similar intrusions on three more windows. There should be reconsideration of this particular house in the proposal.

The letter rehearses previous concern about intrusion of street lighting and traffic.

Applicant's Representations

27. A copy of a letter submitted with the amended drawing addressing some of the issues raised during the consultation process is attached as Appendix 2.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

28. The Key issues to be considered are whether the proposal complies with the criteria set out in Policy SE4, SE9, HG7, and HG10 of the Local Plan.

29. The majority of the site, and all proposed built development, is within the framework and contains dilapidated agricultural buildings. Garden land to plots 2-4 extends beyond the framework by some 8 metres but given that the east boundary of the site will be bounded by a public footpath and the County Council is proposing to carry out landscaping outside the site I am of the view that the proposal in this respect is acceptable. Although development on this side of Trap Road is linear in form, it is my view that removal of these buildings and redevelopment of the site for residential purposes is acceptable. It offers the opportunity to secure affordable housing on a site within the village framework.
30. As amended the application proposes the erection of nine dwellings, four of which are affordable dwellings. Policy SE4 of the Local Plan limits development in Guilden Morden to groups of up to eight dwellings. Exceptionally development of up to 15 dwelling could be permitted where it would make best use of a brownfield site. As agricultural land this site is not brownfield by definition however it is my view that erection of nine dwellings makes best use of this site and could be treated as a Departure from the Local Plan provided the scheme satisfies other criteria.
31. The Local Highway Authority has not objected in principle to the application although still requires the applicant to address details. Access is not a reserved matter and therefore the details need to be resolved at this stage. Its comments on the latest amended drawings will be reported verbally.
32. Although the proposed dwelling on Plot 1 has been resited further south in an attempt to reduce its impact on 11 and 13 Trap Road, I am of the view that it would benefit from a repositioning further east to take it away from the boundary with those properties. There is space within the layout to allow for this.
33. I am of the view that the housing mix is acceptable, with four of the nine dwellings proposed being affordable dwellings in line with the requirements of Policy HG7 of the Local Plan.
34. Anglian Water does not object to the development. The further comments of the Environment Agency will be reported verbally but I anticipate that any matters raised can be dealt with by condition.
35. A contribution towards education provision as requested by the Chief Financial Planning Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council should be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.
36. Landscaping of the site is important and in particular screening of the east boundary. The proposal to screen outside of the development on land owned by the County Council as part applicant is in my view acceptable but I will report the views of the Trees and Landscapes Officer verbally. Any landscaping outside the development site can be included in the Section 106 Agreement.
37. Guilden Morden Parish Council remains concerned about the proximity of dwellings on the northern side of the site to the adjacent recreation ground. I am of the view that this relationship is acceptable although I understand the Parish Council's concern. The proposed houses have been moved away from the boundary with the recreation ground to safeguard existing planting.
38. In the letter from the applicant's agent (Appendix 2) I note that agreement has been reached with the occupiers of 11 Trap Road over the transfer of land.

Recommendations

39. That, subject to the comments of the Local Highway Authority, Environment Agency and Trees and Landscapes Officer in respect of the revised drawing, and a further resiting of the proposed house on Plot 1, the application be advertised as a Departure from the Development Plan. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the Departure process the applicant is invited to enter into a Section 106 Agreement securing the provision of affordable housing, an education contribution and the landscaping to the east of the site. Subject to the completion of the above that delegated powers are given to issue outline consent subject to safeguarding conditions.

Reasons for Approval

1. The application has been advertised as a Departure from the Local Plan (Policy SE4) on the grounds that the proposal makes best use of a site within the village framework and brings forward four affordable dwellings.

In other respects the approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:

- (a) **County Structure Plan 2003: P5/5**
(b) **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE9, HG7, HG10 and CS2**

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:

- Residential amenity including noise disturbance and overlooking issues
- Highway safety
- Visual impact on the locality
- Drainage Issues

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:

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning Application File – S/1926/03/F

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