

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

10th May 2006

**S/6342/06/RM - Caxton
Mitigation Works for the Caxton Bypass to include Mounding and Planting at
Land West of Caxton Bypass South of Bourn Brook
for MCA Developments Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 22nd May 2006**

Site and Proposal

1. The application site lies on the west side of the Caxton by-pass south of Bourn Brook and north of the roundabout on the A1198 Royston Road. Following representations from local residents regarding the impact of the by-pass when it opened, the Cambourne developers undertook to construct screening bunds on the application site, but did not seek prior Reserved Matters approval. The current application seeks to regularise this situation and to resolve the Environment Agency objection to a minor incursion into the Bourn Brook floodplain. A public footpath crosses the site and is accommodated by a dip between two sections of bund before crossing the by-pass at grade.
2. The application received on 27 March 2006, as amended on 18 April 2006 (additional information – cross sections) proposes is to retain most of the screen bund as constructed and planted. A small area immediately south of the brook would be removed and regraded, whilst retaining the height adjacent to the carriageway for screening. The top and slopes facing the by-pass are to be planted with a mix of native deciduous trees and shrubs to blend in with the surrounding landscape and roadside hedge planting. The “inner” slopes of the bunds are to be fenced with post and wire fencing to enable the return of the adjacent land to agriculture, and to prevent trespass onto the upper part of the bunds from the public footpath.

Planning History

3. **S/6066/00/RM** approval of the Caxton By-pass as a reserved matter of the Cambourne development outline permission.
4. **S/6295/05/RM** –Modifications to approved Caxton By-pass scheme to include additional mounding and planting. Withdrawn because of inadequate information and unresolved floodplain encroachment.

Planning Policy

5. South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (“The Local Plan”)

EN3 Landscaping and design standards for new development in the countryside
EN5 The landscaping of new development

Consultation

6. **South Cambridgeshire District Council's Landscape Consultant** – would have preferred a less engineered land form but given the location immediately adjacent to an engineered road system, no objection. Planting should be implemented this autumn.
7. **Caxton Parish Council** – recommend that both these applications are approved.
 - The screening used over Crow Dean on the west side of the bridge over Bourn Brook should be repeated.
 - The level of the southern half of the area should be raised subject to planning permission S/6341/06/F - suggest 6 feet.
 - There is not sufficient top soil on the existing mound. At least one foot of top soil should be put on the existing bank.
 - Trees which will grow tall should be used and preferably larger, more mature (6') trees should be used.
 - Care should be taken near Bourn Brook not to obstruct flow either now or in the future.
8. **Cambourne Parish Council** – recommend refusal for the following reasons:
 - The plans appear not to show the adjoining property 20 Bourn Road
 - Consideration should be given to native evergreen species as part of the tree mix
 - The bunds should be increased to help mitigate the effects of the By-Pass prior to planting
 - Hedging removed as part of construction works should be reinstated.
9. **County Footpaths** – reply awaited
10. **Environment Agency** – reply awaited, but it is understood that the proposed amendments overcome concerns – confirmation is awaited.
11. **English Nature** – no comment.
12. **The Ramblers** – anxious that planting and bunds should not be so close to Public Footpath 14 as to overhang the footpath and cause obstruction to the view of approaching road traffic.

Representations

13. One letter from a resident on the south side of Bourn Road expressing concern about decreased security because of the use of the by-pass lay-by and the top of the bund between the public footpaths to trespass onto adjacent land.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

14. The key issues are the impact of the mounding on the local landscape character, and the impact on residential amenity at premises in Bourn Road. The mounding was installed at the request of local residents in consultation with the developers, in order to prevent headlights from the roundabout causing disturbance at properties in Bourn Road. This has been successful for most of the southern stretch of the by-pass, but it has not been possible to screen the part of the by-pass where it crosses the culverted Bourne Brook. The height of the mound was selected to achieve effective screening while minimising the loss of farmland

required for its construction. In the view from Bourn Road, the steep-sided bunds appear as grassy hills which are not wholly in keeping with the landscape, but blend as grassland with the adjacent agricultural field. This is considered preferable to the unmitigated view of the by-pass which would otherwise appear intrusive in the outlook from Bourn Road. The landform will also be “softened” with the establishment of the shrubs and trees. In the view from the by-pass, the mounding appears more in keeping with the surroundings, because the longer view is framed by the embankments at and beyond the Bourn Road bridge. The installation of fencing to restrict access to the mound-tops will restrict trespass and loss of privacy at properties at higher levels.

15. The proposed alteration to the bund foot adjacent to Bourn Brook overcomes the Environment Agency objection to the mounding as built, and should be implemented as soon as possible. The remainder of the mitigation measures proposed for this area of the by-pass are acceptable considering the balance between resident’s aspirations for comprehensive screening from the by-pass, and the aims of Local Plan policies EN3 and EN5 which would resist incongruous intrusion of new landforms into the locality.

Recommendation

16. **Approve** subject to the following conditions
 1. The landscaping and boundary treatment hereby permitted shall be carried out in the first planting season following the date of this decision notice, and any trees or plants which within a period of ten years from the completion of the landscaping and boundary treatment scheme due, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
(Reason – To secure the completion of the landscaping works for mitigation of the impact of the by-pass and mounding in accordance with Policies EN3 and EN5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
 2. The removal of the existing mounding which lies within the Bourn Brook flood plain as designated by the Environment Agency shall take place within six months of the date of this decision notice in accordance with a scheme which shall have previously been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason – To restore the capacity of the flood plain to accommodate flood waters in the event of excess flow in order to prevent flooding of land in the vicinity in accordance with Policy CS5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and allow the landscaping works referred to in condition 1 to be carried out in the next available planting season.)

Informatives

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:**

EN3 Landscaping and design standards for new development in the countryside

EN5 The landscaping of new development

2. The development 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 and security issues
- Footpath use
- Visual impact on the landscape

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning applications reference S/6066/00/RM approval of the Caxton By-pass as a reserved matter of the Cambourne development outline permission and S/6294/05/F Additional planting in Block W

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