

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

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10<sup>th</sup> May 2006

**S/0593/06/RM – Melbourn**  
**5 Detached Dwellings, Land off Dolphin Lane, For Country and Metropolitan Homes**

**Recommendation: Refusal**  
**Date for Determination: 19<sup>th</sup> May 2006**

### **Adj Conservation Area**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. This application, registered on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2006, seeks reserved matters consent for the siting, design and landscaping of five detached dwellings on a 1.1ha site of vacant land to the south west of Dolphin Lane, Melbourn.
2. To the north east the site abuts the rear boundaries of properties in Dolphin Lane, apart from at its south east corner where it has a 20m wide frontage to Dolphin Lane itself. To the south east the site abuts the rear of properties in Dolphin Lane and High Street, and to the north west and south west an area of land which benefits from planning consent for a Riverside Park (see Planning History below).
3. The boundary of the Conservation Area runs along the frontage of Dolphin Lane and the south east boundary of the site.
4. The site is served from the Dolphin Lane frontage with an access roadway running into the site parallel to the rear boundary of properties in Dolphin Lane. A minimum distance of 8m is maintained between the roadway and the rear of existing properties. The dwellings on Plots 1 to 4 are sited fronting the rear of properties in Dolphin Lane and are a minimum of 28m from the boundary. The dwelling on Plot 5 is set at right angles to the rear of properties in Dolphin Lane and is a minimum of 6m from the boundary.
5. The proposed dwellings each have 5 bedrooms and are designed with low eaves. The ridge height of the dwellings on Plots 1 and 5 is 7.8m and Plots 2 to 4 8.3m. Each dwelling has a double garage. Materials proposed are brick/render and clay tile.
6. Landscaping details have been submitted although the plan shows a different layout to the remainder of the drawings. This point has been raised with the applicant.
7. The density of development is 4.5 dwellings per hectare.

#### **Planning History**

8. Outline consent was granted for the erection of 5 dwellings in May 2005 (**Ref S/1123/03/O**) and was subject to a Section 106 Agreement that prevents occupation of any of the dwellings until the area of land to the south west, given planning consent at the same time for use as Public Open Space (**Ref S/1111/03/F**) has been transferred

to Melbourn Parish Council . A condition attached to the outline consent required provision to be made through the site for access to the Public Open Space.

9. An informative attached to the outline consent stated that the Local Planning Authority was of the view that the height of any dwellings built on the application site should respect the height of adjacent properties in Dolphin Lane.

### **Planning Policy**

10. The site is allocated under **Melbourn Policy 3** of the Part 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2003 ("The Local Plan") for residential development by five dwellings, following its inclusion by the Local Plan Inspector. The outline consent reflects that allocation. The Inspector specifically stated that the site was not suitable for the erection of more than 5 dwellings.
11. **Policy SE9** of the Local Plan requires developments on the edges of villages to be sympathetically designed and landscaped so as to minimise the impact of development on the adjoining countryside.
12. **Policy HG10** of the Local Plan requires residential developments to contain a mix of housing types providing a range of accommodation. The design and layout of scheme should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape.
13. **Policy EN30** of the Local Plan requires proposals to preserve or enhance the character of Conservation Area and their settings.
14. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") requires new developments to achieve a high standard of design which, amongst other criteria, responds well to the local character of the built environment and is integrated within adjoining landscapes.
15. **Policy P7/6** of the Structure Plan requires Local Planning Authorities to protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

### **Consultation**

16. **Melbourn Parish Council** recommends approval.
17. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** refers to conditions attached to the outline consent but suggests that during construction there should be no bonfires or burning of waste except with his prior permission. This matter can be dealt with by an informative.
18. The **Local Highway Authority** states that it does not appear to have been consulted on the outline application but trusts that the matter of the ability of Dolphin Lane to cater for the additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic likely to be generated by the development was considered and that the outline permission required the provision of vehicle to vehicle and pedestrian visibility splays, which should now be clearly identified on the layout plan.
19. The comments of the **Conservation Manager** will be reported at the meeting.

## **Representations**

20. The occupiers of 9 Dolphin Lane object to the application on the grounds that Dolphin Lane is a narrow lane, often impassable to delivery vans etc. To add further vehicular traffic would exacerbate the difficulty of access for essential services. In addition the "Access Only" signs are totally ignored by traffic avoiding the traffic lights at The Cross. An alternative route to the site is not only essential it would be criminally negligent to add further traffic particularly at the High Street entrance to the site.
21. The occupiers of 7 Dolphin Lane object stating that the plans are neither correct nor consistent and in some cases do not show all buildings on adjoining land or any of existing driveways. There is no mention of the electricity supply and where current overhead lines that cross the site are to be resited. In consideration of the closest affected properties any new development should be set further back from Dolphin Lane and bungalows should be re-considered and not 'dwellings' with rooms in loft space as proposed. Construction should be limited to weekdays only and not commencing before 8.00am with no weekend working. There should be no parking of contractor's vehicles in Dolphin Lane, which is narrow and twisting, and any vehicles should only be able to have access up to the site from the High Street without access to the remainder of the lane. Bats and Owls are mentioned in the report accompanying the application and both are in evidence at the site, as are newts. Provision of collecting rain water should be made a high priority – are water butts in the plan? Mature trees and shrubs should be used along the boundaries adjoining all properties in Dolphin Lane and High Street. There are a lot of species at this site and provision of bird and bat boxes should be made on the site.
22. The occupier of 13 Dolphin Lane raises similar concerns in respect of the overhead lines, the Dolphin Lane access, setting back of properties and the planting of mature trees. A track is shown from High Street into the 'conservation' area and it is hoped that this will be the official pedestrian access into this area thus reducing the disruption to existing and new dwellings.
23. The occupier of 5 Dolphin Lane has no objection in principle to the development but is concerned about the impact of construction traffic in Dolphin Lane and suggests that the developers are instructed to access the site from the High Street end of Dolphin Lane, which would cause less damage and disruption to Dolphin Lane.

## **Applicant's Representations**

24. A Planning and Design statement submitted on behalf of the applicant is attached at Appendix 1

## **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

25. The principle of the development of this site for five detached dwellings has been accepted by the outline consent, which followed the allocation of the site for residential development in the Local Plan. This application seeks reserved matters consent and the main issues to be considered are the siting, design and external appearance of the proposed dwellings, and in particular their impact on the character of the area and the amenity of adjacent residents. In addition although the point of access has been agreed through the outline application the reserved matters application should demonstrate satisfactory access details.

26. This area of land was included within the village framework as part of the Inquiry into the Local Plan 2004 and allocated for development by five dwellings. Visually it reads as part of the countryside and Policy SE9 that seeks to minimise the impact of development on the adjoining countryside is particularly relevant to this scheme. It was for this reason that an informative was attached to the outline consent advising that the height of any new dwellings should respect that of adjoining properties in Dolphin Lane. These properties are bungalows with low ridge heights.
27. I am of the view that dwellings with ridge heights of 7.8m and 8.3m are not appropriate on this site and will be both out of character with adjoining properties in Dolphin Lane and have an unacceptable visual impact on the adjacent countryside. Although the land to the south west is to be developed as a public open space, and will be the subject of a landscaping scheme, I do not consider that this will mitigate these concerns.
28. Although the density of development is low it reflects the outline consent which itself follows the Local Plan allocation. The Inspector specifically stated that due to the constraints of access to Dolphin Lane there should be no more than 5 dwellings erected on this site. As a consequence, and given the size of site, it is inevitable that it will not be possible to achieve a mix of dwelling sizes in this case.
29. Whilst the height of the dwellings does not relate well to adjacent properties in Dolphin Lane I am of the view that the distance between the new dwellings and the rear of those properties is sufficient to ensure that there will be no unreasonable loss of amenity due to overlooking. I am of the view however that it would be possible to move the access roadway further from the boundary of these properties and provide additional planting.
30. In allocating the site for the erection of 5 dwellings the Inspector took the view that Dolphin Lane was capable of serving that number of additional dwellings. The Dolphin Lane access is the only one available to the site and will serve both this site and the Public Open Space. A condition can be attached to the consent requiring parking facilities to be provided within the site for construction vehicles.
31. A condition is attached to the outline consent restricting the hours of operation of power driven machinery during the construction process. It does however allow for working on a Saturday morning.
32. A detailed drawing has been requested from the applicants showing dimensioned access details.
33. I have asked for details from the applicant on the proposed re-routing of the existing overhead line.
34. Officers have advised the applicant informally prior to the submission of the application that dwellings of this height would not receive officer support. It is my view that the application should be refused.

### **Recommendations**

Refuse, for the following reason:

35. The proposed scheme is unacceptable in that the height of the proposed dwellings is out of character with surrounding properties in the area and will result in the development having an unreasonable adverse visual impact on the adjoining

countryside. The proposal is therefore contrary to the aims of Policy SE9 and HG10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003, which seek to minimise the impact of development on the adjoining countryside and to achieve development which responds to the local character of the built environment.

**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 File Refs: S/0593/06/RM; S/1123/03/O & S/1111/03/F

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