

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 7th June 2006
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0740/06/F - Impington New Headquarters Building at Histon Football Club Ground for Cambridge Football Association

Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 8th June 2006

Site and Proposal

1. Histon Football Club is a football stadium located within the Cambridge Green Belt just outside the Impington Village Framework. The football club is located adjacent to the A14 to the south of the site and the Impington recreational ground and pavilion to the north. As existing the site is screened to the southwest and south east by a series of high-level trees. The ground itself is surrounded by stands on the eastern side of the site and high level fencing which encompasses the ground.
2. This full planning application, received on 13th April 2006, proposes a new building adjacent to the existing Histon FC building which would serve as the new headquarters to Cambridge Football Association. This building would include the provision for a stand to the rear serving the football pitch which would be an alternative scheme to that approved in 2002. The building would serve as meeting and conference rooms for the Cambridge FA as well as office and recreational uses such as toilets, bar, kitchen and the provision for Histon FC to have its own offices.

Planning History

3. Planning Application **S/1050/02/F** – The erection of toilet block, covered areas and extension to stand which was approved 17th September 2002. This has yet to be built and the current application is an alternative scheme.

Planning Policy

4. **Policy GB2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Local Plan) adopted 2004, and **Policy P9/2a** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (Structure Plan) 2003 seek to restrict inappropriate forms of development within the Green Belt. Appropriate development can include 'buildings providing essential facilities for outdoor sports and recreation or other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with Greenbelt purposes.' **Policy GB3** of the Local Plan states that where development is 'not inappropriate it will be located within or adjoining existing complexes or entail the re-development of redundant buildings to protect the rural nature and openness of the Green Belt'.
5. **GB5**
6. **Policy RT1** of the Local Plan states that, in considering applications for the development of recreational and tourist facilities, the District Council will have regard

to the need for such facilities and the benefits, which might accrue. Therefore the District Council will resist any proposals which would:

- a. Not be in close proximity to and not be well related with an established settlement and its built up area;
- b. By reason of its scale, form, design and materials of the proposal, together with any associated development such as other buildings and structures would create an intrusive feature in the landscape or surrounding area;
- c. Generate significant motorised traffic movements;
- d. Have inadequate provision for parking and manoeuvring of cars and service vehicles to the District Councils standards;
- e. Not provide appropriate provision for screening and to minimise the visual intrusion into neighbouring development and the countryside.

7. **Policy P4/1** of the Structure Plan states that new or improved recreation development should:

- a. Maintain or increase employment opportunities;
- b. Meet the needs of local communities as well as visitors;
- c. Be accessible by a choice of sustainable transport modes;
- d. Protect or improve the local environment, landscape and residential amenity;
- e. Strengthen and diversify the local economy, particularly in Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire.

8. **Policy TP1** of the Local Plan states that the Council will seek, through its decisions on planning applications, to promote more sustainable transport choices, to improve access to major trip generators by non-car modes, and to reduce the need to travel, especially by car. To give effect to these aims, planning permission will not be granted for developments likely to give rise to more than a small-scale increase in travel demands unless the site has (or will attain) a sufficient standard of accessibility to offer an appropriate choice of travel by public transport or other non-car travel modes.

9. **Policy P8/1** of the Structure Plan relates to Sustainable Development and the links between Land Use and Transport. This states that new development should provide for the need of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport uses as well as an appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety

Consultations

10. **Impington Parish Council** – No recommendation but makes the following comments:

- a. Committee felt that the application was not out of context with the site.
- b. The traffic generation figures appeared questionable based on the additional staff and space being provided, and the site access was unacceptable and dangerous for vehicles travelling from Cambridge.
- c. The committee wish to see improvements to access arrangements.

11. **Sport England** – No comments received.

12. **Ecology** – No objection, however the scheme should provide for biodiversity through the provision of nest boxes for “urban” type birds of swifts, starlings and sparrows. The visual and biodiversity benefits could be further enhanced through the use of green roofs and climbing plants upon bare walls. (This might help settle the

development into the Green Belt). Condition required for scheme of ecological enhancement (PPS9 requires provision for wildlife.)

13. **English Nature** – No comment.
14. **Highways** – Comments yet to be received. Members will be updated verbally.
15. **Sports Development Officer** – Comments yet to be received. Members will be updated verbally.
16. **Environment Agency** – The application site falls within Cell F10 (zone 1<1ha) in the Environment Agency's Flood Zone Matrix. However, in view of other environmental related issues, in this instance it will not be necessary for your Council to respond on behalf of the Agency. Informatives are recommended.

Representations

17. Histon Football Club Holdings Limited fully support this application. This is subject to the signing of a formal agreement, regarding lease, usage and other relevant matters between ourselves and the Cambridge Football Association.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

18. The proposed headquarters building is an alternative scheme to planning application S/1050/02/F. This was an application for the erection of toilet block, covered areas and extension to stand, which was approved 17th September 2002. This has yet to be built and the new application for the new HQ building for Cams Football Association would include the provision for a new stand. However this proposal would be substantially larger in scale than the previously approved permission. The site is located within the Cambridge Green Belt and therefore the strict guidelines within Policy GB2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan adopted 2004 apply.
19. Policy GB2 states that permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. While the proposals will provide facilities for outdoor sports and recreation, it is unclear whether or not these are essential. The site is adjacent to the recreational ground and pavilion, which both suitably provide outdoor sports and recreational facilities. The proposed headquarters building does not require a rural location as it would be used for meeting rooms, offices etc. The facilities provided within the proposed HQ are not deemed 'limited', however compared to the floor space and use at the current office in Milton the proposed headquarters building is not being increased significantly.
20. The proposed building would be similar to that of the existing Histon Football Club headquarters although it would be larger in scale and project further into the car park. The current building can be viewed from Bridge Road as you drive into Impington from the A14, despite it being set down from the roadside. The view is minimal from this location and the site, in part, is well screened by a series of tall trees to the south. The site itself is tucked away and located in the corner inbetween the recreational ground and the A14. The proposed Cams FA headquarters would be clearly visible from the recreational ground and to a degree from Bridge Road. However part of the building would comprise of the stand which has already been approved and which would also be visible. The views which would be obstructed from the proposed development, would not compromise the openness and character of the Green Belt as they would only block the view of the existing car park, which is of no visual merit, and the area on which the extension to the existing stand would be

located. Therefore, it is argued that the development although not in accordance with Green Belt Policy, would not significantly impact upon the visual amenity of the Green Belt. Furthermore, in the light of no objections from the local community and that there are no other appropriate sites available to the applicants, the application is considered not to significantly harm the openness and character of the Conservation Green Belt in this area.

Recommendation

21. Approval, subject to no objections being received from the Local Highways Authority, and the following conditions:

- 1) Standard Condition A (Rc A).
- 2) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used for the external walls and roof of the pavilion have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(RC5ai).
- 3) SC51 (Landscaping).
(RC51)
- 4) SC52 (Implementation of Landscaping scheme).
(RC52.)
- 5) Prior to any form of development taking place, a scheme of ecological enhancement shall be submitted for written approval by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented within an agreed timescale.
(Reason: Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, seeks the maintenance, enhancement or restoration of biodiversity. The barn and adjacent fruit trees offer opportunities for the inclusion of specialist nest boxes and/or bat boxes within the development site. Complies with Local Plan policy EN12 Nature conservation: unidentified sites.)

+ any conditions required by the Local Highways Authority.

Informatives

1. As requested by the Environment Agency.

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)
 - P9/2a** (Green Belt)
 - P4/1** (Tourism, Recreation and Leisure Strategy)

- **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
P8/1 (Sustainable Development and Links between Land Use and Transport)
GBS, GB3 (Green Belt)
GB5 (Recreational Role of the Green Belt)
RT1 (Recreation and Tourism Development)
TPI (Planning more Sustainable Travel)

2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:

- Green Belt
- Traffic
- Access
- Biodiversity
- Flooding

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/1050/02/F and S/0740/06/F

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