

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

7th June 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0727/06/F – Melbourn

Demolition and New Build of 35 Extra Care Flats, 5 One Bedroom Flats, 6 Two Bedroom Flats and 8 Three Bedroom Houses, Moorlands Residential Home, The Moor, for Cambridge Housing Society

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 12th July 2006 (Major Application)

Site and Proposal

1. Moorlands Residential Home is located on a 0.67 ha site to the east of The Moor, Melbourn, opposite the Village College. The site currently comprises two main buildings, the main residential block and a day care unit, set within well-landscaped grounds.
2. To the north the site abuts an unmade roadway leading to a pumping station beyond which is a recreation ground. To the south of the site is an industrial building fronting The Moor behind which there is a recently completed block of flats
3. To the east the site abuts the rear gardens of bungalows in Dickasons. These properties are set on land which is slightly higher than the main part of The Moorlands site.
4. This full application, registered on 12th April 2006, proposes the demolition of the existing buildings on the site (this element is to be phased) and the erection of a 35 flat very sheltered residential home, 5 one bedroom flats, 6 two bedroom flats, and 8 three bedroom houses.
5. The 35-bedroom residential home comprises a mainly three storey building, rising to a maximum ridge height of 11.5m. The elevation to The Moor is designed with a two storey eaves with roofs in the roof. The building extends directly behind three of the existing bungalows in Dickasons for a length of 38m and the distance between it and the boundary varies between 15m and 16m. Any first floor windows facing properties in Dickasons are a minimum of 17m from the boundary and any second floor windows are a minimum of 24.5m from that boundary. There is some existing screening on the east boundary of the site although views into the site from the rear gardens of properties on Dickasons are still obtained.
6. The main building is in a 'U' shape and whilst requiring the existing day centre building to be demolished, it wraps around the existing residential building, allowing it to be retained whilst the new building is constructed. Several trees are to be removed including a mature Walnut tree, Lime tree and a Silver Birch on the site frontage.
7. The main building is set a minimum distance of 4m from the front of the site.

8. Fronting The Moor, to the north of the proposed entrance road which serves all properties, is a proposed three storey 'L' shaped building containing the 5 one bed flats and the 6 two bed flats. This building has a two storey eaves with rooms in the roof and a ridge height of 10m. Behind this building is proposed a terrace of 4 three bed houses, with a ridge height of 8.7m. Again this building has a two storey eaves height with rooms in the roof. There is a similar block of 4 three bed houses at the rear of the site, which are a minimum of 15m from the rear boundary of the site with Dickasons.
9. A total of 39 car parking spaces are provided. 26 of these spaces appear to be for the private dwellings and 13 for the residential care home, although a supporting statement gives figures of 28 and 11 spaces respectively.
10. Materials proposed are brick and render with concrete tiles.
11. The scheme is developed at a density of 85dph.
12. The application is accompanied by the following information; a Design Statement, Tree Survey Report, Radar Speed Survey, Client Extra Care Statement, Consultation Report, Confirmation of Funding and, information of discussions on the Award drain. These documents can be viewed as part of the background papers and will be available for inspection at the meeting.

Planning History

13. Members may recall refusing an application (**Ref: S/1114/05/F**) for a similar scale of redevelopment of the site at the August 2005 meeting (Item 18) for the following reason:
14. "The proposed development is unacceptable as the quality of the proposed design is not in keeping with surrounding properties in terms of its form and scale and that the boundary treatment fails to provide a high standard of visual amenity, resulting in the proposed scheme having an unacceptable visual impact in the street scene and a development which is not sensitive the character of the village. For that reason the proposal is contrary to the aims of Policies SE2 and HG9 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and Policy P1.3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003."
15. Prior to that an application was refused at the February 2005 meeting (**Ref S/2305/04/F**) following a site visit by Members on the grounds of the impact of the proposed building on the occupiers of properties in Dickasons, inappropriate design and the loss of the existing day care facility.

Planning Policy

16. **Policy SE2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") designates Melbourn as a Rural Growth Settlement where residential development and redevelopment will be permitted on site within village frameworks provided that:
 - (a) the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village;
 - (b) the development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours;
 - (c) the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity; and

- (d) residential development would not conflict with another policy of the Plan, particularly policy EM8
17. Development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dph unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.
18. **Policy HG7** of the Local Plan sets out the District Councils policy in respect of affordable housing on sites within village frameworks. In villages such as Melbourn, where the population is in excess of 3000, such provision should represent up to 30% of the total number of dwellings in schemes of more than 10 dwellings for which planning permission may be given, dependant upon the level of clearly identified local need, although higher or lower percentages may be agreed in the light of such factors as proximity to local services; access to public transport; the particular costs associated with the development; and whether or not the provision of affordable housing would prejudice other planning objectives warranting greater priority in the particular case.
19. **Policy HG9** of the Local Plan states that the development of residential care homes within village frameworks will be permitted where:
- (a) the quality of design is in keeping with surrounding properties and landscape in terms of scale, form, layout and materials;
 - (b) boundary treatment provides privacy and a high standard of visual amenity;
 - (c) the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties is protected;
 - (d) there is safe and convenient access for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians;
 - (e) parking facilities are in accordance with District Council standards: and
 - (f) there is access to an adequate level of services to meet the need of the development.
20. **Policy CS9** of the Local Plan states that the District Council will refuse planning permissions for proposals which would result in the loss of a village service, where such loss would cause a significant reduction in the level of community or service provision in the locality.

Consultation

21. **Melbourn Parish Council** recommends refusal. "The legend and indicated parking spaces on the plan differ by 2 spaces i.e. 2 short. Concern about loss of garden space for residents, both visual and practical."
22. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** requests a condition restricting the hours of operation of power driven machinery during the construction process. Informatives should be attached to any consent regarding the use of driven pile foundations, the use of bonfires or burning of waste and the need for a Demolition Notice.
23. The **Environment Agency** offers standing advice in respect of surface water drainage and recommends that the Councils' Drainage Manager is consulted in respect of surface water drainage
24. The **Council's Drainage Manager** stated in respect of the previous application that the Council is responsible for the award drain immediately downstream of the site. As the proposal represents an increase in the impermeable area of the site, the applicant should produce a flood risk assessment that will outline the impact on the award. Proposals for the disposal of surface water from the site should then be agreed with the Council's Drainage Manager. These discussions have now taken

place and the Drainage Manager has no additional comments to make in respect of the current application but points out that the contribution agreed with the applicants' agent is £9000.

25. The **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** requests that adequate provision is made for fire hydrants.
26. The comments of the **Trees and Landscapes Officer** will be reported verbally. Previously he objected to the loss of the Walnut tree and noted that, whilst a Lime tree was shown for retention it would also be compromised by the proposal and an objection was raised. The current proposal requires the removal of both the Walnut and Lime tree along with a Silver Birch at the front of the site.
27. The **County Archaeologist** recommends that the site be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation, which can be secured through the inclusion of a negative condition.
28. The **Local Highways Authority** has no objection subject to conditions, although it states that it trusts that a suitable number of parking spaces are to be provided to meet the Council's standards. On-street parking should not occur as a result of insufficient number of spaces on site.
29. The comments of the **Development Manager** will be reported at the meeting. The application and housing mix has previously been supported.
30. The comments of the **Conservation and Design Officer** will be reported to the meeting.

Representations

31. None received at the time of writing the report.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

32. The site is within the village framework and therefore the principle of redevelopment is acceptable. The key issues to be considered are whether the application addresses the previous reason for refusal, in particular whether the development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance. In addition it is necessary to consider the impact of development on the amenities of neighbours, whether safe and satisfactory access and parking can be provided, and whether the proposal conforms to Local Plan PolicyHG7 in respect of affordable housing. In addition the applicant should be able to demonstrate that the proposal does not result in the loss of a village service, where such loss would cause a significant reduction in the level of community or service provision in the locality.
33. In respect of the design of the scheme Members have previously expressed the view that a more traditional approach should be taken that was more appropriate to a village location. The views of the Conservation and Design Officer were sought on the current scheme prior to its submission as a formal application and his views on the application will be reported to the meeting. I am of the view that the design approach goes a long way to addressing previous concerns. Although the main care home building is, out of necessity, still located close to the front of the site the eaves height is now two storey, with the full height of 11.5m being set back 14 metres from The Moor.

34. The private housing follows a similar design approach to the main building in terms of materials and two storey eaves height.
35. I have queried the parking figures referred to in the accompanying statement. In my view the scheme should provide an average of 1.5 spaces per private dwelling. 11 spaces are adequate to meet the requirements of the care home.
36. In terms of the impact of the development on the amenity of neighbours I am satisfied that the revised proposal continues to address concerns expressed at the time of the original application regarding the impact of the proposed building on existing properties in Dickasons. The gardens of these bungalows are relatively shallow, ranging from 8-13 metres. The proposed care home will be a minimum of 15 metres from the boundary of properties in Dickasons. The rear elevation is in part single storey where it abuts the shallower of the gardens in Dickasons, and at this point the three storey section of the proposed buildings is 22 metres from the rear boundary. The proposed private housing in the north east section of the site is a minimum of 15m metres from the rear boundary.
37. The existing building is located in attractive landscaped grounds, particularly at the southern end. In designing a new building for the site the applicant is constrained by the need to retain the existing residential home building while the new one is being constructed and this has always dictated the basic footprint of the main building. Following the original concerns about the impact of the building on adjoining properties in Dickasons the main building, in addition to the design changes, has been moved forward on the site. This has necessitated the removal of both a very good quality walnut tree and lime tree, along with other trees within the site. The Trees and Landscapes Officer has objected to the loss of these trees in the previous applications and I anticipate that similar views will be expressed on the current proposal.
38. A replacement day care facility is to be provided within the new building.
39. Previously the Development Manager has confirmed that the scheme has been the subject of lengthy discussions and negotiations with the applicant and that the mix of housing is appropriate. It has also been confirmed that the private housing is required to fund the scheme and that any affordable element of the development is contained within the residential care units rather than the private housing.
40. In coming to a decision on this application Members will have to have regard to the desirability of providing the 35 bed extra care home and associated housing against the impact on the locality. Although the loss of important trees within the site is regrettable Members have previously been of the view that this did not in itself warrant refusal of the application.
41. Subject to any comments of the Conservation and Design Officer and clarification of the car parking arrangements I am now in a position to recommend approval of the application.

Recommendation

42. That subject to any comment of the Conservation and Design Officer and the satisfactory resolution of car parking issues, consent is granted subject to safeguarding conditions.

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: SE2, HG7, HG9 and CS9**
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Car parking provision
 - Visual impact on the locality

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/0727/06/F; S/1114/05/F & S/2305/04/F

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