

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

S/0528/06/O – Stapleford Residential Care Home (75 Bedrooms) at Greenhedges, Bar Lane for Hill Residential

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval if reference to 75 bedrooms deleted
Date for determination: 16th June 2006 (Major Application)**

Site and Proposal

1. The application relates to a 0.47 hectare/1.15 acres site occupied by a red brick and corrugated sheeting single storey school building and 3 mobile classrooms with two access points and parking to the front. There are a number of trees and planting within and/or adjacent to the site boundaries, including along the site's Bar Lane frontage. Bar Lane is to the east of the site, two-storey residential properties lie to the north and west and Stapleford Community Primary School is situated beyond a track and a footpath to the south.
2. This outline application, registered on the 17th March 2006, proposes the erection of a 75-bedroom residential care home. Although an indicative site layout plan was submitted as part of the original application, which shows 30-35 parking spaces, all matters are reserved for subsequent approval. Additional indicative information (site layout, floor plans and sketch elevations) date stamped the 15th May 2006 show a 73-bedroom two-storey building up to 10 metres high.

Planning History

3. There have been a number of applications for extensions to and mobile classrooms at the school. Before that, outline permission was granted for Local Authority Housing on the site in 1963 (**C/0107/63**) and 1972 (**C/0054/72**).

Planning Policy

4. Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG9** states that the development of residential care homes through conversion or extension of existing facilities within or outside villages, or new build within villages will be permitted where: the quality of design is in keeping with surrounding properties and landscape in terms of scale, form, layout and materials; boundary treatment provides privacy and a high standard of visual amenity; the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties is protected; there is safe and convenient access for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians; parking facilities are in accordance with District Council standards; and there is access to an adequate level of services to meet the need of the development.
5. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EN5** states that the District Council will require trees to be retained wherever possible in proposals for new development.

Consultations

6. **Stapleford Parish Council** recommends approval “subject to care home being for the elderly and not for psychiatric patients.”
7. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** recommends that conditions relating to: the times when power operated machinery shall not be operated during the construction period except in accordance with agreed noise restrictions; driven pile foundations; and details of the location and type of power driven plant and equipment are attached to any approval. He also recommends that an informative is attached to any approval stating that there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site during construction except with his Department’s prior permission.
8. **Trees and Landscape Officer** states that the additional indicative information submitted does not demonstrate that the proposed footprint can accommodate the existing trees. He states that a tree survey in accordance with BS:5837:2005 should be submitted and related to appropriate tree root protection areas as stipulated in the same BS.
9. **Local Highway Authority** has no objections to the scheme in principle but strongly recommends that the appropriate number of parking spaces to meet the District Council’s standards are provided and one of the two existing accesses be permanently and effectively closed.
10. **County Archaeology** states that its records indicate that the site lies in an area of some archaeological potential – there are several earthworks, some at least of medieval date, in and around Greenhedges – and it is possible that additional, as yet unknown, archaeological features may survive on the site which due to the size of the proposed development could be severely damaged or destroyed. It therefore recommends that a condition of any approval requires a programme of archaeological investigation to be agreed and undertaken.
11. **County Council Development Strategy Manager** states that Public Footpath 212/1 runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the site and recommends advisory comments in relation to the footpath be attached to any permission.
12. **Environment Agency** states that the District Council is required to respond on its behalf in respect of flood risk and surface water drainage related issues but notwithstanding this, makes advisory comments in respect of surface and foul water drainage.
13. **Cambs Fire & Rescue Service** is of the opinion that additional water supplies for firefighting are not required.

Representations

14. The following comments were received in relation to the original application:
 - a. Occupier of 33 Bar Lane asked to be informed of any further plans.
 - b. Occupier of 37 Bar Lane’s initial view is that a 75 bedroom care home is a potential overdevelopment of the site with 15-20 staff cars and approaching 50 visitors cars requiring in excess of 75 car parking spaces not to cause on-road parking problems.

- c. Occupier of 53 Bar Lane supports in principle a retirement home on the site but states that the proposed 75 bedroom project is too large, the size and mass of the building is too great in relation to the buildings around it; and there is inadequate parking proposed.
 - d. Occupiers of 51 Bar Lane object on the grounds that 75 bedrooms is too many in terms of ensuring adequate sanitation, electricity, water and gas supplies, traffic, insufficient parking, intrusion of security lighting and inevitable overlooking of neighbours. They are also concerned about the uncertainty as to what kind of people would be looked after there (noise of ambulances if they are infirm and dangers of accommodating mentally challenged next to a school) and uncertainty as to how high the building would be.
15. Any further comments received in relation to the additional information received will be reported verbally.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

16. The main issues in relation to this application are whether this is an appropriate site for a care home and, if so, whether the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that a 75-bedroom care home can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site with respect to the impact on the character and appearance of the area, neighbours' amenity, trees and highway and parking matters.
17. The County Council have recently sold the site as it is to be surplus to their requirements in view of the new special school being built adjacent to Linton Village College. I am satisfied that, with regard to the criteria in Local Plan Policy HG9, this site close to local amenities in a rural growth village is appropriate for a care home.
18. However, I am not satisfied that a 75-bedroom care home can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site. The submitted indicative layout only shows 73 bedrooms. Furthermore, whilst it would not in my opinion result in serious harm to the amenity of neighbours in respect of overlooking and other neighbour impact considerations, by virtue of the combination of its size and height (up to 10 metres) and the proposed forward projection at the southern end, it would result in an unduly dominant building in the street scene. The indicated footprint is also close to a number of important trees within and close to the boundaries of the site which, if they were to be compromised, would further harm the character and appearance of the area and exacerbate the impact of a 75-bedroom home in the street scene.
19. The use of one of the existing accesses would provide for an acceptable access. The applicant states that, in terms of the Local Plan standards, a 75-bedroom home would require a maximum of approximately 45 parking spaces (20 for staff and 25 for visitors). The submitted indicative layout shows 34 spaces. Whilst it would be difficult to refuse the application on parking grounds given that the parking standards in the Local Plan are maximum standards and there is already on-road parking associated with the school use of the site, it does perhaps further indicate that the site cannot satisfactorily accommodate a 75-bedroom care home.

Recommendation

20. Approval if the application is amended to delete reference to 75 bedrooms/Refusal for the following reason if it is not so amended.

Reason for refusal if the application is not amended as above

Whilst the site is considered to be an appropriate location for a care home, the Local Planning Authority has not been satisfied that a 75-bedroom home can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site. The submitted indicative site layout plan, floor plans and sketch elevations only go to show that the site cannot satisfactorily accommodate a 75-bedroom home. These plans only show a 73-bedroom home and, by virtue of the combination of its size and height (up to 10 metres) and the proposed forward projecting element at the southern end, the indicated building would result in an unduly dominant building in the street scene (contrary to South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy HG9(1)). Furthermore, in the absence of a detailed tree survey, the Local Planning Authority has not been satisfied that the indicated footprint would not compromise the important trees within and close to the boundaries of the site which, if they were to be compromised, would further harm the character and appearance of the area and exacerbate the impact of a 75-bedroom home in the street scene, contrary to South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policies HG9(1) and EN5.

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: C/0107/63, C/0054/72 and S/0528/06/O

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