

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

5th July 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/0691/06/RM - Impington
Primary School and Ancillary Development
Land at Arbury Camp, North of Kings Hedges Road, Cambridge**

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 24th July 2006 (13 week) (Major Application)

Site and Proposal

1. The 1.21 hectare site is to the western end of Arbury Camp and midway along the semi-circular road currently under construction. To the north, and also within the road circle, will be playing fields and play areas required for the new community at Arbury Camp. To the south is a vacant site formerly proposed for the County Council Heritage Resource and Cultural Centre (HRCC). The remaining part of the land within the road circle, on the corner of Kings Hedges Road and Histon Road is to be used for mixed uses which may include B1 (Business), C1 (Hotels), C2 (Residential Institutions), C3 (Dwelling Houses), D1 (Non Residential Institutions e.g. Health Care), D2 (Assembly and Leisure) and car show rooms.
2. The application dated 7th April 2006 seeks reserve matter consent for siting, design, means of access and landscaping for the first phase (120 pupil places) of this new primary school. The school is designed to serve the needs of the new housing at Arbury Park and to have integrated health services and extended school accommodation. The integrated health facility will provide facilities for nurse practitioners and the extended school facilities will provide accommodation for the under 5's and include after-school clubs. A supporting design statement highlights the following:
 - (a) The building reflects the curve ditch mound archaeological feature. The building is mainly orientated to inner courtyard to enable pupil gathering, extended curriculum and better acoustic bearing in mind the vicinity to the A14.
 - (b) The building is split into five main function groups: education, community use, health, administration and shared space. The rooms are designed with flexibility in mind.
 - (c) The building maximises the use of natural daylight and ventilation aiming for good environmental rating.
 - (d) The building sits in a green environment.
 - (e) A security fence has been proposed in discussion with the Architectural Police Liaison Officer.
 - (f) As the building does not have front/rear elevation the treatment of all elevations are equal. The hall is the most dominant by the height and the colour and the material treatment. (Trespa Orange). Lower volumes are simple horizontal, neat and rendered with the exception of the main entrance and traffic volumes which

are highlighted by the choice of materials and colours, green/orange. The same treatment colour has been repeated in the design of the bike sheds.

- (g) The roof is proposed to be zinc.
- (h) Additional information is provided by way of a green travel plan, a landscape design statement and drainage statement. The current expectation from the County Council is to start construction in September 2006 with a twelve month construction period to allow opening September 2007.

Planning History

- 3. **S/0157/03/0.** Outline planning consent was granted for primary school and ancillary development 16th June 2004.

Planning Policy

- 4. Policy **P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 seeks to ensure that all new developments incorporate high standards of design and sustainability.
- 5. Policy **CNF1** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 seeks inter alia the retention of an attractive urban edge to Cambridge through the use of high standards of design and landscaping and the creation of gateway features, the retention of appropriate existing features of ecological interest and the creation of new features which will enhance the interest of the site.
- 6. Policy **ES7** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 seeks to minimise impacts of noise from road traffic.

Consultation

- 7. **Impington Parish Council** recommends refusal based on the following:
 - (a) Unacceptable height and design of fence including 'cut outs'.
 - (b) Design 'cheap and unimaginative', being long and thin with vast areas of profiled metal roof; green and orange cladding panels. Little sympathy with the natural environment.
 - (c) Library suite, ICT suite in the main corridor, noise and distance from circulation traffic.
 - (d) Staffroom does not relate to the school and is too far away from the classrooms/hall etc.
 - (e) Health rooms and school office accommodation could be 'swapped' to make school function more cohesive.
 - (f) Does not appear to afford separate access for community use, issues of concern are separation of public and school children (child protection) and conflicts with educational provision.
 - (g) Building shape creates potential hiding places where anti-social activity could take place unobserved.

- (h) Benches next to external wall could facilitate access onto roof for vandals.
 - (i) Use of smooth cladding at low level could be target for graffiti.
 - (j) Use of non-traditional construction materials and methods almost always gives rise to additional life cycle costs. Long lasting facing bricks would minimise maintenance instead of rendering. Profiled metal roofing instead of conventional slates or tiles would last 100 years or more.
 - (k) Internal rainwater gullies, issues of potential water ingress if become blocked and difficulty of access for cleaning.
8. **The Local Highway Authority** has commented - The access road (off the main infrastructure route) to serve the school will remain private. The pedestrian crossing of the main infrastructure road must not conflict with the 'drop off' parking bay. Further corrected and detailed plans of the crossing are requested to ensure coordination with Gallagher's infrastructure and correct details.
 9. **The Environment Agency** comments are awaited.
 10. **The Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** comments are awaited.
 11. **The Arts Development Officer, SCDC** comments - The primary school and surrounding area provide a number of opportunities for public art, including the installation of environmentally interactive pieces as well as arts applications relating to the green theme. Inclusion of artworks in and around the new building is regarded as essential. The Arbury Park public art stakeholder group are expected to be able to provide match funding up to a fixed ceiling level.
 12. **The County Archaeologist** has noted that the area has previously been subject to a programme of archaeological investigation and he has confirmed that no further work is considered necessary in this area.
 13. **The Landscape Design and Arboricultural Consultant Advisor** has commented in respect of each of the boundaries with adjoining property. There is a request that the choice of species should be coordinated with other proposals within the 'Park'. In particular, concern is raised regarding the front, with a long hard frontage and fencing additional opportunities for planting should be sought. Full details of the comments have been provided to the applicant.
 14. The **Design and Conservation Officer SCDC** has commented that the design of the school is, necessarily, driven by its functional requirements and this has resulted in a single storey structure. The architect has attempted to relate the school to the site and respond to the curve of the ditch/mound along the eastern boundary. However, since the school is also contained behind a 1.8m fence, this fence is likely to have a greater impact on the streetscape than the actual school building, which is set back some distance into the site. The fence contains a set of gates which will form the main entrance for pupils and parents, and these are to be 'celebrated' by some artistic involvement. The drawings suggest the addition of silhouettes of children attached to the gates, but more could be made of this with other silhouettes being attached to the fencing either side of the gates, with the density building up towards the gates, giving a sense of movement along the fence.

The design of the school makes significant use of colour to highlight entrances. Strong, bold colours are proposed and, given the location of the school, in principle

this is supported, though would have liked to see alternative colour combinations worked up before a final choice is made.

In terms of the 3 dimensional massing of the school, the design will only reach its full potential when the second phase is constructed, since this will provide a degree of enclosure to the east courtyard, and help reinforce the response of the design to the curving boundary. The design also relies quite strongly on the hall to provide a fulcrum to the various blocks but the shallow hipped roof over the hall is visually rather weak and therefore reduces its impact. More work needs to be undertaken on this element of the design, investigating alternative roof forms.

15. **The Ecology Officer SCDC** is concerned that the design of the building fails to show any regard for the "Arbury Camp Biodiversity and Ecological Management Plan". Although the building may sit in a 'green environment' it fails to be green in itself. An early impression was that the building would include a green roof, contributing to sustainability and increasing awareness of environmental issues. It is doubtful that the application meets the overall aims of PPS9. Biodiversity should not be overlooked on such a prominent building.
16. **The Commercial Services SCDC Refuse** have noted that the waste storage and collection seem to be adequate.
17. The comments of the **Sustainability Officer SCDC** are awaited.
18. The comments of the **Environmental Health Officer** are awaited.
19. The comments of **Community Services** are awaited.
20. **The Arbury Camp Design Review Panel** supported the overall design. Some concerns were raised regarding the choice of colours, although the use of bright colours attractive to children was supported. Minor but important revisions to the design of the two storey roof were raised. Details of the proposed mound and fence that will set the main view from the road frontage were seen as very important.

Planning Comments

21. The principle of the school on this site has been accepted. The main issues this application raises are ones of design, form, detailing, colour and particularly the setting marked by the archaeological mound and proposed fence. With the guarded support of the Design Review Panel (set up to make recommendations on the design of the development) and SCDC Conservation Area and Design Officer, the application is supported. Officers have through the evolution of the design sought to promote a simple, distinctive focal building that reflects the curve of the perimeter road. This building, in part, achieves this aim although the many demanding requirements for the County Council have inevitably influenced the overall form which is less than a simple curved form originally envisaged.
22. The County Council have, via a planning consultant, prepared a response to a number of the issues raised.
23. There is a degree of uncertainty regarding the form of the reinstated archaeological mound that will form the site's frontage. Drawings and a model are being prepared to show the site's context with a couple of options for the height of the mound. Due to these uncertainties and this land being outside the application site it is requested that details of the boundary fence, the gates, position of the pedestrian crossing and

landscaping all be subject to further discussion via a planning condition requiring further details, together with issues of arts and ecology.

24. The choice of green, orange and neutral render is also still being discussed. Further coloured drawings area awaited before forming a view.
25. The County Council have confirmed that they are working in partnership with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) to ensure that new and expanding communities are provided with sufficient and suitable education and health facilities. The aim is that where possible and practical, well-being and therapeutic services for individual children can be delivered from school buildings. As a minimum, the PCT requires access to rooms suitable for confidential meetings and consultations.
26. As a matter of course, the County Council plans and designs new schools to enable them to operate as extended services schools available to families and the wider community before and after school.
27. Arbury Park Primary School has been designed to ensure that the accommodation is not limited to a single use or user.
28. The Parish Councils' concerns relating to internal arrangements and external security etc. have been shared with the County Council but are not regarded as material planning issues that need resolution before consent can be issued. Outstanding matters will be resolved by planning conditions.

Recommendation

29. Approval of reserved matters in accordance with outline planning permission ref. S/0157/03/O dated 16th June 2004 and to the following additional conditions.
 1. Final choice of colour (but accepting vibrant colours).
 2. Landscaping scheme and implementation.
 3. Boundary Treatment. Fence and Gates.
 4. Revisions to the roof form of the main two storey hall.
 5. Details of materials for hard surface areas within the site.
 6. Position of pedestrian crossing.
 7. A scheme for Ecological enhancement.
 8. Art

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)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: CNF1** (Masterplan)

Informatives

1. The buildings shall be accessible to disabled persons and provide facilities for them.
2. Any oil or liquid chemical storage tanks and associated pipework shall be sited within an impervious bunded area details of which shall have been previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
3. Surface water from impermeable vehicle parking areas and service areas shall not be discharged other than through a storm by-pass oil interceptor the details of which shall have been previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
4. The applicant's attention is drawn to condition 10 of the outline planning consent S/2379/01/O which requires compliance with the agreed noise attenuation scheme. This requires a simple noise mitigation schedule that will identify the noise levels. NEC classification and mitigation measures (as specified in SCLP Appendix 11/2). The noise mitigation schedule will take account of the attenuation provided by the proposed built-form of the buildings themselves and of the layout of the rooms within the buildings.

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 Ref: S/2379/01/O outline planning consent
- Draft Design Guide May 2006

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