

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

5th July 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/0829/06/RM - Impington
12 Flats, 11 Houses and Garages, Parcel P
Arbury Camp, Kings Hedges Road, Cambridge
for George Wimpey East Anglia Ltd**

Recommendation: Approval (Major Application)

Date for Determination: 27th July 2006 (13 week)

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.31 hectare application site is towards the eastern end of Arbury Camp where the site starts to narrow between Kings Hedges Road and the A14. It is accessed from the new road No. 6 which meets Kings Hedges Road near Buchan Street. To the south east of the site is Parcel N1 (ref S/0828/06/RM) report on this agenda. To the north of the site is land reserved for commercial uses (B1). To the east is the public open space POS 5 and the western boundary is marked by road no. 6.
2. The application dated 27th April 2006 seeks approval of reserved matter for siting, design, landscaping and means of access. The 12 flats and 11 houses are proposed in 3 storey perimeter blocks which surround the parking areas and a centrally located local area of play (LAP). A key focal building is proposed on the south eastern corner which, together with that proposed for Parcel N1, will provide a gateway entrance to the 'Hedges Area'. The site area is 0.31 hectare and the density equates to 74 dwellings per hectare. The 12 flats and 11 houses comprise 12 one/two bedroom properties, 1 three bedroom property and 10 four bed roomed properties.

Planning History

3. Outline planning consent was granted 14th June 2005 following the signing of a Section 106 agreement that covered the full range of matters including education, transport, affordable housing, sustainability, community facilities, public open space and design guidance.
4. Full planning consent was granted 13th May 2005 for strategic infrastructure comprising spine roads and footways, cycle ways, surface water drainage, foul water drainage and strategic services.
5. At the 2nd November 2005 Development and Conservation Control Committee Members refused reserved matter consent for 6 flats (affordable housing) on land parcel A1. Under delegated powers reserved matter consent has been granted for a total of 160 dwellings on land parcels A2 (Persimmon Homes), A3, (Willmott Dixon Affordable Housing) L1, and M1. (Wimpey).
6. A reserved matter planning application for land parcels P and N1 was withdrawn 6th March following officer's advice that the proposal was too close to the line of trees proposed along the southern and western boundary.

Planning Policy

7. The development of the Cambridge Northern Fringe (CNF West) is the first of a number of major developments on the edge of Cambridge. The site was allocated for mixed use development in the 2004 Local Plan.
8. Structure Plan 2003 policy **p1/3** requires a high standard of design for all new developments, provides a sense of place which creates distinctive skylines, focal points and land marks, includes variety and surprise within a unified design.
9. A Design Guide has been prepared which shows the site for a mix of 2½ /3 storey housing. The Draft Design Guide identifies that the site should contain a key building and a LAP (Local Area of Play).

Consultation

10. **Impington Parish Council** recommends refusal based on the following:
 - a. Unexciting design, particularly unhappy about those fronting Kings Hedges Road.
 - b. Mix of housing types with too many properties with four or more bedrooms.
 - c. No parking provision for the amount of bedrooms.
 - d. Lack of provision for waste and recycling bins.
 - e. Canopy over the front door.
 - f. Object to flat design and concern about materials.
 - g. Unnecessary variety of window styles within a small area of space.
11. **The Local Highway Authority** has no objection in principle. It is noted that as the access road simply serves car parking spaces with no dwellings taking direct frontage it is not necessary for the Authority to adopt the access road.
12. **Cambridge City Council** comments are awaited.
13. **The Police Architectural Liaison Officer** has concerns regarding the Local Area of Play (LAP), parking provision and pedestrian access to it. He is concerned that the garage block will create an area not overlooked from the highway with limited natural surveillance from dwellings. Parking for some of the flats also has limited natural surveillance. The situation is not improved by two means of vehicular access and the pedestrian cycle access point, giving escape routes. Windows at all three levels of the dwellings adjacent entrances improve natural surveillance but where windows are near areas that youths may hang around, noise and disturbance may occur. The location of the LAP adjacent to car parking may increase the vulnerability of vehicles to crime and accidental damage. No dwellings front onto the LAP, with the main entrances to the flats being on the far elevation, although kitchen windows overlook, the main living room windows do not.
14. **The Ecology Officer** has a holding objection. No provision has been made for biodiversity. No consideration appears to have been given to the Arbury Ecological Management Plan nor the Design Guide.

15. **The Arts Officer** has noted consultation with representatives of George Wimpey plc regarding public art is in progress (via Commissions East) and a response is awaited.
16. **SCDC Commercial Services** have provided information on the required refuse collection points for the flats. The refuse collection vehicle would need access to the car park to empty the bins from the store. As there is insufficient space at the front of all houses to store wheeled bins they will have to be collected from the rear. All houses, therefore, require an access gate.
17. **SCDC Environmental Health Officer** - comments require the applicants to demonstrate they conform to condition 10 of the outline permission which relates to noise attenuation.
18. The **Arbury Camp Design Review Panel** was presented with Wimpey's housing schemes for L1, M, N1 and P in January 2006. The current designs for N1 and P remain principally the same in this resubmission. The Panel felt that it was not easy to assess the detail of these proposals given their fragmented nature and the shortness of time for the presentation and discussion. However, it was felt that they appeared to respond well to the Design Guide in their overall planning and layout. The question of the different character areas was raised. These plots fell within 'The Hedges' neighbourhood, and it was not immediately obvious how this area was to be made distinct from the other neighbourhoods. Some concern was expressed about the amount of colour that was being proposed in this scheme, with large areas of deep blue and light blue shown.
19. **The Consultant Landscape Design Officer** has noted that there are still pinch points on the scheme which previously, it has been indicated, should be avoided.

Representation

20. None received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

21. The principle of residential development on the site has already been established by the granting of outline permission. The number of dwellings (23) accords with the phasing plan, condition 3 (housing mix) of the main outline planning consent and with the Design Guide/Design Codes. The proposed mix of 12 two bedroomed flats, 1 three bedroomed house and 10 four bedroomed houses also matches exactly that agreed in discharging condition 3 of the outline S/2379/01/O.
22. This (together with S/0828/06/RM Parcel N1 on this agenda) is a resubmission following a withdrawal of a previous application for the combined parcels, N1 and P. The previous application encountered difficulties due to the close proximity of the dwelling units to the line of trees proposed along the south western boundary. The applicants highlight that this application has been amended such that the minimum distance between the trees and the building façade is 6 metres, with the exception of two trees at the southern most corner where the site is further constrained by a junction visibility splay. The alignment and spacing of the trees have been adjusted so that they do not fall directly in front of habitable rooms. At the time of writing a further large scale plan is awaited to demonstrate what is achievable.
23. The Parish Council made no recommendation on the previous proposal but raised concerns regarding the management of car parking outside the site, ensuring the developers verbal commitment to eco homes is honoured, wishing to see a managed

approach to the use of colour throughout the site and wishing to see vertical features as discussed with regard to A3 carried throughout (including L1 and M) to give continuity to the street scene. Officers' single concern at the time of withdrawal was the proximity of the buildings to the line of trees to the southwest. The current application has repositioned the trees onto adjoining highway land and in places they have confirmed that they are a minimum of 6 metres from the building frontages. A more detailed plan clarifying which trees can be retained is awaited.

24. With regard to the Parish Council's concerns, this design has already been accepted with respect of Parcels L1 and M. The designs have the support of the Design Review Panel and propose a contemporary design with clean lines and I can see no reason to object.
25. With regard to the comments of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer, the LAP and the car park area will be overlooked by the surrounding three storey blocks and I cannot see any solution which will better the situation given the need to accommodate this density of the housing, the need for car parking and a local area for play. I do agree that the car parking court surrounded on two sides by garages may cause problems - but with some changes, e.g. provision of car ports, some improvements to visual surveillance can be achieved here and this will be secured by way of a safeguarding condition.

Recommendation

26. Approval.

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

1. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs, and all surface treatments(Rc5a11);
2. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
3. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
4. Sc60 – Details of all boundary treatment (Rc60);
5. Ecology in accordance with the Biodiversity and Ecological Management Plan;
6. Submission of a Scheme to deliver public Art in accordance with the document Arbury Park "Public Art and Its Role in the New Community";
7. Submission of a scheme to ensure minimum Eco Homes, "good" is achieved.
8. This permission does not grant consent for any garage blocks 41-48 inclusive. Prior to the occupation of any dwelling, a redesign of the provision of parking shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved amended details. (Rc - To provide for an amended garage block with improved visual surveillance.)
9. Tree protection condition.
+ any conditions required by the Local Highways Authority

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
- Draft Arbury Design Guide May 2006

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