

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 5th July 2006
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/6348/06/RM – Cambourne
Erection of 44 Dwellings and Associated Works at Area GC24, Jeavons Lane,
Great Cambourne, for MCA Developments Ltd

Recommendation: Delegated Approval/Refusal
Date for determination: 28th July 2006

Major application

Site and Proposal

1. This 2 hectare site lies on the east side of Great Cambourne, south and east of the established housing facing the site across Jeavons Lane. New houses in Stagwell Road face westwards across the site. The land slopes down, from the north end nearest Great Cambourne village green meadow, towards the south end adjacent to the eventual golf course, with a height difference of approximately 8 metres. There are therefore significant views over the lake in the eastern valley and beyond towards Bourn. The planned Jeavons Greenway will separate the west side of the site from housing under construction in GC17. There is approval for a Space for Imaginative Play (SIP) in the greenway adjacent to the southwest corner of the site.

2. The application seeks approval for the reserved matters of siting, design, means of access and landscaping. The scheme is for 44 dwellings at an average density of 22 dwellings per hectare, comprising 6 two-bedroom houses, 5 three-bedroom houses, 4 four-bedroom houses, 14 five-bedroom, and 15 six-bedroom houses. Most of the houses at the upper (north) end of the site would be two-storey, apart from 3 facing Jeavons Lane which would have rooms in the roof, so three floors. A pair of semi-detached houses facing the existing playspace (LAP) on GC27, and two terraces of four and five houses respectively are proposed. The remainder of the houses would be detached. A design statement is submitted with the application which describes the principles followed in the design, which include most significantly, the creation of views and vistas down through the site to the lake, a view from Jeavons Lane to the adjacent GC27 LAP, the opening of the layout to face the Jeavons greenway, and large detached houses facing the golf course edge. To reduce the need for car travel, several of the dwellings have home office rooms to facilitate working from home. Informal play space is provided in a soft landscaped LAP at the north end which affords an outlook from the houses in Stagwell Road and is overlooked by the proposed terraced houses, as well as a hard-landscaped LAP forming a focal point in the centre of the site, and the adjacent play areas in Stagwell Road (south end) and in the greenway. Parking provision is planned within the detached plots, and to the rear of or adjacent to the terraced houses.

3. The layout shows a collector road from Jeavons Lane to link with Stagwell Road through GC27, and shared surface roads leading south to the golf course edge and branching west to serve the houses facing the greenway. At the south and west margins shared drives with estate rail and hedge boundaries would set the buildings back from the site edge. Refuse bin collection points would be provided within the longer shared driveways and at the rear access from terraced houses.
4. The principles of landscaping are for current consideration, although details will be required by condition of any eventual approval. Tree planting is proposed in the LAPs and adjacent to the shared drives and access ways. It is also proposed to enhance the greenway frontages with additional planting. The detached houses in the centre of the site have generous spacing and ample back gardens.

Planning History

- 5 **S/1371/92/O** Outline planning permission for the new settlement of Cambourne granted in 1994 with conditions relating to Master Planning and submission of reserved matters. A Design Guide with associated Briefing Plans forms part of the approved Master Plan.
6. A previous application, S/6333/06/RM, for 44 dwellings was refused under delegated powers because the development would not have provided any small dwelling; the design, layout and character of the development would not correspond in character with the density gradation required by the approved Phase 5 South Development Briefing Document, and the provision of car parking spaces in excess of two per dwelling conflicts with Local Plan Policy TP1 and would have resulted in excessive built development and hard surfacing.
- 7 The approved Phase 5 Briefing Document for this area defines an “eastern core” higher density at the north end (where terraced housing is proposed), through medium density to the Lake Area which is described as having “buildings of an imposing character overlooking the valley and lake. They should have an irregular, informal arrangement, with wide spaces between the buildings to help soften this edge and allow glimpsed views into the development from the valley areas. They should have well planted front gardens with estate railings, with hedges forming the boundary to the golf course”. 44 dwellings are allocated for this area in the revised approved Phasing schedule which forms part of the Master Plan (an increase of 6 dwellings from the original schedule).

Planning Policy

8. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: **P1/3 – Sustainable Design in Built Development, P3/4 – Rural Services and Facilities, P5/4 Meeting Locally Identified Housing Needs**

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

HG10 – housing mix to include a range of types and sizes, including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. The design and layout should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape.

EN5 – retention of natural features, new planting appropriate to the character of development, its landscape setting and the biodiversity of the locality.

Cambourne 1 – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan

Cambourne 2 – Development in accordance with Cambourne Design Guide

SE2 – Rural Growth Settlements

SE7 – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan and Design Guide.

TP1 – Promotion of sustainable transport choices, restriction of car parking to the maximum levels in appendix 7/1.

Consultation

9. **Cambourne Parish Council** – recommends approval (of original plans) subject to the provision of a bin collection point for shared drive no.3.
10. **County Highways** – requested amendments to relocate the turning head within 20 metres of the stop end of the Stagwell Road cul-de-sac, and to provide the correct width and verges to the shared surface access ways. These have been incorporated.
11. **County Archaeologist** – Archaeological fieldwork has been completed in this area and no further fieldwork is considered necessary.
12. **Council's Landscape Consultant** – the greenway frontages needed more scope for planting, including trees, and at the golf course frontage there must be sufficient space for hedges to the boundary. Planting in these areas will need to be coordinated with the planting outside the boundaries of the site.
13. **Ecology Officer** - Requires provision of 10 bird boxes, and provision of small mammal routes under fences near the bridleway and golf course.
14. **Environmental Operations Manager** – required amendments to junction radii and hammerheads to allow for refuse collection vehicles reversing and turning, bin collection points for the shared drives, and all surfaces to be constructed to the standard to take collection vehicles.
15. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** – The layout is characterised by largely back to back gardens with in-curtilege parking which is generally to be welcomed from a crime prevention viewpoint. Advice is given on surveillance of some of the parking spaces.
16. **David Chare, Cambourne Developers Project Director** – no reply.
17. **Environment Agency** – no objection subject to satisfactory surface water drainage and adequate sewerage by Anglian Water.
18. **Anglian Water** – no reply.

Representations

19. Two letters of objection on grounds of:
 - a. Insufficient parking for four/five-bedroom properties could lead to on-street parking in Jeavons Lane which is too narrow for this at this point, and could

- cause a hazard to children, and difficult reversing movements from drives. Garages are rarely used for car parking,
- b. possible overlooking and loss of privacy across Jeavons Lane (having regard to the land levels),
- c. the originally proposed three-storey houses would have been unacceptable,
- d. limited scope for landscaping and tree planting would be out of keeping with Cambourne
- e. concern about site noise and construction traffic; construction access must be solely from the haul road, and working hours limits must be adhered to. Dust and debris should be cleared, including providing window and exterior cleaning for existing houses.

One letter confirming no objection to the revised application because of the proposal for open space at the north end of the site.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

20. The key issues are the housing mix, the design and layout, access and parking, landscaping and ecology, impact on the surrounding area and residential amenity.
21. The proposal includes 6 two-bedroom terraced houses to cater for the Structure Plan requirement for smaller dwellings. The 5 three-bedroom terraced houses are also relatively small in floorspace. The preponderance of larger detached houses reflects the design Brief for lower density character in the lake view area, and also the character of surrounding existing development, and therefore the proposal may be considered to accord with Policies HG10 and SE7 of the Local Plan insofar as it makes the best use of the site, reflecting local need and is informed by the wider context of the local townscape as required by the Design Brief.
22. The layout has been amended to reflect the sloping lie of the land and the nearby houses so that three-storey houses have been omitted and the terrace at plots 9-14 will “step down” the slope. This aspect still requires refinement in the plan so that level thresholds are provided without exaggerated ramps, and the roof steps at each property boundary. The “core” area creates a tight street scene in Stagwell Road, but a more open aspect to Jeavons Lane to give continuity to the greenway. The grouping of houses around the hard and soft landscaped LAPs in the centre of the site provides a focus in the view from Jeavons Lane and affords surveillance of the open space in this medium density character area. Similarly a view along “Adoptable Road 3” will open the site to the greenway on the west side. The various amendments to the layout to accommodate the above and servicing requirements have resulted in an unacceptably cramped appearance to the southern side of the site adjacent to the golf course. The houses proposed and their outbuildings are excessively bulky, with insufficient gaps in between. Further negotiation is taking place regarding this area, and a verbal update will be presented to Committee. It is considered that the low density character of the golf course edge in the Lake Area is essential to comply with the approved Phase 5 South Briefing Document and with Local Plan Policies Cambourne 1& 2 which require compliance with the Master Plan and design guide (which includes area briefs).

23. Satisfactory vehicular access would be provided within this site and through it to adjacent sites. A hardstanding is provided for each two-bedroom dwelling, and a garage and hardstanding for each three-bedroom house; this accords with the Council's average standard of 1.5 spaces per dwelling and is appropriate to the location. The larger units with double garages and thus four parking spaces exceed the maximum standard, and should be amended accordingly. The only exceptions to this would be the larger houses on shared drives where it is important to make provision for potential visitors without impact on the shared access. Where tandem garages or those with excessively long drives in front of them are proposed these should be amended (some become storage sheds and some relocation frees up greater space for garden to the rear of properties). With this proviso, notwithstanding the concerns of Jeavons Lane residents, the proposal accords with the principles of the Structure Plan, and Policies TP1 and Cambourne 1 & 2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
24. The layout has been designed so that there are railings to most of the greenway and golf course edges where shared drives abut it so that the boundary can be softened by planting, and to allow wildlife corridors into the site and its gardens. Ecological enhancement is to be provided in accordance with the Ecology Officer's advice. Along the north-south road there is not much space for tree planting, but the main emphasis here is on the long views out of the site to the lake and countryside beyond. As there are substantial rear gardens, this accords with Policy EN5 of the Local Plan.
25. The design of the northern end of the site incorporating open space in front of 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 Stagwell Road has allayed residents' concerns, regarding the last application, about excessive overbearing on the outlook from these houses. Part of the gable end of the terrace facing the LAP would be in front of number 11 Stagwell Road, but not to the extent of obscuring the outlook to the LAP and Jeavons Lane beyond. The distance between facing houses across Jeavons Lane would be 27 metres, which is adequate to preserve privacy. Whilst the window-to-window distances at the rear of the houses to Jeavons Lane would be only 19 metres in one case, the offset angle of the facades would preserve privacy in this instance. It is considered that the impact of the proposal on residential amenity is acceptable in accordance with Policy Cambourne 2 of the Local Plan.
26. It is therefore considered that the design and layout would be acceptable in terms of the Master Plan, revised phasing schedule and the Briefing Document provided that excess car parking is deleted and the southern edge is redesigned to a low-density appearance. The density character is distinctive in relation to the designated "core" and medium density areas, and the views and vistas are open in relation to the margins, adjacent sites and the view to the lake and beyond. Adequate parking and space for residential amenity would be provided.

Recommendation

27. Delegated powers of **Approval/Refusal**, approval to be subject to the receipt of amended plans to address the over-provision of parking, and the density character adjacent to the golf boundary, and subject to additional conditions relating to landscaping, ecology, site set-up, access and materials details, and retention of car parking. Otherwise the application should be refused as not complying with the low-density character required by the approved Design Brief.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Contact Officer: Pam Thornton – Planning Officer
Telephone: 01954 713099