

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee

2 August 2006

**AUTHOR/S:** Head of Planning Services

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### **APPEALS AGAINST PLANNING DECISIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTION: SUMMARIES OF DECISIONS OF INTEREST – FOR INFORMATION**

#### **Purpose**

1. To highlight recent Appeal decisions of interest forming part of the more extensive Appeals report, now only available on the Council's website and in the Weekly Bulletin dated 28 June 2006.

#### **Summaries**

##### **Huntingdonshire Housing Partnership & MPM Properties Ltd – 98 no. residential units to include 29 affordable units, new means of access, public open space – Livanos House/Abberley House, Gt Shelford – Appeal allowed**

2. This application was refused by the Committee due to the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Members had also expressed concerns regarding the new access in to the site, although having received the advice of the local highway authority, this did not form a reason for refusal. The appeal was considered at a hearing. This was attended by the Chair of the Parish Council.
3. The site lies at the northern edge of the village and is enclosed by the fork of the London to Cambridge railway line on two sides. The proposals involved the demolition of Abberley House and various utilitarian buildings nearby and the erection of bungalows, houses and flats. The highest blocks of flats would be of 3½ storeys.
4. It was agreed that residential development was acceptable in principle. The inspector accepted that there is no doubt that the development would give a more dense urban appearance to the site itself. While the proposal would bring development closer to the countryside, this would not be incongruous given the existence of surrounding housing development. While some buildings would undoubtedly be of a different scale to surrounding development, the inspector was satisfied that care had been taken to grade the height of buildings across the site. This would to his mind "integrate the scheme with the profile of the site landscape ..." Taking into account the proposed use of materials, the variation in set-backs and planting, "... the view of the site from the east would be attractive."
5. The inspector concurred with the Council's view that some of the blocks would be prominent and very conspicuous when entering the village along Granham's Road. However, these would be partially screened by substantial trees. He considered "... their relatively large scale would provide a contrast to the somewhat monotonous vista of relatively two-storey houses that characterises the edge of Great Shelford ..." Furthermore the clutter of railway paraphernalia, an electrical sub-station and level crossing do not contribute to an attractive entry point or rural edge. The scheme "...would do much to draw attention away from the visually intrusive clutter and provide a handsome group of buildings ... giving a well-defined edge to the settlement."

6. While the proposal would result in the loss of as many as 7 sycamores, the inspector concluded they would only have a relatively limited visual effect and would be justified by the need for the new access. They are relatively poor specimens and their loss would not affect the gateway of trees at either end of those lining the road.
7. The inspector also considered the numerous objections from third parties on highway matters. He was not convinced that the amount of traffic likely to be generated would exceed that of the existing use if fully implemented. In any event, the new access would have better visibility than the existing access.
8. The inspector also gave weight to the efficient use of previously developed and the mix of house types and sizes. The appellants had offered a unilateral undertaking in respect of the provision of the affordable housing, public open space, education contributions, an accident remediation scheme at the Cambridge Road junction and a cycle link. This was acceptable to the Council following consultations between the parties.
9. The appeal was allowed subject to conditions regarding sample materials, landscaping, surface water drainage, ground contamination investigation, refuse storage, noise insulation from railway noise, a children's play area and the equipment thereon, establishment and maintenance of an area of grassland and mitigation strategies for bats and reptiles.

**Park Hill Homes Ltd – Substitution of detached dwelling with two semi-detached dwellings – Plot 9, Eccles Close, Sawston – Appeal allowed**

10. This application was refused because of the effect on road safety and parking and on drainage. An earlier scheme had been approved showing a four-bed dwelling, rather than the two-bed dwellings now proposed.
11. Eccles Close is a private road serving 15 dwellings and a new police station at the corner of Cambridge Road. The inspector saw that each house has its own off-street parking and there is additional visitor space for the development. The road is a narrow cul-de-sac with a sharp bend halfway along its length. Vehicles speeds are necessarily slow. There was no reason to suppose that the extra dwelling would cause any traffic problems. The Iha had commented on the increased number of dwellings but had not quantified any objection.
12. The inspector was therefore satisfied that the proposal would not harm the living conditions of existing residents in Eccles Close. Indeed, the substitution of one large house by two smaller dwellings would achieve a more efficient use of the site in accordance with government advice and Local Plan Policy SE2.
13. The Council had already approved the drainage and road construction details for the approved scheme. The inspector saw no reason why this matter cannot again be covered by means of an appropriate condition.
14. Permission was therefore granted subject to conditions in respect of sample materials, foul and surface water drainage, landscaping and the provision and retention of parking spaces.

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

Planning Inspectors' appeal decisions dated 26 June 2006

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