

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee      2<sup>nd</sup> August 2006  
**AUTHOR/S:** Head of Planning Services

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**S/0951/06/F – Sawston**  
**Erection of 44 Houses Following Demolition of 28 Existing Dwellings at 1, 3 & 9-15 Churchfield Avenue, 1-15 Holme Way, 3, 4 & 11-14 Dale Way, and 2-8 & 14-20 Sunderlands Avenue - for Circle Anglia Housing Group**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for Determination: 9<sup>th</sup> August 2006 (Major Application)**

### Site and Proposal

1. The 1.21 hectare application site comprises 6 parcels of land situated within a block of 45 dwellings in Churchfield Avenue, Holme Way, Dale Way and Sunderlands Avenue. These areas of land are occupied by a total of 28 semi-detached two storey prefabricated concrete Airey houses.
2. The full application, submitted on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006 and amended on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006, seeks to demolish the 28 existing Airey houses and to erect 44 two storey dwellings in their place. These would comprise 4 x 1-bed, 23 x 2-bed, 15 x 3-bed and 2 x 4-bed properties. The proposed houses would comprise a mix of rendered, weatherboard and red brick walls and tiled roofs. The houses on the corners of the roads and a number of other dwellings (namely plots 1, 7-14, 15, 21, 22, 29, 30, 31, 36, 37, 42, 43 and 44) would be 7.1 metres high whilst the remaining houses would be 8.5 metres high; all dwelling types are approximately 5 metres high to eaves and incorporate 37.5 degree roof pitches. The proposal would result in the overall density of the developed areas being increased from 23 to 36 dwellings/hectare.
3. The application has been accompanied by a tree survey, flood risk assessment and details of pre-application consultation with local residents.

### Planning History

4. **S/0012/05/F** - Planning application on the same site for 45 houses following the demolition of the 28 existing dwellings was withdrawn.

### Planning Policy

5. Sawston is designated within the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 as a Rural Growth Settlement where **Policy SE2** states residential development will be permitted providing, amongst other matters, the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenities of neighbours.
6. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 stresses the need for a high standard of design and a sense of place which corresponds to the local character of the built environment.

7. **Policies P5/2, P5/3 and P5/5** of the Structure Plan 2003 encourage new dwellings on previously developed land, densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare and small scale housing developments in villages, respectively.
8. **Policy HG10** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local landscape and townscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness. The supporting text to the latter policy states that, in line with the guidance set out within Planning Policy Guidance Note No.3 (Housing) and within the Structure Plan, new residential development should be constructed at a density of 30-50/hectare in order to make best use of land.
9. **Policy HG7** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 requires affordable housing to be provided at a rate of up to 30% on sites within village frameworks with a population in excess of 3000, such as Sawston.
10. **Policy CS5** of the Local Plan requires the flood risk implications of new development to be considered.
11. **Policy CS10** of the Local Plan requires proposals for 4 or more dwellings to be subject to a financial contribution towards education facilities if required.

### **Consultation**

12. **Sawston Parish Council** initially recommended refusal stating:
  - i. Parking solidly along fronts of all properties is dangerous to pedestrians;
  - ii. Sunderlands Avenue proposal is overdevelopment and is overbearing to the existing neighbours;
  - iii. Residents views have not been listened to and acted upon;
  - iv. More public consultation needed.

Following a consultation meeting with residents, the Parish Council supported the application in principle but the following items were felt to be important before a decision is made:

- a. The houses to be built between existing houses should all be in alignment with the existing properties instead of either behind or in front. This is to give all concerned privacy in the gardens;
  - b. Sunderlands Avenue, Churchfield Avenue and Holme Way are all quite narrow and are all on the bus route. As the new properties will only have one and a half designated parking spaces it is likely that there will always be cars parked on all these roads. The Parish Council and residents would like to request that the verge on one side of each road be removed and the road widened to allow bus and traffic to pass each other.
13. **The Local Highways Authority** states that all parking spaces where they take direct access from the public highway should be a minimum length of 5 metres and comprise 1.5 metre x 1.5 metre pedestrian visibility splays each side. The widening

of Dale Way must be completed prior to the occupation of the new dwellings that take access from it. This will need to be the subject of a Section 106 Agreement with the LHA once permission has been granted (and an informative advising the applicant as such should be added to any consent). The Local Highways Authority considers the amended plan, which clearly identifies the dimension of parking bays together with pedestrian visibility splays, is acceptable.

14. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** raises no objections stating that the root protection zones afforded to the horse chestnut tree in front of plots 9/10 and the beech tree to the rear of plots 39/40 are acceptable. A condition requiring protective fencing around these trees would be required.
15. **The Ecology Officer's** raises no objections subject to a condition requiring a scheme of nest box provision upon the new buildings. The provisions of further nest sites and suitable landscaping should sustain the local house sparrow population, credit is given to the applicants for the provision of house sparrow terraces on buildings retained within the local area.
16. **The General Works Manager** initially objected to the application, stating that there needs to be space for the equivalent of three 240 wheeled bins per property. Each leg of the hammerhead off Sunderlands Avenue must be at least 11 metres long in a 6 metre wide road for the Council's collection vehicles. This junction should have at least 6 metre radii and the access road must be constructed to adoptable highway standards to withstand 26 tonne collection vehicles. The refuse storage and collection arrangements shown on the amended plans are considered to be acceptable.
17. **The County Education Officer** states that, on the basis that 10 of the dwellings would be market dwellings, an education contribution for two secondary school places at £12,500 per place (ie - £25,000 total) is appropriate.
18. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections in principle although does express concern about noise disturbance to nearby residents during the construction period. As such, a condition restricting the hours of use of power operated machinery during the construction period needs to be attached to any planning consent.
19. **The Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** has advised that additional water supplies for firefighting are not required. Access and facilities for the Fire Service should be provided in accordance with BR Document B5 Section 17.
20. **The Police Architectural Liaison Officer** is generally supportive of the application but would like to see small areas of clearly identifiable defensible space, as in the form of planting strips, to the exposed side elevations of plots 4 and 13 to reinforce the semi private nature of space adjacent dwellings.
21. **The County Archaeologist** states that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential and it is likely that archaeological deposits survive on the site that could be damaged or destroyed by the development. The site should therefore be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation (a specification has already been agreed) to be secured through the inclusion of a condition in any planning consent.
22. **The Environment Agency** advises that there are no Agency related issues in respect of the application and that this Authority will be required to respond on surface water drainage related issues. Nevertheless, clarification should be sought in

respect of surface water drainage as the Flood Risk Assessment states this would be to 'soakaways' whilst the application form says 'mains'.

23. The majority of the above responses relate to the application as originally submitted. Any responses received in respect of the amended plans will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.

### **Representations**

24. Letters of objection have been received from 7 local residents, Nos. 6, 7 and 17 Churchfield Avenue and Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 17 Sunderlands Avenue. These objections relate to the initial plans rather than to the amendments. The main points raised are:
- a. The roads are used as a regular bus route and are already too narrow to accommodate the number of vehicles using them and to allow a bus and car to safely pass. Extra housing will, due to the insufficient amount of parking provided, lead to a greater number of vehicles parking along and using the road thereby further obstructing buses and emergency vehicles and making it difficult to pass along the roads safely. The roads should be widened or the bus route changed;
  - b. Increase in density/traffic without upgrade to roads, footpaths and services will lead to congestion problems, loss of amenity to adjoining residents, and loss of value of surrounding properties;
  - c. Plots 37-42 will reduce daylight to No.6 Churchfield Avenue. They should be set further back from road;
  - d. Plot 42 would result in a loss of light to front of No.7 Churchfield Avenue to the north;
  - e. Trees in front of plots 37 and 42 will obstruct visibility when exiting Nos. 17 and 7 Churchfield Avenue respectively;
  - f. No windows should be put in the side elevation of plot 42;
  - g. Plots 5/6 would result in a loss of outlook, loss of light and overlooking of No.10 Sunderlands Avenue;
  - h. The houses should be built in a line;
  - i. Parking blocks will lead to increased crime;
  - j. Who will maintain long rear gardens?;
  - k. What sort of fencing is to be used?
  - l. Tree at front of plot 37 is close to main sewer;
  - m. What is happening regarding sewage and water?

## Planning Comments – Key Issues

25. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- a. Impact upon character and appearance of the area;
  - b. Residential amenity;
  - c. Highway safety;
  - d. Impact on trees;
  - e. Flood risk/drainage issues.

### ***Impact upon the character of the area/general layout issues***

26. The proposed development would make a more efficient use of the area encompassed by the six parcels of land, increasing the density of development from 23 to 36 dwellings/hectare and introducing a greater number of small units of accommodation and a better mix of dwelling sizes to the area.
27. Given that the application seeks to develop separate parcels of land, with a number of dwellings between these parcels being retained, it is essential to ensure that the development strongly reflects the character of the area. The application proposes houses that are simple in form, incorporating gable ends and a palette of materials that reflects the materials of surrounding dwellings. In the initial application the dwelling types were 7.7 metres and 9.6 metres high and incorporated approximately 45 degree roof pitches. The existing houses in the area are between 7 and 8 metres high and it was considered that the higher properties would be too dominant and out of character with the street scene. The plans have been amended to reduce the heights of the dwellings to 7.1 metres and 8.5 metres respectively. The lower dwelling types are proposed for the corner plots, thereby helping to integrate the development into the existing street scene. In the amended scheme, these lower corner plots have also been set back 450mm from the front elevations of the higher dwellings so that they effectively have the appearance of extensions to the larger houses, helping to break up the massing of the development. In addition, plots 1-4 at the northern end of Sunderlands Avenue were originally proposed to be sited well forward on their plots and were extremely prominent in the street scene – these have since been pulled back so that they are in line with the existing dwellings on these plots.
28. One strong characteristic of the area is the open nature of the corners of the roads. In the initial scheme, plots 21 and 22 on the corner of Holme Way and Dale Way were too close to the corner whilst a number of the boundary treatments to other corner plots resulted in an unacceptable level of encroachment into these open areas. I am satisfied that the amended scheme has overcome these concerns by easing plots 21 and 22 as well as boundary fencing on all corner plots further away from the edges of the plots.
29. The Parish Council has requested that all dwellings be in alignment with existing properties. This has been achieved on the majority of plots. However, I would have strong reservations about aligning plots 43/44 with the adjoining dwellings to the south as this would harm the amenities of No.20 Babraham Road to the north. In addition, if plots 37-42 were set further back, this would result in the loss of a beech tree (to the rear of plots 39 and 40) that the Council's Trees Officer considers of sufficient quality to require its retention.
30. The 28 existing dwellings are all Council owned 'affordable' properties. To comply with this Council's policies for affordable housing, 28 of the replacement dwellings together with 30% of the additional 16 houses (ie – 5 houses) must be affordable

properties. A total of 33 affordable dwellings will therefore need to be provided and this will need to be secured by way of a Section 106 agreement.

### ***Residential amenity issues***

31. Concerns have been raised by No.10 Sunderlands Avenue in respect of the siting and scale of plots 5 and 6. In the original plans, these were 9.6 metre high dwellings set well back from the road and sited entirely beyond No.10's rear elevation, and I concur that these dwellings were extremely harmful to No.10's light and outlook. The amended plans have, in my opinion, overcome these issues by siting plots 5/6 in line with No.10 Sunderlands Avenue. A previously proposed parking court at the front of plots 5/6 has also been deleted and replaced with parking spaces serving plot 6 only, thereby appearing to overcome the neighbour's concerns about noise and disturbance from this communal parking area.
32. Objections have been raised by No.7 Churchfield Avenue to the position of the dwelling on plot 42. Although No.7 does have windows serving habitable rooms in the front elevation, I am satisfied that the proposed dwelling on plot 42 is sited sufficiently far away to not result in a loss of light or outlook to these windows. I also consider the dwellings on plots 37-42 to be sufficiently far from No.6 Churchfield Avenue (sited to the north-west on the opposite side of the road) not to result in a serious loss of light to this property.
33. In all other respects, I consider the relationship of the proposed houses with existing dwellings and to each other to be satisfactory from a residential amenity point of view. A condition should be attached to any consent to prevent the insertion of first floor windows in elevations where this would cause serious overlooking of adjoining properties (eg – in the side elevations of plots 9-12). On this point, the plan showing the rear elevations of plots 15-36 does not tally with the floor plans and therefore does not show the correct position of first floor bedroom windows to plots 15, 31 and 36 – these have been shown close to the flank ends, a relationship that would result in overlooking of existing dwellings to the north. Amended plans to address this error have been requested.

### ***Highway safety issues***

34. Concern has been raised by the Parish Council and by local residents on the basis of the narrow width of the existing roads, which are on the main bus route. The Local Highways Authority is aware that these roads are on the bus route but has not raised any objections to the application or requested any widening of the roads beyond 5 metres. On this note, the submitted plans indicate that the only road that is less than 5 metres wide is Dale Way and it is proposed to widen this in accordance with the Local Highways Authority's requirements. Objections have also been raised on the grounds of insufficient parking. The initial application proposed 1<sup>1/2</sup> parking spaces per dwelling. This has been increased to 1.75 spaces per property and the application therefore complies with the parking standards set out in the Local Plan which require a maximum average of 1.5 spaces + 0.25 visitor spaces per dwelling. The amended plan has shown the provision of 5 metre deep parking spaces with 1.5 metre x 1.5 metre pedestrian visibility splays and the Local Highways Authority considers the application to be acceptable from a highway safety viewpoint.

### ***Other issues***

35. The Council's Trees Officer considers the horse chestnut tree in front of plots 9/10 and the beech to the rear of plots 39/40 need to be retained, and is satisfied that,

subject to a tree protection condition, they would not be compromised by the development.

36. With regards to drainage issues, the applicant's agent has clarified that surface water will be discharged to soakaways as stated within the Flood Risk Assessment rather than to the mains as stated within the application form. This would comply with the Environment Agency's standing advice relating to surface water discharge.
37. Conditions need to be added to any consent requiring an archaeological investigation and the provision of an education contribution. Fencing/boundary treatment details would also need to be conditioned as part of any permission.
38. The amended plans have provided an area of defensible space adjacent to plot 13 and therefore appear to address the Police Architectural Liaison Officer's concerns. This would no longer be required adjacent to plot 4 as a previously proposed communal parking block at the front of plots 5/6 has now been deleted from the application.
39. The applicant's agent has clarified that space for 3 bins for each property has been provided, whilst the turning area in front of plots 9-12 has been increased in size to accommodate refuse vehicles. In addition, radii at the junction with Sunderlands Avenue have been increased to 6 metres and it has been confirmed that the shared surface to this areas will be constructed to adoptable standards. I am awaiting further comments from the Council's General Works Manager in respect of these amendments.

#### **Recommendation**

40. Approval, as amended by drawings date stamped 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006, subject to the following conditions:
  1. Standard A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
  2. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5aii);
  3. Sc5f – Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas;
  4. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
  5. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
  6. Sc56 – Protection of trees during construction (Rc56);
  7. Sc60 – Boundary treatment details (Rc60);
  8. Save for the windows approved by this permission, no further windows, doors or openings of any kind shall be inserted at first floor level in the following elevations of the development, hereby permitted, unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf:
    - a. Side elevations of plots 2, 4-12, 14, 16-18, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28-30, 32-35 and 37-44;
    - b. Rear elevations of plots 1, 13 (south), 15, 21, 22, 31 and 36;
    - c. Front/north elevation of plot 13.

(Reason – To safeguard the privacies of occupiers of adjoining properties and of future occupiers of the dwellings hereby permitted);

9. The widening of Dale Way to 5 metres, as shown on drawing number p-22/A date stamped 12<sup>th</sup> July 2006, shall be completed prior to the occupation of any one of the dwellings on plots 22-30 inclusive, hereby permitted.  
(Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
10. Visibility splays shall be provided on both sides of each access and shall be maintained free from any obstruction over a height of 600mm within an area of 1.5 metres x 1.5 metres measured from and along respectively the highway boundary.  
(Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
11. No development shall begin until a scheme and completed Section 106 Agreement for the provision of an education contribution of £25,000 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the contribution shall be provided in accordance with the approved scheme.  
(Reason – To ensure the provision of a financial contribution towards education facilities as required by Policy CS10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004);
12. No development shall commence until a scheme and completed Section 106 Agreement to secure the provision of affordable housing on a minimum of 33 of the plots has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason – To ensure the provision of affordable housing as required by Policy HG7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004);
13. Sc66 – Archaeological investigation (Rc66);
14. During the period of construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 hours on weekdays and 08.00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18.00 hours on weekdays and 13.00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays), unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions (Reason – To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents);
15. No development shall commence until a scheme for the provision of nest boxes upon the new buildings has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the nest boxes shall be provided in accordance with the approved scheme (Reason - To sustain the local house sparrow population).

## **Informatives**

## **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), P5/2 (Re-using previously developed land and buildings), P5/3 (Density) and P5/5 (Homes in Rural Areas).
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** SE2 (Development in Rural Growth Settlements), HG7 (Affordable Housing on Sites Within Village Frameworks), HG10 (Housing Mix and Design) and CS10 (Education).
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
- Impact on character of area;
  - Amenities of residents including loss of light, loss of outlook and overlooking issues;
  - Highway safety;
  - Flood risk/drainage issues.

### **General**

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
2. During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.
3. Before the existing properties are demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from the Environmental Health Department establishing the way in which the properties will be dismantled, including any asbestos present, the removal of waste, minimisation of dust, capping of drains and establishing hours of working operation.
4. The applicant will need to enter into a Section 106 Agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council (the Local Highways Authority) to secure the widening of the carriageway of Dale Way.
5. The applicant's attention is drawn to the Environment Agency's comments set out in the attached letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

**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
- File references S/0951/06/F and S/0012/05/F

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