

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6th December 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

**S/2103/06/RM - GIRTON
Phase 2 Residential Development of 72 Dwellings
at Land off Wellbrook Way**

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 1st February 2007 (Major)

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the recommendation for approval is contrary to the Parish Council's recommendation.

Site and Proposal

1. This site measuring 1.907 hectares forms part of the larger residential development at Wellbrook Way, off Girton Road. The land is at the north-western end of the development and lies adjacent to phase 1, which is under construction and partially occupied.
2. Thornton Road and Girton Road are to the south-west of the site. Houses on these roads have their rear gardens backing onto the site. Houses developed as part of phase 1 adjoin the site to the south-east. A spine road runs through the centre of the site on a north-west/south-east axis. South of this road, at the north-western end of the site, land has been reserved for community use, which is to be the subject of a separate planning application. North of this road land has been reserved for the development of 76 care homes and the provision of a balancing pond to serve the site. North-west of this land the remainder of Wimpey's phase 2 development is proposed, adjacent to land north-west of the site which has been given planning permission previously for a commercial development. The A14 lies beyond fields adjoining the site to the north-west.
3. This reserved matter application, registered on 2nd November 2006, seeks permission for details of siting, design and landscaping of phase 2 of the residential development. Access has already been determined at the outline stage. Unlike previous applications the area has been revised to include only the residential land i.e. land for community use, Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) and balancing pond are or will be the subject of separate applications. The application proposes to increase the number of residential units to a total of 300. The mix of houses proposed for market housing is 11 no. 2-bedroom houses, 11 no. 3-bedroom houses, 30 no. 4-bedroom houses, with a total number of 52 on phase 2. In terms of affordable housing the mix proposed is 4 no. 2-bedroom houses, 4 no. 3-bedroom houses, 12 no. 1-bedroom flats, with a total number of 20 units. In total 72 dwellings are proposed on phase 2.

Planning History

4. An outline planning application (ref. **S/0175/99/O**) for residential development was considered by Committee on 2nd June 1999 (item 2). Members agreed to grant outline consent subject to the prior signing of a Section 106 Agreement. All details were reserved.
5. Outline planning application **S/1284/02/O** was allowed at appeal for residential development, including close care flats, community facilities, public open space and associated highway infrastructure and landscaping and included a condition that the reserved matters 'shall provide for a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare, but not more than a total of 300 dwellings on the residential land, inclusive of the appropriate public open space, but excluding the land proposed for community use'.
6. Application ref. **S/0691/03/RM** subsequently approved reserved matters of siting, design and landscaping of phase 1 subject to conditions.
7. Recently approved applications **S/2398/05/F** and **S/0061/06/F** vary condition 2 of planning permission **S/1284/02/O** to allow a further year (**S/0061/06/F**) and 3 years (**S/2398/05/F**) in which to submit details of reserved matters of siting, design and landscaping.
8. Two previous applications for reserved matters in relation to phase 2 have been considered. **S/0162/06/RM**, was withdrawn prior to being considered at Committee in April. It was recommended for refusal on grounds of:
 - a) The application failed to provide a suitable layout and design for the roads serving the site and as such is contrary to the proper planning of the area.
 - b) The application failed to include appropriate provision towards the identified local housing needs.
9. Other issues were to be reported verbally to Members following receipt of consultation responses. Subsequent application **S/1437/06/RM** was refused under delegated powers on grounds relating to:
 - a) Issues with the layout regarding crime prevention, refuse collections, highway safety and public rights of way.
 - b) Failure of the ecology proposals to adequately provide for the provision of bat and bird boxes.
 - c) Failure to include adequate provision for affordable housing and tenure mix.

Planning Policy

10. **RPG6:** Regional Spatial Strategy for the Eastern Region (2000) is not relevant in the consideration of this application.
11. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003):
 - a) **Policy P1/1** 'Approach to development' requires development to be located where travel distances by car can be minimised, walking and cycling encouraged and where good access to public transport exists.
 - b) **Policy P1/3** 'Sustainable Design in Built Development' states that a high standard of design and sustainability must be achieved for all new forms of development.

- c) **Policy P5/3** 'Density' requires developments to achieve a density appropriate to the area, with a minimum requirement of 30 dwellings per hectare.
- d) **Policy P5/4** 'Meeting Locally Identified Housing Needs' requires local plans to make provision for housing needs including for affordable and one and two bedroom homes.
- e) **Policy P6/1** 'Development-related Provision' restricts development unless additional infrastructure and community requirements generated by the proposals can be secured.
- f) **Policy P6/3** 'Flood Defence' requires measures and design features to be included to give sufficient protection against flooding on site or elsewhere locally.
- g) **Policy P6/4** 'Drainage' All new development should avoid exacerbating flood risk locally by utilising water retention systems.
- h) **Policy P7/2** 'Biodiversity' seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- i) **Policies P8/1** 'Sustainable Development – Links Between Land Use and Transport', **P8/8** 'Encouraging Walking and Cycling' and **P8/9** 'Provision of Public Rights of Way' seek to ensure that new developments are located where they are highly accessible by public transport, cycle and on foot; reduce travel by car; cater for all users and; provide opportunities for travel choice; and do not compromise safety.
- j) **Policy P8/5** 'Provision of Parking' requires car parking standards to be maximums, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 13, "Transport".

12. South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004):

- a) **SE3** 'Dwellings in Limited Rural Growth Settlements' (LRGS). Developments should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare.
- b) **HG4** 'Allocations in LRGS allocates 6-7 ha of land north of Thornton Road for residential development.
- c) **HG7** 'Affordable Housing on Sites Within Village Frameworks' defines the Council's requirements for meeting locally identified housing needs and requires 30% of dwellings provided to be affordable in villages with a population of more than 3000.
- d) **HG10** 'Housing Mix and Design' requires residential developments to contain a mix of units providing a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making best use of the site and that promotes a sense of community which reflects local needs. Design should be informed by the wider character and context, avoid inflexibility and promote energy efficiency.
- e) **TP1** and **TP2** 'Planning For More Sustainable Travel' seek to promote sustainable transport choices and provide appropriate car and cycle parking levels, and to secure appropriate traffic management measures in the village environment.
- f) **TP5** 'People With Disabilities and Limited Mobility' requires developments to include safe and convenient access for people with limited mobility.
- g) **CS1** 'Planning Obligations' – The Council will seek to secure through section 106 agreements or Grampian conditions infrastructure or other forms of development that are necessary as a result of the development proposed.
- h) **CS2** 'Public Utilities' – Planning permission will not be granted where there are inadequate water supply, sewerage or land drainage systems.

- i) **CS5** 'Flood Protection' restricts development where flood risk will be increased.
- j) **CS7** 'Underground Pipes, Fibres, Wires and Cables' are sought in order to reduce the visual impact of utilities, provided it would not damage ecology or archaeology.
- k) **CS10** 'Education' seeks financial contributions towards the provision of education where the development would cause the capacity of local schools to be exceeded.
- l) **CS13** 'Community Safety' seeks to minimise opportunities for crime within housing layouts, with subsequent reduction of the fear of crime.
- m) **RT2** 'The Provision of Public Open Space in New Development' sets out the standards for recreational space within developments.
- n) **EN5** 'The Landscaping of New Development' requires trees, hedges and woodland wherever possible to be retained within proposals for new development and landscaping schemes will be secured through appropriate conditions.
- o) **EN12** 'Nature Conservation: Unidentified Sites' seeks wherever possible to retain features and habitat types of nature conservation value where they occur. Where the need for development outweighs the need to retain such features appropriate mitigation measures will be required.
- p) **EN15** 'Development Affecting Ancient Monuments or Other Archaeological Sites' and **EN16** 'Public Access to Archaeological Sites and Records' seek to protect, preserve and enhance known archaeological sites and to require developers to provide access to any records arising from excavations for the public.
- q) **ES2** 'Road and Footway Lighting' requires new lighting not to have light spillage above the horizontal.
- r) **ES5** 'Recycling/Waste Minimisation' seeks to encourage recycling and waste minimisation within new developments.
- s) **ES7** 'Noise from Road Traffic' seeks to minimise the impact of road traffic noise through planning conditions.
- t) '**GIRTON 1**' allocates 9.2 ha of land for mixed development, including housing, adjoining Thornton Road.

Consultation

- 13. **Girton Parish Council** recommend refusal on grounds that it deplores the inadequacy of the ecological measures being taken on the site. It requests details of the registered social landlord.
- 14. **Housing Strategic Services** comments include:
 - a) A proposed deed of variation to the Unilateral Undertaking is acceptable as it provides initial shares of 50%, staircasing to no more than 80% for the shared ownership units. This has been sought for some time.
 - b) They will accept that 66 affordable units are to be provided subject to:
 - 1. written confirmation from the Girton Town Charity;
 - 2. details of the arrangements made for transferring these four units to a registered social landlord;
 - 3. details of the house types and tenures, to be agreed by them;

4. no link for these units will be made with a potential land exchange with the Council.
- c) The proposed 66 affordable units will mean that 30% of all units across phase one and two will be affordable.
- d) 50:50 split between shared ownership and rented would be acceptable but no grant funding will be available for either type. An application for grant from the Housing Corporation would only be supported on the basis of a 70:30 rented to shared ownership split.

Further comments on mix are being sought and will be reported verbally.

15. **Building Control Officer** is satisfied that general issues have been overcome in this layout.
16. The **Local Highways Authority** requires an amended layout plan addressing the following points:
 - a) "Blockwork surfacing is used within shared surface domains and junction tables to provide drivers (and pedestrians) with a clear visual message of the combined shared usage. Consequently, (except in the case of junction tables), no separate footway is provided. If the street serving plots 1-11 is to remain block surfaced the metalled width should be a min of 5.5m with 0.5m maintenance strip each side (such strip not to be metalled except at the point of accesses). No separate footway in front of plots 7-11.
 - b) There is no highway *objection* to the layout of the street running in front of plots 33-36, but would it not provide a more coherent arrangement if the entire street was shared surface? Similarly, the small section of standard carriageway in front of plot 20.
 - c) The street serving plots 56-72 appears to comprise a junction containing two different radii on the eastern side, together with a footway that appears on the west side of the carriageway in front of plot 68. This may be simply a CAD glitch but it needs to be sorted.
 - d) All accesses to comprise 1.5m x 1.5m pedestrian visibility splays each side.
 - e) Whilst not necessarily a LHA issue, I would point out the difficulty that residents of plots 28-31 and 22-25 will have in accessing/egressing their houses. Are the residents of these properties really expected to squeeze between parked vehicles to reach a metalled surface on which to walk?"
17. Cambridgeshire Constabulary's **Architectural Liaison Officer** is satisfied with the layout and requires that utility meters be sited on the front wall/ or side wall as close to the front/public side as possible.
18. **Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service** requires a section 106 agreement or planning condition securing the provision of fire hydrants. The cost of provision is to be received from the developer.
19. Cambridgeshire County Council's **Countryside Access Team** has no objection to the development. However a public footpath runs through the middle of the site and along the proposed spine road. The plans submitted with the application when compared with the Definitive Map show that the spine road does not follow the exact line of the public footpath. The footpath begins on what would be the south side of the road and runs in a south-easterly direction, crossing the proposed road at a shallow

angle to end up running along the north side of the road. It is not clear whether the angle of the public footpath would mean a continuing divergence from the proposed spine road in the area of the site immediately to the south of this one. This may cause serious problems for that area, with the potential for buildings and/or gardens to be constructed on the definitive line of the public footpath. This is a serious issue and one that should be addressed before detailed plans for the whole area are approved. It recommends informatives to draw the applicant's attention to points of law.

20. At the time of writing comments are awaited from the following consultees and any responses will therefore be reported verbally:

- a) **Trees and Landscape Officer**
- b) **Landscape Design Officer**
- c) **Ecology Officer**
- d) **Drainage Manager**
- e) **Chief Environmental Health Officer**
- f) **General Works Manager**
- g) **Environment Agency**

Representations

21. At the time of writing one letter of representation have been received from the occupier of 74 Girton Road. This raises the loss of woodland in the western corner of the site, contrary to a number of national and local policies.

22. The period for public representations expires on the 8th December 2006. Any additional comments, if received, will be reported verbally to the Committee.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

23. The development has planning permission and, therefore, the key issues in relation to this reserved matter application relate to the affordable housing provision, highways, public rights of way, ecology and loss of trees.

Affordable housing

24. The affordable housing proposals appear to be generally acceptable and comply with the requirements of Policy HG7 of the Local Plan. Further details as requested by the Strategic Housing Manager have been sought and a revised section 106 is to be undertaken.

Highways

25. The issues raised by the Local Highways Authority can be overcome through the submission of a revised layout. A revised plan has been sought.

Public Right of Way

26. The applicants have provided details of the public right of way that runs through the centre of the site in relation to the main access road. These details appear to show the right of way as being entirely within the public route through the site and not within areas that are proposed to be private gardens. Confirmation has been sought from the County Council that this is satisfactory.

Ecology

27. The previous application included details that were acceptable to the Ecology Officer with the exception of bat and bird box provision. The applicant's Ecologist has liaised

with the Council prior to the re-submission and it is anticipated that this concern has now been overcome, although comments are awaited from the Ecology Officer. In any event this could be conditioned if necessary.

Loss of trees in the western corner of the site

28. There is an area of self-seeded trees in the western corner of the site. This has been examined on several occasions by the Council's Trees and Landscape Officers, Landscape Design Officers and Ecology Officer. In each of the previous applications no objections have been raised to the loss of this habitat. Comments of the relevant Officers in relation to the landscaping of the site are awaited and will be reported.

Recommendation

29. Subject to the receipt of amended plans detailing changes required to the highways layout and no other material planning issues being raised by consultees yet to respond, signing of a variation to the section 106 to address the affordable housing provision, it is recommended that **delegated approval** be granted subject to appropriate safeguarding conditions.

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
- Regional Planning Guidance
- Planning File Refs: S/1284/02/O, S/2398/05/F, S/0162/06/RM, S/1437/06/RM, S/0061/06/F, S/0691/03/RM, S/0175/99/O and S/2103/06/RM

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