

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6th December 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

S/1876/06/RM - LONGSTANTON
Erection of 20 Dwellings and Garages
Land within Phase 2, Home Farm for Kings Oak, Milton Keynes

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 1st January 2007 (Major Application)

Notes:

These Applications have been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Parish Council objection does not accord with the officer recommendation.

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.68 ha site forms part of a larger site comprising Phase 2 of the Home Farm development. The Phase 2 site extends to 6.4 hectares. Formerly agricultural land the site is now being developed as part of an overall planning permission for 500 houses.
2. Access is from Over Road which lies to the west. To the east is the High Street and to the north and east an awarded watercourse. A Public Footpath crosses the site from southwest to northeast.
3. This reserved matters application, received on 2nd October 2006 provides details of the siting and design of, the means of access to and landscaping for 20 dwellings as a revision to part of the approved details for 153 dwellings on Phase 2. These proposals increase the number of dwellings on this part of the Phase 2 site from 14 to 20 by predominantly subdivision of units to form semi detached and terrace properties. This has increased the density from approximately 21 dwellings/ha to 29 dwellings/ha although it should be noted that this figure takes into account the application site area which includes the access and internal roads.
4. The development would be comprised of 2 (10%) no. 2-bedroom dwellings, 11 (55%) no. 3-bedroom, 3 (15%) no. 4-bedroom and 4 (20%) 5 bedroom. This compares to the approved 2 (14%) no. 3-bedroom dwellings, 5 (36%) 4-bedroom and 7 (50%) 5-bedroom dwellings.
5. 40% of the dwellings (8) would be 2-storey and 60% (12) 2½ storey. The ridge heights of the proposed dwellings range from 7.8 to 10.5 metres. This compares to the approved 50% (7) 2-storey and 50% (7) 2½ storey with ridge heights ranging from 8m to 9.3m.
6. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.

Planning History

7. Outline planning permission for comprehensive phased development to provide B1050 Bypass for Longstanton and related road works together with housing (21Ha), a business park (6.3Ha), extension to village recreation ground (2.8Ha), village green including land for local shop and surgery, open space, landscaping and related infrastructure` on land west of Longstanton, including the application site, was granted in October 2000 (**S/0682/95/O**). The Decision Notice was issued following the signing of a legal agreement relating to education contributions and highway works. Condition 16 restricted development to no more than 500 dwellings unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.
8. An application to vary conditions 2 and 3 of **S/0682/95/O**, which relate to the timescales for the submission of details and the commencement of development, was submitted under reference **S/1268/02/F**. This application has been treated as withdrawn.
9. **S/1762/03/RM** - 91 dwellings and ancillary works (Phase 1) - approved 22.12.03.
10. An appeal against a refusal to vary condition 16 of the Outline Planning Consent **S/0682/95/O** to allow the construction of more than 500 dwellings was dismissed by an Inspector's letter dated 29th November 2004.
11. **S/0246/04/RM** - Reserved Matter application for 200 dwellings (Phase 2) - Appeal allowed for 196 dwellings August 2005.
12. **S/0696/04/RM** - Duplicate application for 200 dwellings (Phase 2) - Refused for the following reasons:
 - “1. The proposed density at 31.25 dwellings per hectare, which exceeds the approved density of Phase 1 (29.3 d/h), would be contrary to the development principles of the Adopted Development Brief for Home Farm, would fail, in the absence of an appropriate master plan, to coherently implement the phased provision of 500 dwellings over the whole Home Farm site as required by the Outline Planning Permission, reference **S/0682/95/O** dated October 2000 and would not reflect the character of the existing built environment; consequently the proposal would be contrary to Policies P1/3 - Sustainable Design in Built Development of the Approved Structure Plan 2003 and HG5, HG10 and Longstanton 1 of the approved South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
 2. The design and layout of the proposed development fails to achieve a sufficiently high standard of design and a sense of place as required by Policies P1/3 - Sustainable Design in Built Development of the Structure Plan 2003 and HG10 of the Local Plan 2004 and by the adopted Longstanton Development Brief 1998.”
13. **S/0625/04/RM** - Reserved Matters application for the construction of on-site roads and sewers (Phase 2) – Approved April 2005.
14. **S/1846/04/F** - Application for balancing pond and scheme of ditch widening to serve development approved by virtue of outline planning permission **S/0682/95/O** – Approved June 2006.
15. An Appeal to vary Condition 16 of the Outline Planning Consent **S/0682/95/O** to allow the construction of 630 dwellings was withdrawn.

16. **S/2069/04/RM** – Application for 153 dwellings (Phase 2) was approved in May 2005.
17. **S/2415/05/F** – Application for 18 dwellings within Phase 2 has been withdrawn.
18. **S/1086/06/F** – Application to extend the period for submission of reserved matters for Phase 2 for an additional 2 years was approved in August 2006.
19. Approximately 10 revised designs have recently been approved for individual plots to include conservatories.

Planning Policy

20. The site forms part of the 21 hectare area of land allocated for some 500 dwellings on land north of Over Road in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: 2004 **Policy HG5**.
21. The principles of development are encapsulated in **Policy Longstanton 1** of the Local Plan 2004. The supporting text at Paragraph 67.17 states:
"The District Council has granted outline planning permission for residential, employment and recreation uses, which includes the provision of a development related bypass. The bypass between Hatton Road, Over Road and Station Road would provide access to Over or Willingham and onto Fenland without passing through the village. The District Council considers that the provision of the bypass is crucial for the village and therefore allocated a larger area for a housing estate than would otherwise be appropriate. In this instance there is no requirement for affordable housing as set out in **Policy HG7** because of the need to ensure the provision of the bypass and other community facilities such as a village green, shop and surgery".
22. Longstanton is defined as a Group Village in South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: 2004 (**Policy SE4**).
23. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/3** requires all new developments to incorporate high standards of sustainability and design and to provide a sense of place which:
 - (a) "Responds to the local character of the built environment;
 - (b) Is integrated with adjoining landscapes;
 - (c) Creates distinctive skylines, focal points, and landmarks;
 - (d) Includes variety and surprise within a unified design;
 - (e) Includes streets, squares and other public spaces with a defined sense of enclosure;
 - (f) Includes attractive green spaces and corridors for recreation and biodiversity;
 - (g) Conserves important environmental assets of the site;
 - (h) Pays attention to the detail of forms, massing, textures, colours and landscaping."
24. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P5/3** states that densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable "Local Planning Authorities should seek to maximise the use of land by applying the highest density possible which is compatible with maintaining local character".
25. Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG10** states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and

promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. It also states that the design and layout of the scheme should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape and schemes should achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency.

26. Local Plan: 2004 **Policy TP1** states that the Council will seek to promote more sustainable transport choices and one of the ways this can be achieved is restricting car parking for residential developments to a maximum of an average of 1 ½ spaces per dwelling with a maximum of 2 spaces for 3+ bedroom dwellings in poorly accessible areas.
27. A development brief for the Home Farm site, covering matters such as development aims, design philosophy, scale of development, built form (advocating a series of townscape zones including greenways, village lanes, village streets and hamlets), architectural form and open space was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 1998. Whilst design guidance has evolved since this brief was adopted, many of the principles contained within the brief remain relevant.
28. Government's **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 3**, "Housing" (March 2000) aims to avoid developments which make inefficient use of land (those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare). In terms of village expansion, development should be designed sympathetically and laid out in keeping with the character of the village. Design and layout should be informed by the wider context, having regard to the townscape and landscape of the wider locality.

Consultation

29. **Longstanton Parish Council** recommends refusal. It comments:
"The applicant states that the current application is to increase the number of homes in one part of Phase 2 from 14 to 20 homes. There is currently approval for 153 homes in Phase 2. Increasing the number of houses in each area of Phase 2 piecemeal provides no ability to assess the overall effect upon Phase 2, Home Farm, Longstanton. The Parish Council believes that the applicant should:

Submit a new application, detailing the whole of Phase 2 in the same manner as the initial 153-home application. Only in this way can there be an essential assessment of the area in its totality. No applications for local increases in houses should be approved until an overall plan is submitted. Failure to follow this basic approach is contrary to the general-to-detail approach that has been in place for Home Farm since the beginning. Further, the Parish Council objects to the drastic change in the housing composition (for example, 5 bedroom houses are reduced from 7 homes to 4 and 3-beds are increased from 2 to 11. The applicant previously stated that their housing composition was appropriate. By definition, then, this new application provides an inappropriate balance ensuring that the development becomes a bedroom community rather than one that will fully integrate with the schools and other aspects of village life".
30. **The Council's Drainage Officer**
"Please note that under the Council's Land Drainage Bylaws, no buildings, fencing, planting or any other obstructions will be permitted within 5 metres of the top of the bank of the watercourse to the north of the development".
31. **Natural England**
Makes no comments.

32. **Environment Agency** comments:

“Confirmation is required that the surface water drainage scheme has been wholly completed, including balancing facility and works to the watercourse, and adopted in accordance with previously agreed details.

Planning approval should not be forthcoming until the aforementioned detail is forthcoming.”

33. **Definitive Map Officer, Countryside Access Team, Cambridgeshire County Council** comments:

”Public Footpath No.3, Longstanton runs through the sites, as shown on the attached plan, which is taken from our digital version of the Definitive Map. The spine road cuts through the public footpath and the Countryside Access Team requires that the developers apply to divert the footpath from the Definitive line to the pavement of the spine road. It has already been brought to the developers’ attention that the development to the south of these sites has obstructed the legal line of the footpath and therefore a diversion is also essential to enable the sale of the affected properties. I attach a copy of an email sent to the developers regarding this issue. It should be noted that to date we have received no response. The Countryside Access Team requires that a condition be added to the planning permission stating that no part of the development should commence until a suitable diversion has come into effect.

In addition to the above comment it should be noted that the depiction of Public Footpath No.3 to the north east of the spine road on the developers plans appears to be in the correct location and the developers should ensure that it is constructed in this location to ensure that a subsequent diversion is not needed.

During construction the developers should apply for a temporary closure notice to ensure the safety of members of the public...”

34. **Middle Level Commissioners** comment:

”You will be aware from my previous correspondence that the Commissioners, on the Board’s behalf, agreed suitable land drainage/flood defence negotiations with the applications consultant and the Environment Agency to ensure that this development does not detrimentally affect the Board’s drainage district. It has been agreed that:

- (a) The balancing pond that serves this development has been completed to its maximum dimensions and the necessary flow regulation structures installed and operational before work on the Home Farm development commences on site.
- (b) The proposals for 500 houses at Home Farm are not increased.
 - i. Work on the Home Farm development has commenced prior to the completion of the balancing pond and will place the Board’s district at an increased of flooding.
 - ii. This planning application must also be submitted to the Environment Agency for comment/guidance in relation to :
- (c) Surface water disposal – I understand that the Environment Agency’s current policy is that any surface water created by a development should be regulated to the pre-development rate of run-off. The Board will, however, also require details of your client’s proposals to ensure that they do not adversely affect the Board’s rateable area.

- (d) The piping and filling of on-site watercourses.
- (e) Development affecting one of their 'main' rivers.

35. **Anglian Water**

Comments are awaited

36. **The Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service** asks that adequate provision is made for fire hydrants by way of Section 106 agreement or condition. Access and facilities for the Fire Service should also be provided in accordance with the Building Regulations Approved Document B5, Section 17.

37. **Local Highways Authority** comments:

"I would refer you to my original comments (dated 16th May 2005) in respect of the Reserved Matters application 2069/04 relating to Phase 2. There were so many highway related issues that needed to be addressed to provide an acceptable adoptable layout that I requested a joint meeting to resolve such issues.

Unfortunately, my concerns were not addressed, resulting in a highway infrastructure layout that comprises elements that will cause serious adoption difficulties.

From the statement submitted with the application it appears that the proposals the subject of this application do not affect the previously approved highway layout. Notwithstanding this, you may (for the avoidance of adoption difficulties) wish to suggest to the developer that the issues set out below be addressed at this late stage:

1. The private access road serving plots 42-44 and 64-67 should comprise a common turning area at the end of the road. At the very least the road width should be maintained past the private driveway to plot 44 to enable vehicles reversing from this drive to have suitable manoeuvring space.
2. I assume Road 2 comprises a shared surface street? The overall metalled width of Road 2 should therefore be a min of 5.5m with a 0.5m maintenance strip each side. Such maintenance strip should not be metalled except at the point of vehicular accesses.
3. The 1.8m wide footways adjacent to Road 1 should continue round the radii of the Road 1/Road 2 junction to terminate a min of 2.0m past a ramp/rumble strip to be provided at the interface of the standard carriageway within the bellmouth and the shared surface access way. Such ramp/rumble strip to commence at the tangent point of the radii and extend for some 2.0m.

I would suggest that an amended layout plan, addressing the above, be obtained from the applicant/agent, a copy of which to be forwarded to me when available."

38. **Finance Officer Cambridgeshire County Council**

Comments are awaited.

39. **Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum**

Comments are awaited.

40. **Cambridge Water Company**

Comments are awaited.

41. **Chief Environmental Health Officer comments:**
No objections subject to conditions to safeguard the amenities of existing residents from noise disturbance during construction.
42. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer**
"The parking arrangement for plots 70, 72, 73 and 74 are such that the spaces are rather remote from the dwellings served and not within their natural surveillance. This may result in inappropriate parking within view of car owners' dwellings, with the potential for dispute between residents.

The parking court to the rear of plots 81 and 82 should be provided with column mounted white down lighting. If this is not possible lights operated by dusk to dawn sensors should be fitted to the garages and powered by the dwellings served.

In addition to Roads 1 and 2 the drive to the front of plots 72-75 should be lit by means of column mounted white down lighters to BS 5489:1996 Code of practice for outdoor lighting."
43. **The Council's Ecology Officer comments:**
"Layout accepted. Condition required to secure provision of nest boxes or bat box on or in association with 50% of the dwellings (Council Policy as of 28th September 2006). Complies with PPS9."
44. **The Council's Landscape Design Officer comments:**
"The proposal no longer relates directly to the landscape master plan Drawing No.2348/04/P. The proposed changes will need either a revised master plan or notification of changes to the master plan. With the increase in density agreed, there will necessarily be a reduction in the green spaces available. Would prefer to see a few spaces large enough to take a mid range tree rather than many very small spaces with only grass. Detailed planting schemes will be required for each area".
45. **The Council's Environment Operations Manager comments:**
"Due to the lack of appropriate vehicular access I am assuming that refuse collection is to be made from the front of each property, however it is not clear from the drawing where the refuse storage is for the terraced properties. Please confirm the arrangements.

The Hammerhead in Road 2 is too small. Each leg **must be 11 metres** long to facilitate our collection vehicles.

Plots 64 and 65 are too far away from Road 1, the footpath could be linked to the hammerhead of Road 2 to resolve this problem.

Any surface we are likely to drive over must withstand 26 tonnes gvw."
46. **County Principal Archaeologist**
"The site has been subject to a programme of archaeological investigation in mitigation of the development. No further fieldwork is considered necessary and we have no objection to the commencement of development in this area".

Representations

47. One letter of objection has been received from the occupiers of The Retreat, Few's Lane, Longstanton.

"We agree with the Longstanton Parish Council that these applications should be refused and a completely new application submitted for the whole site. This development is becoming very piecemeal and numbers will soon be completely out of control and far exceed the original total of 500.

There is great concern within the community at the density, lack of parking spaces and whether or not adequate flood protection measures have been put in place".

48. **Ramblers Association (Cambridge Group)** comments:

"We wish to register our usual concerns:

- a) That the surface of the footpath should not be unduly disturbed by increased traffic during building work.
- b) That materials etc should [not] be stored/dumped on the RoW.
- c) That vehicles visiting the site should not impede the safe passage of pedestrians.
- d) That any footpath signs are not obscured or removed during building work.
- e) Any diversion of the footpath during construction should be adequately signed, and the surface should be that expected of a footpath.

49. **Longstanton Residents for Dry Homes has commented:**

"20 dwellings represents at 43% increase in housing stock on the application site (original application called for 14 homes). While appreciating that an appeal against an application for more than 153 homes did conclude that some number more should be considered, there has to date been no application to change the number of homes from 153 to some other number. It was quite proper that there be an initial outline consent for all of Home Farm, and that subsequently each phase submitted a more detailed application for its housing. It is wholly inappropriate, however, for Phase 2 to have its numbers increased in an ad hoc manner, with no indication of what the final number of houses might be. No applications for increases in housing on Phase 2 should be considered without an application that sets out the total number requested for Phase 2. Only then can the District be in a position to evaluate whether or not the numbers and arrangement of homes are consistent with the outline consent, and whether or not they are consistent with other reserve matters applications.

In particular, LRDH is concerned that an increase in homes will increase run-off into Longstanton brook. While the developers of Phase 1 have indicated that their drainage improvements would cater for more than 500 homes, this is far from a specific statement that it would cater for a specific number of homes with no increase to flood risk. Nor is it a statement that the balancing pond sluice gates have been tuned to cater for an increase beyond 500 homes (the developers, in a statement to the District's drainage advisory group, made clear that the gates would require expert tuning). The only way in which a clear statement can be made of the suitability or not of the drainage system is to have a specific application from the developers for the total number and distribution of homes requested for each phase.

Planning Comments - Key Issues

50. The key issues for consideration are:
- a) The impact on residential amenity of the revised layout
 - b) The visual impact of the scheme on the wider locality
 - c) Housing mix and density
 - d) Parking and landscaping

General

51. The applicant is seeking to erect an additional 6 dwellings on this part of the overall Phase 2 Home Farm development, which is being implemented in accordance with the approved 153 dwelling scheme rather than the 196 dwelling scheme allowed at appeal. I note the concerns of the Parish Council and a local resident in relation to piecemeal development. However, Phase 2 is being developed by more than one party making it impractical to take a more coordinated overview approach to the making of an application. In any case the applicants have a right to submit applications for reserved matters on parts of the site and the Council has a duty to consider these on their merits. Provided all of the conditions on the Outline permission can be complied with, including the 500 houses limit, I see no reason why these applications cannot be determined on their merits. A reason for refusal in line with the concerns raised would not therefore be justified. The overview approach to Home Farm is contained within the terms and conditions of the Outline planning permission.
52. This proposal for reserved matters only will not lead to more than 500 houses being erected on the Home Farm development site.

Residential amenity

53. The proposal will not materially affect the amenities of occupiers of existing properties. I consider the layout will provide for an adequate level of amenity for the future occupiers of the dwellings with the exception of the relationship between plots 70 and 71 which is poor. I have asked the applicants to consider replacing this pair of semi detached properties with a single detached dwelling to overcome the problem. I am expecting revised plans to be submitted shortly. Members will be updated at the meeting.

Visual impact

54. Eight of the dwellings are approximately 10.5m tall, just over a metre taller than the tallest approved dwelling on this part of the site. However, dwellings in excess of 10m are approved within Phase 2 (and some in excess of 11m) and I do not consider that in this location well within the overall Home Farm development that this will be out of keeping with the existing character. In fact these dwellings will face the large central area of Public Open Space giving some sense of enclosure to this area. I would prefer them to relate more obviously by being perpendicular to it but I do not consider this can be easily achieved or would justify a reason to refuse the application.
55. The house types are consistent with those already approved and the layout of the access roads has only been changed very slightly. The approved layout on this site did not contain public open space, it being provided elsewhere within Phase 2.

Housing mix and density

56. The increase in density here may be offset by lower densities in future phases eg Phase 3B but in any case 500 homes are permitted on the Home Farm site. This dictates the density unless the whole of the site is not developed. In this regard the density of the developed area will be greater and more in line with the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan and Government targets than permitted. The merits of developing the remainder of the site will have to be considered should this be proposed in the future. With regard to this site I welcome the increase in density and the provision of a greater proportion of smaller dwellings.

Parking and landscaping

57. Each dwelling will have parking available for two cars and the access arrangements remain as already permitted. The revised layout will not prejudice the ability to provide for planting in association with a scheme to be submitted under conditions on the Outline permission.

Other matters

58. The comments of the Policy Architectural Liaison Officer and the Council's Environment Operations Manager have been forwarded to the applicants for them to consider revisions to overcome the issues raised. As stated above Members will be updated at the meeting.
59. Drainage concerns are dealt with in the conditions attached to the Outline permission and in the recent permission for the balancing pond (see above), which has now been constructed. The new layout does not compromise the 5m safeguarding strip for maintenance of the drainage ditch to the north.
60. The appeal scheme for 196 houses, allowed by the Inspector, cannot be built as the permitted scheme for 153 houses has been implemented. However I consider it material to the consideration of these applications that a greater number of dwellings has been permitted by an Inspector within Phase 2 of the overall development. On this particular site within Phase 2 the appeal scheme permitted the erection of 20 dwellings.
61. A condition of the outline planning permission requires the provision of fire hydrants.

Recommendation

62. Delegated powers of approval are sought following the submission of the revisions detailed above and not subject to the need for further consultation, subject to safeguarding conditions that closely follow those attached to the approved scheme for 153 dwellings under planning permission ref. S/2069/04/RM.

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

- Reserved Matters Application Files Ref: S/2069/04/RM and S/1876/06/RM
- Outline Planning Permission Decision Notice Ref. S/0682/95/O
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Development Brief for Home Farm, Longstanton 1998
- Applications referred to in the "Planning History" section of this report.

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