

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

7<sup>th</sup> February 2007

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

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### **S/2134/06/F - PAMPISFORD**

**Erection of Two Buildings (Class B1) Together with New Access,  
Reconfigured Car Park and Ancillary Infrastructure at London Road  
for Turnstone (Cambridge) Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007 (Major Application)**

**Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the officer recommendation does not accord with the comments of the Parish Councils.**

**Members will visit the site on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site, which extends to 1.67 hectares, rises gently to the southwest towards the A1301 Sawston By-Pass. There is a 2m high hawthorn hedge on a low bank along the London Road/east frontage, a B1 (Business) building under construction to the south, and commercial premises on "Sawston Park" to the north. The bypass to the west is set down below the level of the site. A single storey and two-storey business units, comprising 2.861 sq.m. floorspace, an open storage depot, frontage to a disused petrol filling station and a high telecommunication mast lie within the site.
2. This full application, received on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006, proposes the erection of two 49m x 19m approx x 8.75m high to top of roof/11.05m high to top of plant room roof (3,744 square metres of gross external floor area) B1 (Business) buildings together with new and reconfigured car parking (219 spaces in total, 132 spaces for the proposed buildings and 87 spaces for the adjacent existing buildings), a new access to London Road and landscaping. Cycle parking is also proposed. The buildings would be faced with metallic silver horizontal metal panelling system, vertical gault brick panels and would have a flat roofing membrane system behind a brick parapet wall. Two existing accesses onto London Road would be closed.
3. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Transport Statement, Ecological Appraisal, an Archaeological desk-based Assessment, Ground Investigation Report, Flood Risk Assessment and a Foundation Works Risk Assessment.

#### **Recent Planning History**

4. Application reference **S/1377/05/F** for the erection of a 42m x 19m x 8.79m to the top of roof, 9.86m to the top of plant roof (1709 sq.m. gross external floor area) B1 (Business) building, together with car parking and landscaping on land to the south of the site was approved on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

## Planning Policy

5. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/2** states that no new development will be permitted within or which is likely to adversely affect functional flood plains or other areas where adequate flood protection cannot be given and/or there is significant risk of increasing flood risk elsewhere. Structure Plan **Policy P6/3** states that, if development is permitted in areas where flood protection is required, flood defence measures and design features must give sufficient protection to ensure that an unacceptable risk is not incurred, both locally and elsewhere.
6. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/3** requires a high standard of design for all new development and requires new development to be integrated with adjoining landscapes.
7. Structure Plan 2003 **Policies P2/2, P2/6** and **P9/7** relate to the general location of employment, the rural economy and the selective management of employment development respectively.
8. Local Plan 2004 **Policy SE9** requires development on the edge of villages to be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact on the countryside.
9. Local Plan **Policy EM3** sets out the limitations on the occupancy of new business premises in the District.
10. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EM6** states that, within village frameworks, planning permission will be granted for small-scale development (small-scale being considered to be development for those who employ 25 people or less) in classes B1-B8 provided that there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions, village character and other environmental factors; and the development would contribute to a greater range of local employment opportunities, especially for the semi-skilled and unskilled, or where initial development is dependent on the use of locally-based skills and expertise.
11. Local Plan 2004 **Policy TP1** states that the Council will seek, through its decisions on planning applications, to promote more sustainable transport choices and to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, by amongst other things, requiring the preparation of Green Travel Plans and by restricting car parking to a maximum of 1 space per 30 sq. metres of gross floor space (over 2,500 sq. metres).
12. A 6m to 10m wide proposed planting belt alongside the Sawston By-pass falls within a 2.3ha allocation for Class B1 employment development by virtue of Policies **"Pampisford 1"** and **EM1** of the Local Plan 2004.
13. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EN5** states that the District Council will require trees and hedges to be retained wherever possible in proposals for new development. Landscaping schemes will be required to accompany applications for development.
14. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EN12** seeks to retain features of biodiversity interest.
15. Part of the site is within the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Zone 2. Local Plan 2004 **Policy CS5** states that planning permission will not be granted for development where the site is liable to flooding, or where development is likely to: (1) increase the risk of flooding elsewhere by materially impeding the flow or storage of flood water; (2) increase flood risk in areas downstream due to additional surface water runoff; or (3) increase the number of people or properties at risk unless it is demonstrated that these effects can be overcome by appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures

and secured by planning conditions or planning obligation providing the necessary improvements would not damage interests of nature conservation.

16. Local Plan **Policy ES1** sets out requirements for proposals for redevelopment of potentially contaminated land.
17. In December 2006 Government published Planning Policy Statement (**PPS**)25: "Development and Flood Risk". In determining planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should:
  - (a) Have regard to the policies in the PPS;
  - (b) Ensure applications are supported by site-specific FRAs;
  - (c) Apply the sequential approach at a site level to minimise risk by directing the most vulnerable development to areas of lowest flood risk, matching vulnerability of land use to flood risk;
  - (d) Give priority to the use of Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS); and
  - (e) Ensure that all new development in flood risk areas is appropriately flood resilient and resistant, including safe access and escape routes where required, and that any residual risk can be safely managed.

### **Consultations**

18. **Pampisford Parish Council** comments:

"We strongly oppose the scale of this development. We were not informed about it officially until the planning applications were received and were not consulted by the developers despite its major impact on the village.

Policy EM6, which exists to protect small villages like Pampisford, states that planning permission may be granted within village frameworks and on suitable brown field sites for small scale development in classes B1-B6, provided that:

- (a) There would be no adverse impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions, village character and other environmental factors;
- (b) EM6 defines small scale development to be for firms who employ 25 people or less.

Taking these qualifications in turn:

#### *Impact on residential amenity and village character*

1. The potential number of employees on all three phases (evidenced by 392 car parking spaces) could eventually exceed the residential population of Pampisford by 2 to 1.
2. Pampisford is a small pretty village which already has significant business development within its boundaries. We accept that the site in question is earmarked for development but in our view the scale of development proposed is grossly disproportionate. The result is a very congested site. There will be an obtrusive visual impact at the entrance to the village. The height of the buildings proposed, including plant, is 14.8m overall.

3. If all the phases of the development are allowed to proceed, the London Road site will in toto be one of the largest areas of employment in South Cambs. This does not fit well with the concept of Pampisford as an infill village only (Policy SE5) and is contrary to EM6. The applicant accepts that it is “quite possible that an occupier...would employ more than 25 persons” . But they claim that this is not “particularly significant” as the site is adjacent to Sawston. The Parish Council strongly disagree. The principles enshrined in EM6 were crafted to protect and maintain the character of villages like Pampisford.

*Impact on traffic conditions*

4. If fully occupied, the development will generate additional traffic flows on such a scale (392 car park spaces) that it will cause serious problems in the area. The traffic survey is inadequate, concentrating on “access for safe vehicular access to the site” while ignoring the effect that increased traffic flows will have on the village, or accessing the A505 and Sawston. The traffic survey fails to offer any meaningful solutions to the wider traffic problems that the development on the scale proposed will generate (Appendix 1).

*Impact on other environmental factors*

5. We are concerned too about the impact on other basic services such as water, sewerage and electricity.
6. We feel that the Ground Survey report underestimates the impact of development on this scale and therefore the future potential for flooding especially in adjacent parts of Sawston Parish where it has been a problem for years. Government figures make it clear that flood risk will worsen with climate change over the next decades (e.g. flood risk to increase by a factor of 6-8 by 2080, increasing the risk of major floods from one every 100 years to every 17 years)
7. The Ecological Appraisal is inadequate, superficial and partial. It is also unfinished and must be completed before any decision can be made about the biodiversity value of the proposed development (see Appendix 2 for details). The reptile survey stated to be essential by the Ecological Appraisal has yet to be carried out.
8. **In our view, any development should be limited so that the site is less congested and more attention paid to sensitive landscaping on the lines of the site between Waterbeach and Chittering on the A10.**

*Current Position*

Phase 1 (3 buildings) already completed but not yet fully occupied  
Phase 2 (2 buildings) detailed planning permission applied for  
Phase 3 (2 buildings) outline permission being sought

If, notwithstanding our deep concerns over this development, SCDC is minded to approve this application, there are a number of important caveats we would wish to see imposed:

- a) *Scale back*: The development should be scaled back to be more in keeping with the character of the village and the spirit of Policy EM6.
- b) *Transport and additional traffic*: To make the roads safe, immediate and comprehensive design improvements to the road system between the village and A505 roundabout should be made. Proper and thorough evaluation of the transport impact on the surrounding area (access to the A505, the A505 roundabout, A1301 Sawston By-pass, access to Sawston, and impact of increased traffic flows on the village). This should include provision for traffic calming.
- c) The intended widening of London Road for a turning lane must not impact on the footpath and grass verge.
- d) *Cycleways*: Local cycleways need joining up, between Pampisford and the west side of Whittlesford station, Sawston, along bypass, A1301 and A505, eastwards.
- e) *Number of employees*: Controls on number of employees in the tenant businesses (following policy EM6)
- f) *Light pollution*: There should be strict controls on light pollution from the site. The unoccupied building on Phase 1 is already illuminating the surroundings to an unnecessary degree.
- g) *Hazardous substances*: That there should be strict controls/ restrictions of hazardous substances, which might be used in some small light industry/ lab research operations, particularly in relation to disposal. There is already polluted ground water in the area.
- h) That the old petrol station on west of A1301, should be cleared, including the removal of any remaining fuel tanks and the site allowed to become a wildlife area.
- i) A proper ecological appraisal of the site should be carried out and more native species are included in the proposed planting schemes (Policy EN7).
- j) There should be a defined acknowledgement that the village is beginning as you come to 30mph sign on London Road – such as a fence, village name or village sign.

#### *Supporting comments*

*Employment opportunities*: the applicants claim this will increase employment opportunities in Sawston. But the occupiers of these buildings are likely to want technically proficient skilled workers. And the almost 400 car parking spaces suggest that the developers are not expecting local workers.

#### *Local traffic flows*:

- (a) When planning permission was granted to The Wellcome Trust for further building at Hinxtton, the effect of such development on the traffic was acknowledged and improvements were made to the roundabout between A505 and A1301.

- (b) The result at the time was better traffic flows on A505, and a reduction of 'rat running' traffic through Pampisford.
- (c) The gradual increase in traffic since however, means that flows are again very slow around the roundabout, both in the morning and in the evening, in all directions, both towards and away from it.
- (d) Regularly the east bound traffic backs up on the other side of the M11, by the air museum.
- (e) Traffic coming round Sawston on A1301 [Sawston bypass] comes very fast and is not always prepared to let in the traffic coming out of London Road.
- (f) The angle of this junction is such that though there may not have been many serious accidents logged, there are minor crashes between vehicles
- (g) Drivers who cannot easily access roads, find rat runs and this has a huge potential impact on the village, particularly Town Lane and Brewery Road.

#### *Appendix 1 Traffic concerns*

These are not just the views of the Parish Council. The whole village was leafleted, invited to see the plans and to give their views. All who took this opportunity were concerned about the impact on the village environment and particularly how local roads would cope with the extra traffic.

#### *Appendix 2 Detailed comments on London Road, Pampisford Ecological Appraisal*

This is a brief review of the Ecological Appraisal by Dr Mark Rehfish, a Senior Ecologist with 20 years experience of working with the UK government and the private sector to quantify biodiversity value on actual or proposed designated sites, and of carrying out EIAs at a wide range of spatial scales.

The Ecological Appraisal is substandard. It should be completed before any informed decision can be made about the biodiversity value of the site. Some of the basic limitations are summarised below.

1. *Birds: Firstly, the ecological survey of the site was carried out on a single day in August (Ecological Appraisal 2.1).* This is too late in the breeding season to find evidence of breeding in the high biodiversity value species (Song Thrush, Corn Bunting and Tree Sparrow) that have been recorded from the near vicinity of the proposed development site by the author. Species such as the Song Thrush have been identified as priority species by the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2000-2010. Standard protocol would require a minimum of three evenly-spaced site visits to be carried out between mid April and June to ensure that any breeding pairs can be recorded.
2. A rapid search of existing datasets would have partly remedied the poverty of the bird survey. However no attempt has been made to assess bird numbers from the main provider of bird count data for Great Britain, the British Trust for Ornithology, that runs all long-term surveys of Britain's birds: the Breeding Bird Survey, the Common Bird Census, the Waterways Breeding Bird Survey, the Wetland Bird Survey, the periodic Breeding and Wintering bird Atlases of Britain and Ireland, etc.

3. *Reptiles*: Secondly, as stated in the Ecological Appraisal, a reptile survey needs to be carried out on the potentially suitable rough grassland and scrub habitat present in the area of the proposed development to determine whether any reptiles protected under the amended W&CA 1981 are present (Ecological Appraisal 5.6). Such a survey should be carried out between April and September with return visits. A single visit to a site, not specifically targeted at reptiles, is totally inappropriate to assess the presence of these species.
  4. *Bats*: a database search for bats is only likely to identify the relatively few areas in Britain that have been surveyed by a bat specialist. To ensure that the London Road site does not hold colonies of bats, the Ecological Appraisal should include at least three visits at dusk with a bat detector. The protected species, Noctule and Serotine, that hunt over a range of several kilometres have been found within 500 m of the site (Ecological Appraisal 4.22). These species could be using the area of London Road. It is illegal to wilfully disturb bat colonies.
  5. *Otters*, a protected species, occur 60 m away from the site and yet the value of the area of London Road is dismissed cursorily (Ecological Appraisal 4.28).
  6. Proposed Mitigation (Ecological Appraisal 5.8)  
The proposed mitigation for the development comprises an ill-defined wish-list with no targets, and fewer guarantees of any action. The proposal that wildlife corridors be built is likely to lead to increased wildlife movement and therefore greater wildlife mortality in an area with so much car traffic.”
19. **Sawston Parish Council** recommends refusal. It comments:
- “Could the cycleway be extended from the A505;  
Much extra traffic will be generated at a very busy junction of the A1301;  
Improvements needed to junction of A1301 and High Street.”
20. **The Local Highways Authority** has requested additional information which was absent from the original Transport Assessment (TA). That information comprises:
- “1. Trip Generation**
- Surveys have been carried out but need include not only the peaks, but also all day data, as per the County’s Transport Assessment guidelines.
- As the Travel Plan attached to the TA has yet to be implemented, there is no data relating to the modal split of travel by workers at the site. The Developers currently have the first phase of development in place and partly occupied, which should be used to demonstrate the success of the measures in the travel plan. Travel Plans should be implemented from day 1 to set a foundation of travel choices, not when the development is fully occupied, as stated in the conditions of the Developer’s Travel Plan.
- The number of parking spaces, although inline with standards, are not justified by all day data. This appears to lead to more parking spaces than necessary, which does not support PPG 13 Objective 3 “*To reduce the need to travel, especially by car.*”
- Savills are aware of this additional work and are currently working on it.

## **2. Accident Sites**

There are two Accident Cluster Sites in the locality and the impact of the inevitable increase in traffic have not been addressed in the TA, nor have potential mitigation measures been identified. Savills are aware of this and will carry out the work required.

## **3. Junction Capacities**

There is a lack of information regarding the capacity of critical junctions in the vicinity of the site, such as the angled T-junction of London Road/A1301 (0.6km south of the development entrance) and the major roundabout junction of the A505 and A1301. Savills are currently working to provide this analysis.”

The Local Highways Authority is also aware of the comments of Pampisford Parish Council in regard to transportation matters.

21. **Anglian Water** - comments are awaited and will be reported verbally.

22. **Ecology Officer**

“I wish to raise a holding objection to the current layout. I object strongly to the culverting of the ditches that are onsite. This is contrary to Policy EN12 which seeks to retain features of biodiversity interest. Furthermore, whilst I accept the findings of the ecology report PPS9 seeks restoration of landscape features especially those of a linear nature. The district only has a finite resource of such features and we should be protecting and enhancing them. The current proposal contradicts many of the Local Development Control Policies of the Biodiversity Strategy.

From reading the FRA the Agency has already advised the applicant that culverting of watercourses is not normally granted permission. Also when the site is at risk of flooding it would appear unwise to build on top of watercourses or to allow any operation that limits their potential to operate effectively. If we were to accept any culverting and new channel creation then I must have full design profiles and planting schedules in advance so that I can be fully assured that it will deliver a biodiversity gain. Also during my walkover I found old culverts behind the northern garage which should also be restored to open drains (see pics).

I have concerns at the amount of planting proposed along the southern boundaries, it will lead to the shading of the watercourse, thus limiting its potential as a wildlife corridor and lowering water quality (EN45). The retained ditch should also be kept open on one side so that it can be maintained appropriately, this may require suitable reprofiling.

I note that the tree survey recommends repollarding of some of the old willows. I welcome this and it could possibly be conditioned.

I welcome the proposal for the erection of bird and bat boxes. This could be achieved through condition.

The current scheme needs to be reconsidered so that it gives better biodiversity protection and presents worthy habitat enhancement measures that will provide lasting biodiversity benefits for a range of habitats.”

The Ecology Officer has considered a response to his and the Pampisford Parish Council's comments by the applicant's ecological consultants. He says:

"I still do not accept the need for the extensive amount of culverting. When I visited the site all ditches had some water in them (this is a different view to the developer's ecologist who visited in summer) as such they must form a drainage purpose and should thus be restored as PPS9 seeks. Furthermore, the culverting is to allow car parking, this is not normally allowed by Agency policy. If new ditches of similar lengths can be created on site or other enhancements presented then I might reconsider my view. At present the application results in a net loss for biodiversity which contradicts the aims of the Council's Biodiversity Strategy.

I accept that effort has been made to retain an open nature of the parts of the watercourse. However, the use of gabion or sheet piling walls detracts from the habitat potential of the ditch banks and needs further discussion with the applicant. To use a condition is not entirely correct at present as we may end up having to accept an engineering solution which we don't wish to have.

I have considered an update paper provided by the applicant that addresses my initial concerns and those of the parish council (who had the input of ecological expertise). Agreement can be reached on many points in my view, however the following issues should be reported:

Lizards - given the disturbed nature of the site and the previous dense vegetation it is unlikely that lizards will be found in the main development areas. Space remains in the periphery to include their needs (should they be present). As the applicant's ecologist still advises that a survey be conducted I would in this case recommend that a condition be used to survey for them within areas of suitable habitat (to be agreed with the applicant's ecologist).

Otters - Ditches across the district are providing a network of dispersal routes for the recovery of the otter population. Otters are using surprisingly small watercourse. It is for this type of reason that we should not be allowing the uncompensated loss of any watercourse through culverting. I accept that it is unlikely that otters ever took shelter on the site. However, the improvement of the overall quality of the local environment will benefit them.

Ditches - (already touched upon) even where they appear degraded, PPS9 seeks their restoration.

Further layout designs are needed."

23. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** comments:

"Consideration might be given to designing out the recess to the rear of units 4 & 5 where they join as this may provide an area where the buildings could be subject to criminal attack out of view."

24. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** requests the provision of fire hydrants by way of a S.106 Agreement or a planning condition.

25. **Landscape Design Officer** has some reservations:

"Entrance - will moving entrance cause removal of some existing trees? Not shown on scheme.

Leylandii hedge - there is currently a large hedge running East to West along the site, has this been removed or is it shown as the hedge behind unit 4 and 5? If this is new planting, what is it?

Car park behind unit 1 - 50m x 50m car park with no internal planting is not acceptable, would like to see some reasonable sized beds with trees. What is planting along edge of car park next to earth bank?

What is purpose of board walk all around site? How will it be maintained?

Area near to Mast - It is unclear from the drawing what trees will be lost.

Drain - unclear what will happen to it, what will it drain, and where will the water go?

Earth mound along A1301 - planting is notoriously difficult to establish on a mound, not sure it will provide sufficient screening of the buildings from the road.

Generally - need clearer definition of what is going to be planted where, what species are 'native planting' and 'ornamental planting' etc. on key."

In response to a proposed revised landscape plan, the Landscape Design Officer has said:

"Is number of car parking spaces fixed or only just meeting standards? Any provision for alternative transport eg bike parking?"

1. Car parking arrangements still seem confused and create many small, awkward areas of landscape where planting will be difficult to establish. Suggest losing a few spaces to allow larger better integrated areas of planting.
  2. Where space permits suggest replacing some groups of small trees with a fewer number of large trees - which will be more in scale with the site and buildings.
  3. Suggest moving shrubs and trees adjacent to the ditch/stream as shown on section C – C to a distance of 4 metres from the bank top, leaving an open meadow area. This will reduce shading and leaf falls into the stream and provide an area for maintenance access. The meadow should be of a suitable native seed mix to be agreed with SCDC. This treatment could be continued between the east side of the emergency access and the petrol station
  4. Suggest retaining open ditch/stream in front of unit 6 as this area is not needed for access or building.
  5. Suggest further tree planting in car park fronting phase one despite changes in level. This could be achieved by careful tree pit design or removal of a limited number of car parking bays to form planting beds."
26. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** has no objections to the proposed trees for removal. A landscaping scheme for the area should be approved by the Landscape Officer.
27. **County Archaeology Officer** does not consider archaeological investigations to be necessary.
28. **The Council's Drainage Manager** has no comments. There are no award drains in Pampisford.

29. **Cambridge Water Company** is most concerned that any planning consent that may be granted should include conditions to prevent any potential for ground water contamination of underground water supplies in the chalk aquifer.
30. **The Environment Agency** comments that the application falls within floodzones 1, 2 and 3. The FRA is acceptable in principle and a number of conditions are recommended. These relate to:
- (a) Submission, approval and implementation of a scheme of compensatory flood storage works, details of a safe access/egress route, a flood contingency plan and a surface water drainage scheme;
  - (b) Prevention of spoil or materials being deposited or stored in the floodplain or ground raising within the floodplain;
  - (c) Removal of permitted development rights for extensions;
  - (d) Stipulation of minimum ground floor level of any building (at least 23.96m AOD); and
  - (e) Protection of the development against the ingress of carbon dioxide and volatile organic compounds using appropriate gas protection membranes.

The Environment Agency's comments relating to groundwater and contaminated land are awaited and will be reported verbally.

31. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** recommends the imposition of conditions relating to details of location and type of any power driven plant or equipment, hours of construction works and method for construction of any driven pile foundations. A number of points of clarification have been sought from the applicants upon the ground investigation reports.
32. The first meeting of the **Disability Plan Vetting Group** has considered this application. It considers the layout is well conceived but has made some detailed comments in regard to the "core areas" and entrances to the buildings and the need for additional access space alongside two of the disabled parking spaces. These comments have been passed on to the applicants.

### **Representations**

33. The applicants have submitted a revised landscape plan and associated sections in support of the scheme. In a letter dated 25th January 2007 (attached as an electronic appendix) the applicant has also commented on a number of matters and included statements from the ecological consultant and upon surface water disposal.
34. The Directors of Eastern Counties Leather Group Ltd fully support the application as they believe it will help the much needed employment situation in this part of the County.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

35. The main issues in relation to this application are relationship to employment policies in the Local Plan 2004, the affect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, highway and transport matters/parking; drainage and flood risk; ground contamination; and landscaping/ecological matters.

### ***Employment Policies***

36. The site is brownfield/previously developed land within the Village Framework. Structure and Local Plan Policies encourage Business development on such sites, subject to limitations on occupancy for Class B1 premises being imposed by condition (Policy EM3 of the Local Plan 2004).
37. Although the site is within the Pampisford Village Framework, it is also very close to Sawston Village Framework, a Rural Growth Settlement. Policy EM6 of the Local Plan supports small-scale (firms who employ 25 people or less) B1 development in this circumstance.
38. Having regard to the size of each unit, approximately 1,870 sq.m, and the car parking allocated to each, 60 spaces, it is possible that each unit would, if occupied by a single user, employ more than 25 persons. However, I do not consider that this is fatal given that this is existing employment land, each unit is similar in size to that approved at Unit 1 in 2005 and an occupancy condition is required by virtue of Policy EM3 of the Local Plan.

### ***Character and Appearance***

39. The proposed buildings will back on to existing unattractive commercial buildings to the north. They will be seen from both London Road and the A1301, Sawston By-pass, but in the context of commercial buildings on either side. Street elevations illustrate that, although the roof of the buildings will be some 2m higher than the commercial buildings to the north (plant room a further 2.3m higher), the roof of the buildings will be 1.22m lower than Unit 1, which is under construction and 0.15m higher than the adjoining building at Unit 3 to the south. The top of the plant room will be the same as that on Unit 1 and 0.85m below that of the plant room on Unit 3. These proposed plant rooms are, however, recessed approximately 7.5m and 5.5m from the end and principal elevations respectively of each building. In terms of scale, design and appearance I conclude that the proposal is acceptable.

### ***Transportation***

40. The proposed new access achieves 4.5m x 90m visibility splays, appropriate to the scale of the development and the 30 mph speed limit on London Road. It provides a protected right-turning lane which doesn't exist for either of the two existing accesses. Both of these would be closed. In principle, therefore, highway safety on London Road should be improved. A proposal for an emergency access with lockable bollards on to the A1301 By-pass is unlikely to be acceptable, however. This Authority and the Highway Authority have always resisted any such proposal.
41. Car parking has been provided at a ratio over the entire site of 1 space per 31.5 sq.m. gross floor area to accord with the Local Plan maximum standard of 1 space per 30sq.m. for development over 2,500 sq.m. Disabled car parking provision has been provided at 5% of capacity (6 spaces). Additional space is necessary on one side of two of these spaces to afford adequate access. Covered and secure cycle parking is provided at 1 space per 80 sq.m. gross floor area. Although this accords with the level of provision approved as part of the 2005 permission for Unit 1, it does not accord with the Local Plan standard of 1 space per 30 sq.m. gross floorspace. In this sustainable location, I consider that further cycle spaces should be provided.
42. The site is located 1.6km from Whittlesford railway station and close to bus stops on London Road, along which the frequent Citi 7 service operates. Each business unit will be subject to a Travel Plan, which can be made the subject of a condition.

43. To the south of the site, London Road merges into the A1301 Sawston By-Pass at a very acute angle. The Transport Statement assesses traffic flows for the full development opening year of 2010. In the a.m. and p.m. peak hours it is predicted that approximately 15% of the two way flows on London Road south of the site access will be development-related traffic, based on a total development of 12,340 sq.m. existing, approved and proposed floorspace. The implications of this for the flow and safety of traffic at this junction is being analysed by the County Council.
44. The cycleway and footway link to Whittlesford Railway Station involves a crossing of London Road north of the A1301 junction and a crossing back over the A1301 at its southbound approach to the A505 roundabout. I am awaiting the comments of the County Council as to the adequacy of this route.

### ***Drainage and Flood Risk***

45. The Flood Risk Assessment identifies the development as largely within the 1 in 100 year flood level of 23.36 AODN. Finished floor levels are to be raised 600mm above that flood level as required by the Environment Agency. The levels of proposed access road and car parking will be partly below the flood level but above the only actual flood level relating to the site of 22.71, AODN taken on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1968. It is proposed that this risk will be mitigated by putting in place a flood warning and evacuation procedure. Surface water will be stored/attenuated and discharged into the watercourse at an agreed rate.
46. The displacement of flood waters by buildings will be compensated for within the site on a level by level, volume by volume basis up to 1 in 100 year flood level. This is detailed in the FRA, which is acceptable to both the Environment Agency and the Council's Drainage Manager, subject to the imposition of a number of conditions on any planning permission.

### ***Ground Contamination***

47. The Ground Investigation Report and Foundation Works Assessment recommends that localised remediation is necessary to mitigate the impact of concentrations of chromium and various hydrocarbons which were proven in soils. Further investigation of historic landfill on/adjacent to the site, sampling of the degree and distribution of hydrocarbon contamination, evaluation of remedial measures to counteract contamination and discussion with the Environment Agency in regard to shallow groundwater contamination is recommended by the Chief Environmental Health Officer. The applicant's Consultant is aware of this request.
48. The appropriate and suitable foundations for each building are identified in these reports.

### ***Landscaping and Ecology***

49. The proposed landscaping belt along the south west boundary will vary in width from 5m to 10m. Native tree and shrub species will reflect the previously approved scheme for Phase 1 (Unit 1). In the northern section of this belt an existing open watercourse will be retained but will require re-profiling. The existing access gaps on London Road will be closed by the planting of a native hedge, the species being selected from the existing hedge on this frontage.
50. At the rear of Units 2 and 3 the extended and reconfigured car park will comprise some 111 spaces without any planting whatsoever to break up its appearance. I consider this to be unacceptable and not in accord with the approved layout plan for

Unit 1, which was amended to include trees within the line of parking spaces along the eastern boundary.

51. The Ecological Appraisal found no habitats of ecological value although features on site offer opportunities for local wildlife. Further surveys for reptiles have been recommended. Bat roosting opportunities exist in “mature and veteran trees”, some of which will be retained. Any removal of vegetation should be conducted outside of the bird nesting season (March-August). Opportunities also exist to provide biodiversity gains. However, further work is necessary and the scheme needs to be reconsidered to give better biodiversity protection and enhancement.

### **Conclusion**

52. I support the proposal in principle, but I have identified issues which the applicants should address, namely deletion of the emergency access to the A1301, ecological comments of consultees, lack of planting within the car park, inadequate cycle parking, need for further work upon contamination matters and shortcomings in the Transport Assessment.

### **Recommendation**

53. Subject to the satisfactory resolution of the issues identified in Para 52 above, Approval, subject to conditions, to include:
1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
  2. Sc5a – Samples of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5a);
  3. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
  4. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
  5. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that order with or without modification) - for a period of ten years from the date of first occupation of each of the hereby permitted buildings, they shall only be used and occupied as follows:
    - (a) Offices
      - (i) Normally to the provision of a local or sub-regional service or administrative facility principally for persons resident or organisations situated in the Cambridge area excluding national or regional headquarters offices; *or*
      - (ii) To a maximum floorspace of normally 300 square metres;

*and/or*

- (b) Research and Development

- (i) To the provision for high technology research and development firms, or organisations, which can show a special need to be closely related to the Universities, or other established facilities or associated services in the Cambridge area;

*and/or*

- (c) Light industry to a maximum planning unit size of 1,850 square metres of floorspace.

(Reason - To safeguard the policies of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy EM3 in particular, which limit employment development in the Cambridge area to uses that need to be located close to Cambridge.)

6. Sc5 - Details of the covered secure cycle parking.  
(Reason - To encourage alternative means of travel to the site.);
7. Neither building shall be occupied until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; implementation of the Plan shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details of the Plan.  
(Reason - To encourage car sharing and the use of alternative means of travel to the site.)
8. Details of the location and type of any power driven plant or equipment including equipment for heating, ventilation and for the control or extraction of any odour, dust or fumes from the buildings but excluding office equipment and vehicles and the location of the outlet from the buildings of such plant or equipment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before such plant or equipment is installed; the said plant or equipment shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and with any agreed noise restrictions.  
(Reason - To protect the occupiers of adjoining buildings from the effect of odour, dust or fumes.)
9. 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 protect occupiers of adjoining buildings from noise.)
10. No development shall commence until a scheme for the erection of bird and bat boxes has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and an approved timetable.  
(Reason - To accord with Local Plan Policy 2004 EN12 which seeks to retain features of biodiversity interest and Planning Policy Statement 9 which requires ecological enhancement in new developments.)
11. No development shall commence until a scheme for the provision and implementation of compensatory flood storage works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved programme and details.  
(Reason - To alleviate the increased risk of flooding.)
12. No development shall commence until details of a safe access/egress route, not adversely affecting the flood regime, to land outside the 1 in 100 year floodplain, are submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved route shall be in place before any occupancy of the building(s).  
(Reason - To provide safe access and egress during flood events and reduce reliance on emergency services.)

13. No spoil or materials shall be deposited or stored in the floodplain nor shall any ground be raised within the floodplain as shown on Drawing No. 19374:90:002 Rev B within the Flood Risk Assessment unless expressly authorised in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To prevent the increased risk of flooding due to impedance of flood flows and reduction of flood storage capacity.)
14. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), the following classes of development more particularly described in the Order are expressly prohibited within the Flood Compensation Area in accordance with Drawing No. 19374:90:002 Rev B in respect of the property and each unit thereon unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf: - Part 8 (Industrial and Warehouse Development).  
(Reason - To ensure that any development which would not otherwise require planning permission does not lead to an increased risk of flooding to other land/properties, due to impedance of flood flow and reduction in flood storage capacity.)
15. The minimum ground floor level of any building involved in the development must be at least 23.96m AOD unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To provide a reasonable freeboard against flooding and an allowance for climate change.)
16. No development shall commence until a flood contingency plan including car parks and warning signage has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the approved plan shall be implemented in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment before any building is occupied and shall thereafter be held on site for use at all times.  
(Reason - To ensure the safe access and egress during times of flood.)
17. No development shall commence until a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme.  
(Reason - To prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory method of surface water drainage.)
18. The development, hereby permitted, shall be fully protected against the ingress of carbon-dioxide and volatile organic compounds using appropriate (aluminium cored) gas protection membranes: service entry points must be fully sealed.  
(Reason - The development is above the LS9 closed non-inert landfill site used for the disposal of tannery residues. RSA Geotechnics site investigation report 10070A demonstrates the presence of significant VOC and carbon dioxide levels in the ground beneath the development.)
19. No development shall commence until a scheme for the provision and location of fire hydrants to serve the development to a standard recommended by the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; no development shall take place other than in accordance with the approved scheme.  
(Reason - To ensure adequate provision of fire hydrants.)

20. No external lighting to the development, hereby permitted, shall be installed other than in accordance with a scheme which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To minimise the impact of light pollution in the area.)

### **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:**
    - P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development)
    - P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development)
    - P2/2** (General Location of Employment)
    - P2/6** (Rural Economy)
    - P6/3** (Flood Defence)
    - P9/7** (Selective Management of Employment Development)
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
    - SE9** (Village Edges)
    - EM3** (Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises in South Cambridgeshire)
    - EM6** (New Employment Within Rural Growth Settlements)
    - TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)
    - EN5** (The Landscaping of New Development)
    - EN12** (Nature Conservation: Unidentified Sites)
    - EM1 and Pampisford 1** (Allocation for B1 Employment Uses)
    - CS5** (Flood Protection)
    - ES1** (Contaminated Land)

### **Informatives**

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted to 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.

**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
- Planning File Refs: S/1377/05/F and S/2134/06/F

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