

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

7<sup>th</sup> February 2007

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### **S/2331/06/F – GREAT SHELFORD**

**Erection of 9 apartments following demolition of existing buildings; ‘Bambinos’, 79/81 Hinton Way, for L Crawford**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

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

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application site, measuring 0.14 ha, is occupied by a pair of Edwardian semi-detached dwellings located on the north west side of Hinton Way. ‘Bambino’s’ was a day nursery which closed in June 2006, and attempts to sell it as an on-going concern have not been successful. To the south west, the site is adjoined by No.77, an Edwardian two-storey semi-detached dwelling with windows in the roof that look over the site, and a dining room/utility adjacent to the boundary with the site. To the north east, the site adjoins the access road serving residential development at ‘The Orchards’, beyond which is modern two-storey dwelling at No.87 Hinton Way. The rear boundary of the site adjoins a single-storey dwelling at No.1, The Orchards. There are two existing vehicular accesses from the site onto Hinton Way.
2. The full application, received on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006, seeks to demolish the existing dwelling and to erect 8 x 2-bedroom and 1x 3-bedroom flats on the site. The building is to be predominantly two-storey with two apartments to be accommodated in the roof space. The ridge height of the finished building is shown to be similar to the neighbouring frontage dwellings at Nos.77 and 87 Hinton Way. A single-storey wing is proposed at the rear adjacent to No.77 in order to reduce the impact on the amenity of that dwelling.
4. The new development has been designed with a steeply pitched roof with four gables on the front elevation and two gables on the rear elevation to reflect the appearance of the Edwardian architecture of the existing and adjoining dwellings, and elsewhere on Hinton Way, and also to create the appearance of a pair of larger semi-detached houses as seen in the area. The building is to be finished in brick and slate, with timber casements and sash-type windows. Mature trees on the site are to be retained.
5. The existing vehicular accesses are to be closed and a new access created in the centre of the Hinton Way frontage. Following discussions with the Highway Authority, the existing public footway fronting the site is to be widened to 2.0 metres. 15 car parking spaces are to be provided at the front of the apartments. This represents a provision of 1.66 spaces per flat, including 1 disabled space. A facility for bin and bicycle storage is proposed adjacent to the rear boundary of the site.

6. The density of development equates to 64 dwellings/hectare.

### **Planning History**

7. **S/1871/06/F** – Full application received 29<sup>th</sup> September 2006 for 8 apartments and 1 duplex apartment. This application was withdrawn following representations received about the size and design of the development, and the impact on the amenity of No.77 to the south west.
8. **S/1101/98/F** – Part change of use of No.79 to day nursery – Approved.
9. **S/0894/91/F** – Nursery extension – Refused.
10. **S/0676/89/F** – Change of use to day nursery – Approved.

### **Planning Policy**

#### Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

11. **P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development) requires compact forms of development through the promotion of higher densities that responds to the local character of the built environment.

#### South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

12. **SE4** (Group Villages) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that redevelopment up a maximum scheme of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework provided that the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenities of neighbours.
13. **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design) requires residential developments to have a mix of units making the best use of the site. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape.
14. **CS10** (Education) – Where planning permission is granted for schemes of 4 or more dwellings, financial contributions will be sought towards the provision of local educational accommodation.
15. **TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel) – car parking requirements will be restricted to the maximum levels set out in Appendix 7/1. (For dwellings, Appendix 7/1 gives a level of an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling, up to a maximum of two per 3 or more bedrooms in poorly accessible areas. Visitor/ service parking should not fall below 0.25 spaces per dwelling provided with 2 parking spaces).
16. **Policy EM8** (Loss of Employment Sites in Villages) – the redevelopment of employment sites to non-employment uses will be resisted unless the existing site is generating environmental problems or where market demand make it inappropriate for any employment use to continue.

#### Great Shelford Village Design Statement (SPG 2004)

17. **Buildings and Spaces** – Principles Buildings in Great Shelford are predominantly domestic in scale, and diverse in style, ground plan, ownership, setting and alignment. Future development should mirror that scale and diversity. **Guideline** - protect good examples of historic and modern buildings and building types, their features and details, whether or not they are listed.

## Consultation

18. **Great Shelford Parish Council** – recommends refusal of the application stating:  
“We still believe this is overdevelopment of the site despite the floor area and width of the new building being reduced, as the applicant still wishes to erect 9 flats on the site. In order to achieve this he is proposing a second floor which makes the building higher than the adjacent properties despite a large part of the roof being flat. We do not think this is a sustainable form of development.
19. We objected to the overlooking from the first floor windows on the previous application; this situation has been made worse by the inclusion of 4 velux windows and a large bedroom window on the second floor rear elevation.
20. Our comments on the car parking also apply to this application. A reduction in the number of units on the site would allow for a more sensitive car parking layout and would permit the construction of a purpose built building to house bins in the front garden away from the occupiers of 1 The Orchards.
21. (The plot area when measured is some 300 sq m less than that specified in the application, the windows shown on the floor plans do not match up in size and shape to those on the elevations and some of the chimneys are not shown on the floor plan).”
22. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – Recommends conditions to be attached to any permission issued to minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents during the construction period.
23. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – No objection in principle, subject to details of hard surfacing being agreed.
24. **Local Highways Authority** – Concern that the provision of off-street parking may not sufficient, and that it is highly likely that on-street parking will occur in Hinton Way. The Local Planning Authority should consider the implications of the likely on-street parking due to the limited on-site parking. Recommends conditions to be attached to any consent granted.
25. **Chief Financial Planning Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council** – In order to meet the additional demand expected to be generated by the development, a contribution of £16,800 should be sought from the developer to enable two further primary school places to be provided.

**Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** - Fire fighting supplies are not required.

26. Comments are awaited from the Environment Operations Manager. These will be reported verbally to Members if received.

### **Comments from the Applicant's Agent**

27. The applicant's agent has responded to the concerns of Great Shelford Parish Council. He does not agree that the 9 flats is 'overdevelopment' but seeks to make the best use of this previously used site. The highest point of the roof ridge is slightly higher than the adjacent properties but as is the existing building and the roof is, of course, hipped away from both adjacent properties. With the redesigned layout, the rear windows are considerably further from the rear boundary to 1 The Orchards, which has good existing screening, and the existing building does already have 2 large windows at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level looking towards that boundary. He considers that a bin store at the front of the property would spoil the appearance to the street scene. The proposed bin store to the rear is fully enclosed and roofed as shown on dwg P 2036-

02 and is separated away from the rear boundary by screen planting. The depth of the rooflights will appear different on the floor plan from that shown on the elevations because of the perspective of a sloping roof but these are correct. The rear bedroom window referred to has a narrower section shown through it on the plan because of the roof slopes on either side but is correct. The chimneys are 'false' and so will not appear on the floor plans but are an important part of the design and elevations. The site area has been rechecked and is about 0.14 ha but this excludes that area of the planning application forming the visibility splays within the public highway.

28. He has responded to the comments of the Local Highway Authority by saying that, even if one assumes the 'maximum' of 2 spaces for the 3 bedroom apartment with the average 1.5 spaces for the remaining 8 apartments, this is still only a requirement for 14 spaces. If you add the '0.25 (visitors) spaces per dwelling provided with 2 parking spaces' this would only increase the total to 14.25 spaces. If one were to take the most generous view of 1.75 spaces per dwelling, this would be a total of 15.75 spaces i.e. only 0.75 space above our provision. However, he points out that he has provided a disabled persons space albeit that this is not a requirement of Local Plan policies. He considers that the provision of 1.66 spaces per dwelling is adequate and accords with both national and local planning policy. The application site's location is highly accessible to public transport and, in particular, to Gt Shelford railway station (which is within a short walk in the same road ) therefore reducing the need for travel by car.

### **Representations**

29. Letters of objection have been received from The Orchards Residents Company Limited and 7 residents on Hinton Way and The Orchards. The following grounds of concern have been raised.

#### ***Demolition of existing dwellings***

30. The existing dwellings are attractive and are in good condition, and are in keeping with the character of the area.
31. Great Shelford Village Design Statement encourages the protection of good examples of historic and modern buildings, and discourages historical pastiche. The proposal is in blatant contravention of this policy.
32. No justification has been presented as to why two fine homes need to be demolished. These are two substantial quality family homes that just require some updating to bring them back to their past glory.
33. If permission is given for two very unique properties to be destroyed, this could be the start of a very slippery slope for the character of Hinton Way and of Great Shelford.

#### ***Overdevelopment***

34. There is insufficient room for scaffolding during the construction period. The development should be centralised on the plot.
35. The proposal to increase the footprint of the current property is excessive, intrusive, greedy and not in keeping with other properties in the area.
36. Nine flats are proposed in an area of approximately 1400 sq. m. This compares with a current development at 116 Hinton Way (S/1328/06/F) where eight flats have been approved on a site previously occupied by a very undistinguished property but utilising an area of around 1900 sq. m. and with open country to the rear.

37. The substantial size of the proposed development would make it without doubt the single largest structure in Hinton Way. It would tower above the bungalows in The Orchards.
38. The ridge level is proposed to be raised by in excess of 1.2 metres over the existing properties in order to make provision for a third storey. This is not well shown in the elevation plans. These tend to suggest that the roof line will be about the same as that of adjacent buildings.
39. Overall, this extra level of windows in the roof is completely out of character with surrounding houses which are all of conventional two storey design. There is no justification for this degree of overdevelopment.
40. Any redevelopment should surely be in sympathy with the surrounding properties with the footprint and ridge height restricted to the current sizes.
41. This is 65% larger than the building it replaces, and larger than the adjacent buildings.
42. This is higher density development and closer to neighbouring dwelling than scheme approved for 8 flats at No.116 Hinton Way (reference S/1328/06/F).
43. The length of the front elevation is overbearing, as it suggests one house yet is the length of a four-house terrace.

The need to accommodate car parking has meant that the building will be sited 1.5m behind the established building line facing Hinton Way.

44. There is too much car parking on the frontage, which will affect the landscaped setting of the site.
45. There is no marked garden area for future residents to enjoy.
46. Some of the rooms are small and fitted beneath low eaves, indicating an over-development of the site.
47. The proposed extension will project beyond the rear building line of 87 Hinton Way.
48. There is a concern in the Cambridge area that hundreds of flats are being built to the exclusion of family homes and that family homes are becoming like gold dust.

***Neighbouring amenity***

49. Construction noise will be disruptive.
50. The privacy of residents of The Orchards will be eradicated.
51. Both No.1 The Orchards and No.77 Hinton Way would be particularly affected by the substantial extension of the rear of the building towards the boundaries with these properties, whose privacy and light would be very severely compromised. This would be exacerbated by the fact that the land becomes lower towards The Orchards.
52. The proposal to have a large window (bedroom 1) at the second floor level (i.e. the third storey) looking down on the properties to the rear is considered to be very intrusive. This window should be the same size as the two windows of the sitting rooms at the front.
53. The proposed positioning of the bicycle and bin store is of great concern to the owners of No.1 The Orchards. Not only would this block light getting to their kitchen

and dining room, but the noise and smell would be a considerable nuisance. The positioning also seems very impractical, given that it is about as far from the collection point on the roadside as it is possible to be. Are the residents to be relied upon to drag their wheelies to the roadside? The sensible and only practical place for the store is at the front of the property.

54. Obtrusive to the rear dining room of No.77 – loss of light to kitchen and dining room windows. Dormer window will overlook patio area of garden of No.77. In the interests of privacy, the boundary with No.77 should be provided with 2.0m high close-boarded fencing.
55. It is unrealistic for windows in the north elevation to be required to be fixed shut and have obscured glass.

#### ***Car parking and access***

56. Inadequate parking for visitors and service vehicles, which will result in parking on Hinton Way. As roadside parking already takes place in the vicinity, any more would be extremely dangerous.
57. If permitted, any damage caused to the private highway at The Orchards should be repaired at the developer's expense.
58. The width of the parking bays is not generous and it is apparent that, for example, bays 1 and 15 will be very difficult to get in and out of with a modern mid size saloon when vehicles are parked in adjacent bays 2 and 14. The usual outcome of such situations is that these bays are never used.
59. There is no provision for visitor or trade vehicle parking. All such vehicles will need to park on Hinton Way close to the entrance to The Orchards.
60. The Access Details Visibility Splays drawing does not take account of 9 wheeled bins and assorted boxes left randomly arranged on the pavement for up to 24 hours or even longer every week. This is likely to cause a severe visibility hazard to vehicles leaving The Orchards.

#### ***Preferred development***

61. The existing houses could be converted and extended to provide flats.
62. A smaller building with fewer apartments would allow more room for parking and landscaping and would be more suited to Hinton Way.
63. The development should be restricted to a maximum of four flats. In a reduced scheme, the building line could be brought forward to its existing position whilst maintaining an adequate number of parking spaces etc. The footprint of such a development could be incorporated within the existing footprint, the rear of the development would not pose a nuisance to nearby residents and the ridge line could be maintained in proportion with the surrounding area. This would be commensurate with the size of the plot, the availability of adequate parking, traffic considerations and the provision of a practical rubbish storage and disposal area.
64. Developing replacement housing on this site would be more in keeping with the mix of houses in the area and would be less harmful to the privacy of adjoining dwellings, as there would be bedrooms rather than kitchens at first floor level.

### ***Other concerns***

65. The OS plan does not show the extension at the rear of No.77. There are also inconsistencies in the drawings of chimney positions and depth of dormer windows on the rear elevation.

### **Planning Comments**

#### ***Demolition of existing dwellings***

66. The existing pair of semi-detached Edwardian dwellings are not within the Great Shelford Conservation Area and nor are they listed buildings. As such, they are afforded no statutory protection. Notwithstanding the guideline set out in the Great Shelford Village Design Statement for the protection of good examples of historic and modern buildings, their features and details, whether or not they are listed, I do not consider that there are reasonable ground for refusal of planning permission for this reason in this case.

#### ***Neighbouring amenity***

67. The nearest first and second floor windows in the rear elevation of the development are to be sited some 9 metres closer than the existing to the boundary with the bungalow at 1, The Orchard. Even so, as there will remain a separation of at least 16.0m from windows to this boundary, I do not consider that serious overlooking of existing windows in this bungalow or its rear garden area will occur as a result of the development. The proposed cycle and bin store, which is to be 3.5m to ridge, is to be located 2.0m from this boundary, which is marked with a 1.8m close boarded fence. Provided the bin store is provided with roof covering, I do not consider that any undue loss of amenity is likely to occur.
68. The dining room and utility of No.77 are shown to be separated by some 4.6m from the proposed single storey wing at the rear of the development. This wing will have a lean-to roof at a height of 5.2m reducing to 2.4m along the length of the facing elevation. I do not consider that any serious loss of daylight to these rooms will occur as a result of the development. Although views over the rear garden area will be possible from dormer windows in the rear elevation, these will be at an oblique angle and as there will be a minimum distance of 6 metres to the boundary, I consider that the privacy of the rear garden area of No.77 will not be seriously harmed as a result of the proposed development, nor that taller fencing on this boundary is warranted.
69. The windows at first floor level in the northern elevation facing No.87 are to kitchens, which can reasonably be required to be obscured glazed and fixed shut, in my opinion.

#### ***Overdevelopment***

70. As noted above, the proposed development will retain adequate separation from adjoining development so as to avoid any undue loss of amenity to neighbouring properties. Mature landscaping on the site is to be retained. The roof height of the proposed development will be greater than the existing dwellings and the adjacent dwellings at Nos 75/77 by 1.1m –1.2m. I do not consider that the scale or siting of the development will appear incongruous in the street scenes of Hinton Way or The Orchards.

#### ***Car parking and access***

71. The number of spaces falls 0.75 space below the maximum provision as set out in LP Policy TP1 and Appendix 7/1. I do not consider this shortfall to be significant in the context of development on a bus route and within walking distance of a railway station, notwithstanding the comments of the Local Highway Authority. The layout of spaces is workable, including bays 1 and 15.

71. The LHA has not raised concerns about the safety of the proposed vehicular access from Hinton Way.

**Other matters**

72. The site has been marketed without success as a going concern. Given the potential for noise disturbance to neighbouring dwellings, I consider that there is very limited scope for alternative employment uses to be considered appropriate on this site. I consider that the proposal complies with LP Policy EM8.
73. I note that suggestions for other development of this site have been put forward. Members will wish to consider this proposal on its planning merits. I have examined carefully the concerns of Great Shelford Parish Council, local residents and consultees. For the reasons set out, I consider the proposal to be acceptable, subject to conditions.

**Recommendations**

74. Approval
1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
  2. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5aii);
  3. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
  4. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
  5. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
  6. Sc5f – Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas (Reason – To minimise disturbance to adjoining residents and to safeguard trees);
  7. Sc22 – Windows at first floor level in the north elevation of the development to be fixed and obscure glazed (Rc22);
  8. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery, during the period of construction (Rc22);
  9. Bin storage areas to be enclosed and roofed and to be retained as such (Rc22);
  10. Legal agreement to ensure payment of a financial contribution to the Cambridgeshire County Council for future education provision;
  11. As required by the Local Highways Authority
- + any conditions required by the Environment Operations Manager

**Informatives**

As recommended by the Chief Environmental Health Officer.

**Reasons for Approval**

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
  - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P1/3** (Sustainable design in built development)

- **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE4** (Group Villages) **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design), **CS10** (Education), **TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel) and **EM8** (Loss of Employment Sites in Villages)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
- Residential amenity including noise disturbance and overlooking issues
  - Highway safety
  - Visual impact on the locality

**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
- Great Shelford Village Design Statement (SPG 2004)
- Planning files refs S/2331/06/F, S/1871/06/F, S/1328/06/F and S/2375/06/F

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