

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

7th March 2007

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

S/6389/07/RM – CAMBOURNE

Construction of Cyclepath, Including Removal of Trees and Erection of Fences to Connect High Street, Monkfield Lane and Chaffinch Walk

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 23rd March 2007

Notes:

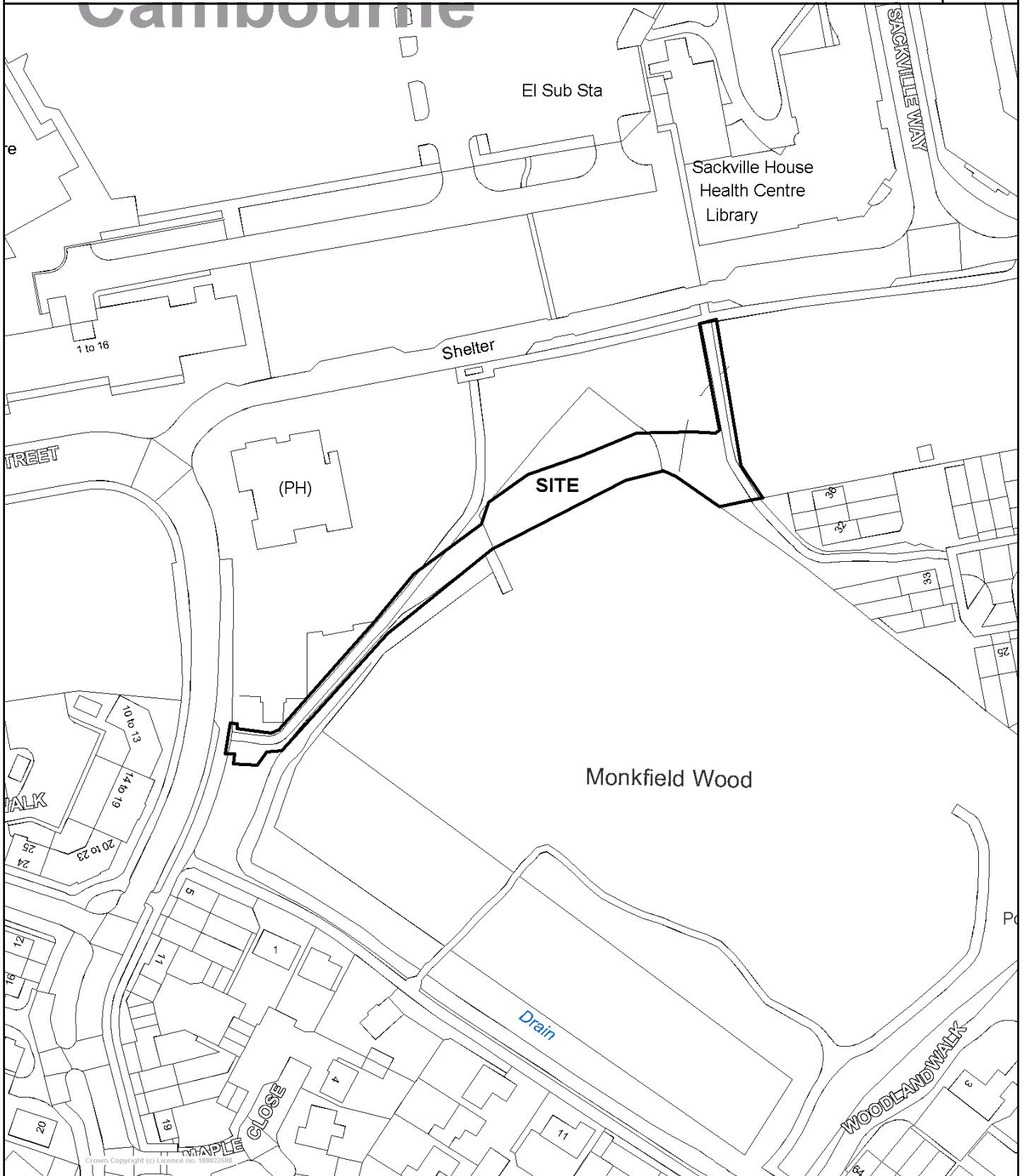
This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the officer recommendation does not accord with the comments of the Parish Council.

Site and Proposal

1. The site is located on the southern side of the High Street. To the north of the site is the public house and adjacent vacant land, which will form part of the High Street development. The site comprises of existing footpaths, one of which is temporary, and the northern edge of the significant established woodland known as Monkfield Wood. This part of Monkfield Wood has been separated from the main part by a fence and ditch that run adjacent to the route of the proposed cycle path.
2. The application, received on 26th January proposes a new cyclepath to be constructed partly along the route of two existing footpaths and joining them together. The new cyclepath would start at the footpath junction with Monkfield Lane, and run in a north easterly direction through the north west boundary of Monkfield Wood linking with an existing footpath which links Chaffinch Walk to the High Street.
3. Within the site there are a number of trees that would need to be removed. These have little amenity value, although do provide a smooth graduation in terms of height between the High Street and the wood. It would also be necessary to remove a hedge which is approximately 45m in length. The hedge lies to the southern side of the existing footpath which runs from Monkfield Lane to the High Street. It is necessary to remove the hedge in order to accommodate the necessary width needed to create the cyclepath. This hedge would be replaced by a 1.2 m high post and rail fence.
4. The cyclepath would be surfaced with red coloured asphalt and would be 3m in width. Cycleway barriers would be installed at the junctions with the footpaths on the High Street and Monkfield Lane to ensure public safety.

Planning History

5. Outline Planning Permission for Cambourne was granted in 1994, ref S/1371/92/O. The subsequently approved Masterplan and Design Guide include the "Settlement Centre Briefing Plan" which shows a cycle path in this area.



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Scale 1/1250 Date 26/2/2007

Centre = 532141 E 259503 N

Planning Committee March 2007

Planning Policy

6. South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, Policies:
Cambourne 1 – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan
Cambourne 2 – Development in accordance with Cambourne Design Guide
SE7 – Development in accordance with Cambourne Masterplan and Design Guide
TP1 deals with planning for sustainable travel
ES2 and ES3 set principles for streetlights and external lighting within sites
EN5 requires the landscaping of new developments

Consultations

7. **Cambourne Parish Council:** Recommends refusal on the grounds of:
 1. Unacceptable loss of established trees in an area of outstanding landscape which provides a buffer between the High Street and the residential areas;
 2. The continued loss of native trees in Cambourne;
 3. Loss of visual amenity of the area;
 4. An alternative route skirting the trees would be more appropriate.
8. **Highways Authority:** Generally have no objection to the proposed line of the cyclepath. Raised concerns regarding the position of the fence, which is to be relocated to the top of the ditch and whether this will provide sufficient support for the fence posts to prevent the fence falling into the ditch if struck by a cyclist. Raised a query regarding how the drainage matters will be dealt with. Would wish to see the cyclepath adequately lit. They would not be prepared to adopt all the area in the red line.
9. **Wildlife Trust:** Comments awaited.
10. **Natural England:** Comments awaited.
11. **SCDC Landscape:** Suggest that the line of the cycleway is shifted a couple of metres towards the ditch as this will enable some of the better Ash and Maple trees to be retained. – I would rather lose the cherries along the ditch. Suggest native hedge planting on the outside of the cycle way. The whole of the woodland block will need attention if encouraging people to pass through the area – i.e. removing additional leaning/straggling trees, some dead wooding and crown lifting etc.
12. **SCDC Trees:** No objections as trees have little amenity value.
13. **SCDC Ecology:** Comments are awaited.

Representation

14. 1 Objection has been received from 33 Chaffinch Walk. Object on the grounds of:
 1. Monkfield Wood is a listed piece of woodland and it should not be eroded.
 2. Loss of 19 trees that have amenity value.
 3. An alternative cyclepath could be routed around the edge of the trees and still provide a much needed cycling amenity.

4. Concerned that if this application is allowed, when the vacant land along the High Street is developed it will be easier to argue that the remaining trees should be cleared to extend the vacant plot area.

Comments from the Applicant in response to Representation:

15. The cyclepath will be located outside of Monkfield Wood which is bordered by an existing fence and ditch. There has never been a plan or proposal to remove any trees within Monkfield Wood. This is an amenity which everyone values and which the Developers have spent a lot of time and effort in protecting and enhancing. Whilst it is acknowledged that a few trees will have to make way for the footpath, this has always been known. The cyclepath follows a footpath line discussed and approved by South Cambs District Council in the settlement centre briefing plan. A route around the trees will seriously impact on the viability and development of the High Street.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. The approved Settlement Centre Briefing Plan which covers this site shows a footpath linking Monkfield Lane with the High Street/Chaffinch Walk in this location, therefore the principle of a cycleway along this route is broadly acceptable. The main issues are the loss of 20 trees and a hedgerow, how the drainage matters will be addressed, and public safety along the proposed route.
18. ***Loss of trees and hedgerow***
The Council's Tree Officer has visited the site and confirmed that none of the trees are of high amenity value and therefore has no objection with their removal subject to appropriate replacement planting. None of the trees have TPOs. The assertion that the construction of this cyclepath would make the removal of further trees directly to the north of this site acceptable is unfounded. The removal of trees in that location would not be in accordance with the Cambourne Design Guide which seeks to include a area of open space along the High Street frontage.
19. ***Drainage***
The Highways Authority has raised concerned regarding how the drainage matters in respect of this site will be addressed, however this can be the subject of a condition.
20. ***Public Safety***
The application fails to incorporate any lighting along the proposed new cyclepath which is unacceptable. As lighting proposals may impact on the trees or their roots, these should form part of an amended scheme to be submitted before approval can be granted.
21. Therefore, amended plans have been sought, requesting the moving of the route of the cycleway further south so that the relatively more important trees can be retained, an indication of replacement planting proposals (the detail of which will be subject to condition), details of lighting and details of the method of drainage. The amended plans have been requested in time for the Committee meeting, and a verbal update will be given.

Recommendation

Approval of amended plans, subject to conditions addressing the following matters:

1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
2. Landscaping scheme, including protection of trees during construction, replacement planting, and method construction to avoid root damage;

3. Implementation of replacement planting in first planting season following implementation of permission:
 - a. Lighting scheme;
 - b. Surface water drainage details;
 - c. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery during construction.

Informatives

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: Cambourne 1, Cambourne 2, SE7, TP1, ES2, ES3, EN5.**
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - **Loss of trees, drainage, public safety.**
3. All other material planning considerations have been taken into account. None is of such significance as to outweigh the reason for the decision to approve the planning application.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning file ref: S/6389/07/RM

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