

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th April 2007

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

S/2196/06/F - WILLINGHAM

Erection of 9 Dwellings Following Demolition of Existing Dwelling and Outbuildings at Land at 37 Rockmill End for Hazelmere Homes

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 10th January 2007

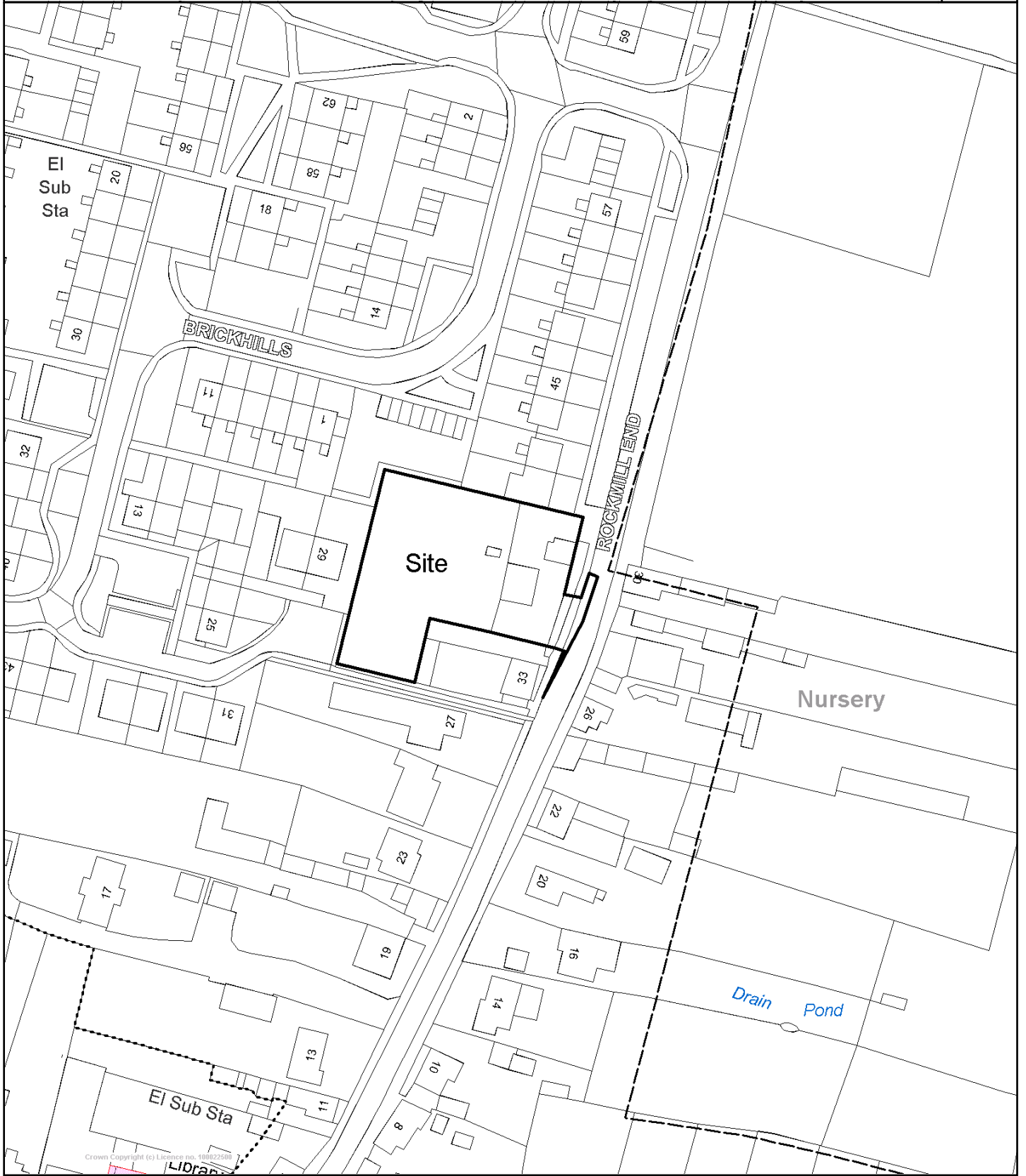
Notes:

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

Members will visit the site on Monday 2nd April 2007

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.1822 ha site lies within the village framework close to the north eastern boundary of the village. A detached dwelling sits centrally within the Rockmill End frontage. To the north lie semi detached 1970s style properties. To the south a two storey period dwelling (The Old Dairy) that sits close to the back edge of the footpath behind a low wall (0.36m) with attached single storey range that lies on the site boundary. To the west lie bungalows. The site is 'L' shaped. To the south runs an adjacent public footpath that links Rockmill End to Brickhills.
2. There are no windows in the side elevations of the immediate bungalow to the west or in the semi detached dwelling to the north, although this has an attached conservatory that has obscure glazed windows directly onto this northern site boundary. There are 3 small windows in the single storey range of the dwelling to the south.
3. The full planning application, received 15th November 2006, proposes to demolish the existing dwelling and erect 9 dwellings at a density of approximately 49 per ha. The dwellings fronting Rockmill End would consist of ground floor and first floor flats forming 6 of the dwellings. To the rear is proposed a terrace of 1 two storey property and 2 1½ storey properties. Access to all dwellings is to be formed by a single shared access from Rockmill End. 15 car parking spaces are to be provided which is just in excess of 1½ spaces per dwelling.
4. The dwellings that would front Rockmill End range between 6.8 and 7m in height to the ridge line. The dwellings either side are approximately 6.4m to the ridge. The proposed dwellings to the rear range from 6.2m to 7.5m in height.



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Scale 1/1250 Date 20/3/2007

Centre = 540884 E 270616 N

April 2007 Planning Committee

Planning History

5. Outline planning permission was granted in June 2005 for the erection of 5 dwellings and garages following demolition of the existing house. This permission has not been implemented but is extant. Siting and the means of access were approved. The approved siting indicated 3 houses on the frontage with Rockmill End with 2 bungalows to the rear. The 3 frontage properties each had its own point of access. The density is approximately 27 per ha.

Planning Policy

6. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ('the Structure Plan') requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development and which provides a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment. This policy is supported by policy DP/2 of the Local Development Framework, Submission Draft 2006.
7. **Policy P5/3** of the Structure Plan states (in part) that densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare should be sought in locations close to a good range of existing or potential services and facilities and densities of less than 30 dwellings will not be acceptable.
8. **Policy P5/5** of the County Structure Plan adds small-scale developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account the character of the village and its setting.
9. **Policy HG10** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (the Local Plan) states (in part) 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, the design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape.
10. **Policy ST/5** of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy lists Willingham as a Minor Rural Centre where schemes of up to 30 dwellings may be permitted.

Consultation

11. **Willingham Parish Council** – recommends refusal. It states:
"Overdevelopment (ref. SCDC letter of 7.6.06 from Ray McMurray to Mr Hardiman of Hardiman Associates Ltd);

Part of the land included in the proposed visibility splay is not in the applicant's ownership;

The application proposes a 2-storey building very near to the single-storey part of the next door dwelling (the Old Dairy)".

12. **Cambridgeshire County Council Chief Financial Planning Officer**
An education contribution of £22,000 is needed to provide additional facilities at the village school, including provision for under fives, the secondary school at Cottenham which serves Willingham and various community facilities and amenities to be provided under the auspices of the Parish Council in the village itself.

13. **Old West Internal Drainage Board**
Provided soakaways are used to accommodate all run-off from the site the Board's surface water receiving system will not be affected.
14. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service**
Additional water supplies for firefighting are not required. Access and facilities for the Fire Service should be provided in accordance with the Building Regulations Approved Document B5, Section 17.
15. **Chief Environmental Health Officer**
No objections subject to informatives to require a Demolition Notice prior to demolition and to restrict bonfires and the burning of waste during demolition and construction.
16. **Environment Operations Manager**
No objections, confirms arrangements for refuse storage and collection and access are acceptable.
17. **Local Highways Authority**
No objections subject to conditions to control visibility, access and parking. The access must not comprise radius kerbing and the footway along the frontage should be increased to a minimum width of 1.8m to be completed prior to the occupation of any of the dwellings.

Representations

18. One letter of objection has been received from the occupiers of The Old Dairy, 33-35 Rockmill End. The points are summarised below:
 - (a) The proposed plots 4 and 5 are very close. This will cause problems of maintenance.
 - (b) Fencing on this boundary will effectively 'board up' three windows which will affect light.
 - (c) Close proximity raises structural integrity issues.
 - (d) Loss of privacy from side facing kitchen windows.
 - (e) Line of sight at the front will prevent any future wall being erected at the front of The Old Dairy.
 - (f) Plot 3 is also very close, footing could cause structural problems with existing wall.
 - (g) First floor bathroom window will overlook garden.
 - (h) Single storey range comprises 3 bedrooms, a playroom, bathroom and a study. There is no cavity wall. Noise will therefore be suffered from the creation of 9 dwellings.
 - (i) A subsequent letter from the occupiers of this property states that they are prepared to enter into a legal agreement to protect the sight lines across the corner of their property.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

19. Given that the principle of development accords with Development Plan Settlement Policy, the key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Impact upon the visual quality of the street scene
 - Impact upon residential amenity
 - Impact upon highway safety

Street scene

20. The proposed dwellings fronting Rockmill End are approximately 0.6m taller than those either side but still a modest 7m or so. I do not consider they will appear over dominant in the street scene and the spacing of the buildings is similar to the approved scheme for five dwellings.
21. Rockmill End contains a range of dwellings of varying ages and styles and there is no particular continuity of design or placement in the street scene. With the use of good materials these dwellings would not appear out of character.
22. The dwellings to the rear will turn their backs on the footpath which is a change from the approved scheme and will serve to enclose the footpath with rear garden fences for approximately 20m of its length. However I do not consider this somewhat negative aspect of the scheme would be sufficient to justify refusal. The bulk of the building mass steps away from the east, and more central part of the site, towards the west to effect a transition to the single storey heights of the adjacent bungalows. The design is varied and the buildings are set back approximately 15m from the footpath. I do not consider these dwellings will appear incongruous or dominant in the street scene or when viewed from the footpath.
23. The Old Dairy (dwelling to the south) does have a positive impact in the street scene. The new buildings although taller will be set back from it and will not in my opinion impinge on its visual importance in the street scene.

Residential amenity

24. With regard to potential loss of light, the buildings have been sited such that no significant overshadowing of existing properties will occur. Although the scheme introduces a further 4 dwellings from that approved, the position and bulk of the building mass is similar. The dwellings to the rear of the site have been located such that they are set forward of the bungalows to the west and will not result in any significant loss of light to the rear gardens of these properties particularly as the height steps down to just 3m on the boundary with a ridge of only 6.2m set some 9m from the nearest bungalow. Some overshadowing of the front garden of this property and a small loss of morning sunlight to its front facing windows may occur but the dwellings are sufficiently separate such that this is not unacceptable.
25. There will be a loss of light to the conservatory at the rear of No. 39 which lies directly on the northern site boundary and is likely to be blocked by boundary treatment. However, this is no different from the approved scheme and there is currently no restriction on the erection of fences (below 2m) or planting such that the occupiers of this property do not have any reasonable expectation of southern light into this conservatory. I note, however, that the main building mass does not lie adjacent and some light may still reach the south facing windows of the conservatory depending on the height of fences or planting.

26. The same situation arises for the single storey range to The Old Dairy in that a proposed fence along its length will block windows. The occupiers of this property have this concern and also concerns about future maintenance. This is addressed through the Party Wall Act but the blocking up of windows with a fence is regrettable. However, as above it is likely to have occurred through the approved scheme and could occur without the need for specific planning permission in any case. Although I understand the neighbours' concerns I do not consider this would amount to a justification to withhold planning permission.
27. The positioning of the dwellings in relation to existing properties will not result in any overbearing impact which viewed from within these properties or from their gardens.
28. With regard to privacy there will be no significant views into the rear gardens of existing properties other than from oblique angles. The rear facing bedroom window in plot 1 will afford views towards the rear of the adjacent rear garden but most of the garden will remain private.
29. Windows in the side elevations of the rear dwellings (plots 1 and 3) do not serve habitable rooms and can be required to be obscure glazed.
30. A kitchen window in the first floor southern elevation of plot 4 would look towards the rear garden of the adjacent property to the south but views from this window will be obscured by the existing single storey range. This is evident from the submitted street elevation.
31. A kitchen window in the north elevation of plot 9 will look towards the blank southern elevation of the adjacent semi detached property and will only afford very oblique views over its garage into the rear garden.
32. A condition restricting new openings in the north elevation of plot 9, the first floor west elevation of plot 1 and the first floor east elevation of plot 3 together with a requirement for obscure glazing to the first floor windows in the west and east elevations of plots 1 and 3 respectively will ensure that acceptable levels of privacy are maintained.

Highway safety

33. I note the comments of the Local Highways Authority. Adequate visibility can be achieved but this does require the cooperation of the occupiers of the neighbouring property. A letter has been received that indicates that these neighbours are willing to enter into a Section 106 agreement which will ensure that the southern visibility splay remains clear of obstruction.
34. Sufficient space has been provided within the site to allow vehicles to turn so that they exit in forward gear and the parking provision accords with the Council's car parking standards.

Other matters

35. The scheme provides for bin storage and collection points. The collection point in the centre of the site may prove problematic but there will be sufficient space to the Rockmill End site frontage for bins so that if collections could not occur from the centre of the site they could occur at the front of its access.

36. The scheme is below the threshold for affordable housing requirement in the Local Plan and it is not therefore required.
37. The scheme is generally for smaller dwellings (1 and 2 bed) which fits with changing demographic patterns and will help to provide a better mix of dwellings in this locality.
38. The density is high and accords with the Development Plan without compromising any visual, amenity or highway safety issues.

Recommendation

39. Subject to the prior completion of a S106 to maintain visibility over neighbouring land and to require an education contribution, approval subject to conditions to control materials visibility splays (pedestrian and vehicle), access road width and maintenance of parking spaces, revised access detail, footpath widening, surface and foul water drainage and no further openings/obscure glazing where relevant.

Informatives

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)
P5/3 (Density)
P5/5 (Homes in Rural Areas)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
HG10 (Housing Design and Mix)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy,**
adopted January 2007
ST/5 (Minor Rural Centres)
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
 - Surface water disposal
 - Highway safety

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S/2196/06/F; S/0397/04/O

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