

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th April 2007

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

S/6392/07/F - CAMBOURNE

Change of Use from Live/work Mixed Use (B1/C3) to B1 Office Use Only at 26 Broad Street (Plot 43) - for MRL Public Sector Consultants Ltd

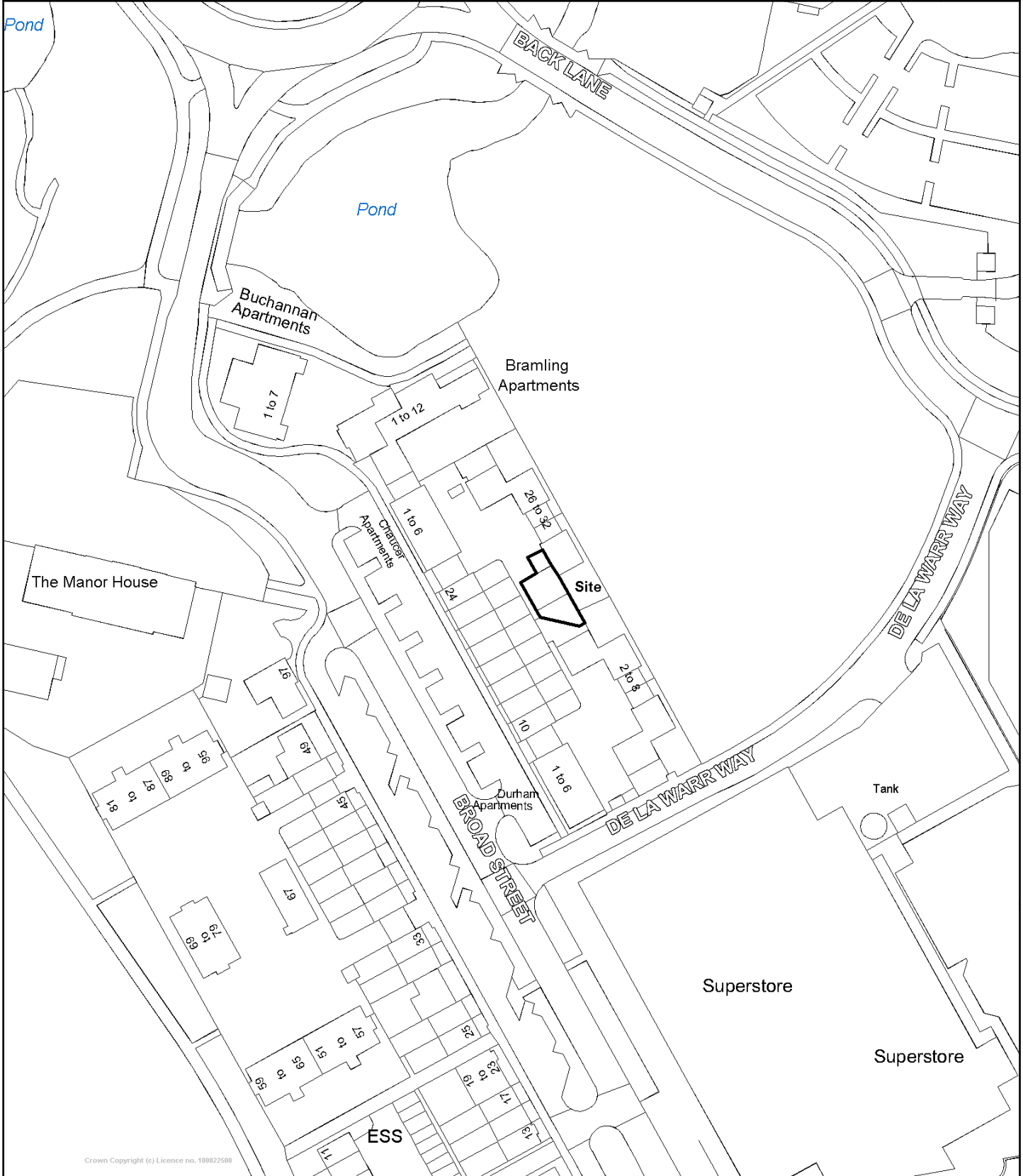
Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 4th April 2007

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Parish Council recommend Refusal.

Site and Proposal

1. This property is located on the east side of Broad Street in a development marketed by Bryant (Taylor Woodrow) as "St James Gate". There are three-storey town houses and flats on the Broad Street frontage, with a parking area to the rear which serves Units 40 to 43 and six of the frontage residential units. The site is faced on the north side by a similar unit which backs onto four-storey flats with under croft parking (Bramling Apartments). To the east are some larger live/work units, all as yet unoccupied, and awaiting finishing. The applicant firm, MRL Public Sector Consultants Ltd, already occupies 8 Broad Street (Plot 44) which backs onto the application site.
2. The units comprise a ground floor space, approximately 30 sq.m. with adjacent toilet and utility room. They have residential accommodation on two floors above this. The application site has three bedrooms. The interior has not been finished nor fitted out. Each unit has two car spaces allocated, some within carports. This unit has a rear garden of 44 sq.m. and 12 metres separation from no. 8. If permission were granted for the change of use, a link would be made between the two gardens so that pedestrian access between the two offices would be direct. Vehicular access to the site is from the service road parallel to Broad Street, through a tall archway beneath/between the frontage blocks. The bus services to Cambridge and St Neots stop 100 metres to the south outside the supermarket.
3. The proposal is to use the premises in connection with the existing management consultants' office at no.8, so that archive storage and reprographic functions can be given greater space. The ground floor "workshop" would become a reception and work area, the first floor for archiving and reprographics, and the top floor would be a meeting room and a staff "breakout" area.
4. The application is accompanied by a new Travel to Work Plan which explains that the nature of the consultancy involves most of the consultants working at



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their clients' sites, and describes facilities and incentives for staff to use other modes of transport than private cars. At present, because staff live locally, only two bring a car to the existing adjacent premises. An additional member of staff is proposed as part of the firm's expansion, and the application site has two car spaces.

Planning History

5. **S/6338/06/F** – Change of use of 8 Broad Street from mixed use to office – Approved, for the purposes of the current applicant only.
6. **S/6369/06/F** - Removal of Condition 20 of Planning Approval S/6233/04/F to Allow Plots 40 - 43 and 45 - 47 Inclusive to be used as Wholly Residential Units Rather than Live/Work Units.
7. **S/6233/04/F** - Erection of 39 Dwellings and 8 Live / Work Units.

Planning Policy

8. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007 Policy**

ST/4 Rural Centres – Development in proportion to services and facilities, and with good access to, among other things, employment opportunities.

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

EM6 – Allows for new employment at Rural Growth Settlements provided there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions, village character and other environmental factors, and would contribute to a greater range of local employment opportunities.

Consultation

9. **Cambourne Parish Council** – recommend refusal on the following grounds:
 - a. lack of parking space for the floor space available. Further changes of use would give rise to greater problems. Alternative space in Morrison's Car Park not appropriate due to development in the Commercial centre and associated parking requirements.
 - b. Supporting travel plan is out of date.
 - c. The further loss of mixed use live/work premises would not accord with the provisions of the approved Cambourne Master Plan and Design Guide for "Country Studios" on the site, thereby reducing the opportunity for creation of a sustainable community with a variety of employment opportunities and fewer journeys to work.
10. **Local Highway Authority** – No comment
11. **Representations**
11. None received

Planning Comments – Key Issues

12. The key issues in this instance are residential amenity at surrounding properties, adequacy of car parking, and provision of employment premises in accordance with the Cambourne Master plan, Design Guide and Briefing Plan for this area.
13. The application is for the change of use of this mixed use building from a dwelling with ground floor office, to purely offices. Most of the staff are out on clients' premises rather than in the office, apart from team meetings, etc. The occupation of the building would be low density, some rooms being used purely for meetings, presentations and specific staff even though they are not there very often. Clients do not visit the premises. The main aspect windows of the building face directly onto the premises already occupied by MRL, so there would be no additional intrusion of commercial activity on privacy by virtue of office occupation of the upper floors. The low level of activity at the premises would not be more intrusive than the permitted live/work use; normal office hours would be 0900 to 1800 Monday to Friday, and no air conditioning equipment is anticipated. This is acceptable in accordance with Policy EM6 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
14. The applicant has submitted a Travel for Work plan (updated and resubmitted following the Parish Councils comments) to show targets to reduce car use. The applicant lives at Cambourne as do some staff, and the bathroom facilities allow for changing and drying. It is intended to install a shed at the rear for bicycle storage. The 2 parking spaces have proved sufficient for this particular business and its travel plan, but an unfettered B1 use could well lead to the additional premises being more densely populated and more frequently occupied. It is therefore appropriate to restrict the use by condition to this named business only, to revert to mixed use upon cessation. With these conditions, the proposal accords with Policy TP1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
15. The Cambourne Design Guide indicates this area for "Country Studios". This was interpreted as a requirement for employment premises, and that was the basis for resisting the development of parcel CR03 for solely residential purposes, and allowing live-work units instead. Planning permission for MRL's current premises at no.8 was granted in consideration of the need for employment opportunities locally, and the firm's relocation from Caldecote to be closer to staff resident in Cambourne. It is therefore considered that the proposal complies with Policy EM6 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

Recommendation

16. Approve - subject to the following conditions.

Conditions

1. Standard 3 years to implement;
2. The Travel for Work Plan hereby approved shall be implemented as approved during the occupation of the site by the applicant company.
(Reason: In the interests of sustainability, residential amenity and highway safety in accordance with Policies Cambourne 2 and TP1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004);

3. No person, business or company other than MRL Public Sector Consultants Ltd shall occupy the building. Upon cessation of use of the building by MRL Public Sector Consultants Ltd, the building shall revert to mixed C3/B1 use as granted by planning permission S/6233/04/F, unless otherwise permitted by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - Permission is only granted in this instance having regard to the nature of the applicant business, in the interests of neighbouring residential amenity and to avoid the overdevelopment of the site in accordance with Policies Cambourne 2 and EM6 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004);
4. The site shall not be occupied until details of a secure cycle storage facility have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and subsequently installed. The storage facility shall subsequently be retained for use by staff.
(Reason - To ensure the successful implementation of the Travel for Work Plan in the interest of sustainability in accordance with Policies Cambourne 2 and TP1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)

Informatives

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - a. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007 Policy**
ST/4 Rural Centres – Development in proportion to services and facilities, and with good access to, among other things, employment opportunities.
 - b. **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
EM6 – New employment at Rural Growth Settlements

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

- Local Development Framework Core Strategy adopted January 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning files ref. S/6338/06/F, S/6369/06/F and S/6233/04/F

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