

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

9th May 2007

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

S/0473/07/RM - IMPINGTON

Erection of 6 Flats

Land Parcel A1, Arbury Camp, Kings Hedges Road for Wilmott Dixon Housing

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 7th May 2007

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because of objection received from Impington Parish Council.

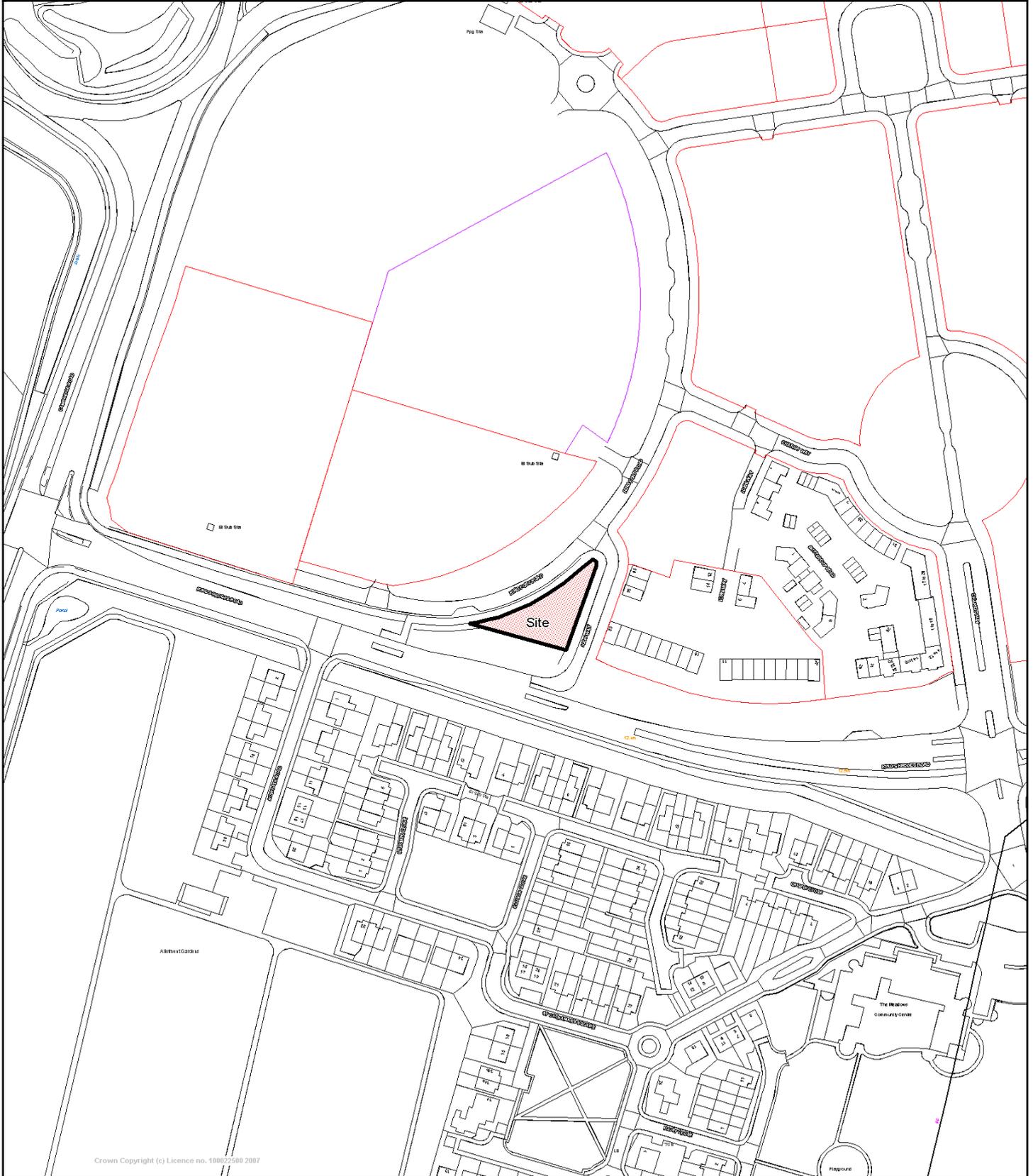
Members will visit this site on 7th May 2007.

Site and Proposal

1. The site is particularly prominent as it fronts onto Kings Hedges road at the western end of the Arbury Site. It is located some 200 metres east from the Junction of Kings Hedges Road and the B1049 Histon Road. The B1049 is the access to the site from the A14 at this end of the site. To the east is a recently occupied three storey affordable housing scheme (Land Parcel A3) built by the same applicants as for this Land Parcel A1. To the northeast is a private housing development (A2) being undertaken by Persimmon homes, which with the affordable housing at A3 completes the development of land parcel A.
2. The site is of an irregular triangular shape of approximately 8795 sq metres. The site is generally flat and has no other distinguishing features. It is currently partly used as a temporary car park for the adjoining RSL housing development. The southern part of the site cannot be developed as major underground cables have been routed under this part. The proposal received 12th March is for a single three storey building with its narrowest end facing onto Kings Hedges Road and under a mono pitched roof sloping down towards the east abutting the housing at A3. This will provide three one bed roomed and three two bed roomed properties. A semi circular stairway is attached to the western side and forms a distinctive feature. A total of eight car parking spaces are split into two areas north and south. The four southern most car parking spaces are positioned over the route of the underground cables. A combined cycle/bin store building is positioned to fit into the triangular point to the west side of the site.

Planning History

3. Outline planning consent was granted 14th June 2005 following the signing of a Section 106 Agreement that covered the full range matters including education, transport, affordable housing, sustainability, community facilities, public open space and design guidance. The affordable housing is to be provided on 13 sites spread across the site with ownership transferred to the approved RLS consortium.



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Scale 1/2500 Date 27/4/2007

Centre = 544564 E 261465 N

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4. The site has been the subject of three similar applications in the last two years:
S/1651/05/RM 6 flats (affordable housing) - refused 6th December 2005.
S/2363/05/RM 6 flats (affordable housing) - withdrawn 8th February 2006.
S/2091/06/RM 6 flats (affordable housing) - refused 22nd December 2006.
5. **S/1651/05/RM** was a proposal for two linked glass boxes with 8 car parking spaces, bin store and cycle parking. It was refused by the November 2005 Planning Committee for the following reasons:
 - (a) The design, layout and character of the proposed residential flats is regarded as poor and inappropriate for such a prominent position located at the front of the site and adjacent to Kings Hedges Road.
 - (b) Policy CNF1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 provides for a Masterplan which seeks the retention of an attractive urban edge to Cambridge through the use of high standards of design and landscaping and the creation of gateway features.
 - (c) The Design Guide which accompanies the outline planning consent **S/2379/01/O** seeks a 'key building' for this site. The application fails to provide the required standard of design for this prominent site on the edge of Cambridge or the required 'key building'. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CNF1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003.
 - (d) Policy ES7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 seeks appropriate planning conditions to minimise the impact of noise from traffic. To the south of the site is land reserved for a proposed guided bus.
 - (e) The application contains insufficient and inaccurate information to demonstrate that future residents will be adequately protected from noise. It has not therefore been demonstrated that planning conditions could achieve sufficient protection, and the proposal is consequently contrary to Policy ES7.
6. A subsequent application **S/2363/05/RM** for a redesign, similar but with balconies added was withdrawn following officer advice that the proposal did not receive officer support.
7. A third application **S/2091/06/RM** for a further redesign with two linked glass boxes was refused under officer delegated powers for the same reasons as **S/1651/05/05/RM** above.

Planning Policy

Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") requires a high standard of Design for all new developments, provides a sense of place which creates distinctive sky lines, focal points and landmarks, includes variety and surprise within a unified design.

8. Gallagher have prepared a Design Guide which shows the site for a 3 storey housing, and it is also identified as a key building. The Design Guide has been an evolving document and has the broad support of officers. It was reported to Members via the Bulletin in June 2005.

Consultation

9. **Impington Parish Council** recommends refusal commenting we feel this must go to Planning Committee at SCDC based on:

- (a) Not considered to be a significant gateway feature
- (b) Not Welcoming
- (c) Bin/Cycle store-too prominent on the site, excessive height

10. **The Environment Agency** has commented that the application falls within Cell F6 of the EA PPS25 Flood Risk Standing Advice.

11. **The Local Highway Authority** has raised two issues .The first relates to the proposed in/out access arrangement; questioning its requirement and enforceability. The second relates to the location of the tree pits where they lie within the visibility splays.

12. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** has requested two conditions to control impact of construction. Further advice regarding the impact of noise on future occupants has been sought and is awaited.

13. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** has commented

“To deter unauthorised entry into the site I would recommend that the railings around the perimeter are raised to a height of 1.8m to provide a more effective barrier. These railings should replace the 1m high brick wall around parking spaces 7 and 8, although the height could be reduced to 1m along Road No. 4. Suitable toppings as detailed below will further enhance security by preventing other than determined climbing.

Similarly the 1m wall between the entrance and exit if replaced with railings would enhance views in and out of the site and reduce the opportunities for creating hiding places.

The 1m high wall which gently rises to 1.8m could be used by youths as a climbing aid to climb on to the roof of the cycle/bin storage facility. Providing railings instead, bow topped or perhaps with fleur de lys toppings, would provide better protection for this area.

Given that the grass area to the south of the flats is not public space but for the benefit of residents of the flats, I would recommend the height of the railings to continue at 1.8m up to and including the barrier adjacent the cycle/maintenance track.

The southern elevation of the building should be supplied with an area of clearly identifiable defensible space such as a planting strip, similar to that along the northern elevation to underline the semi private nature of the space immediately outside living room windows. It may also be advisable to gate off the area immediately to the rear of the flats to deter access, subject to potential use as an emergency exit.

If utility meters cannot be located externally on the front elevation consideration should be given to redesigning the entrance to facilitate the creation of an ‘air lock’ type area between access controlled doors so that access can be restricted to the meters.”

14. **SCDC Arts Officer** has asked that the applicant’s financial contribution to the public arts strategy is paid on approval, if granted.

15. **SCDC Design Officer** has commented the design is basically as discussed (following pre application discussions) but requests a steeper pitch on the slate roof element to give a better relationship to the block across the street.
16. **The Delivery Manager - Cambridgeshire Guided Busway** has commented “assuming they have the boundary in the right place, I have no comments”
17. **Cambridge City Council** have no wish to comment on the application, other than to say the proposal looks more interesting than that built at Arbury Camp to date
18. The comments of the following are awaited
 - (a) **SCDC Commercial Refuse Collection**
 - (b) **SCDC Landscape Officer**

Representations

19. None received .A site notice was posted and immediate occupied properties were notified.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

20. The principle of residential development on the site has already been established by the granting of the outline permission.
21. The gross density is 73 dwellings to the hectare which accords with the Design Guide which seeks in this area a mid to high density (60-90 d/h) of mixed town houses and flats. The proposed mix is for 1 and 2 bedroom units is welcomed. The Design Code for this plot within the Design Guide seeks a key building and a height of 3 storeys to create an identifiable point to assist legibility and character for future occupiers and visitors.
22. This is not only a small but awkward shaped site to develop and as such the design of a scheme has been challenging. Previous proposals have been for more strident building designs have been rejected on the basis of being a poor design for such a prominent location.
23. The application has been subject of pre-application discussions with officers. The proposal now also benefits from the fact that neighbouring development to the east being is largely built, so the context is clearer.
24. The current proposal may be regarded as being more “conservative “ by some, however, Officers are confident that the current proposal strikes the right balance of compatibility with the neighbouring development, particularly through the use of similar materials, whilst incorporating distinctive elements particularly the mono-pitch slate roof, corner windows and the curved rendered stairwell. The curved cycle/bin store reflects the shape of the corner of site and has been designed in similar materials to the curved stairwell, acting as a visual ‘step up’ to the main building.
25. Windows (bedrooms and lounge/diner) on the east elevation face windows (lounge /diner) on the west elevation of the recently constructed affordable houses at A3. However this is across a service road and wide pavements which are designed to accommodate street trees. With a total separation of just over 15 metres I have no objection

26. The comments of the Local Highway Authority have been passed to the applicant. I cannot agree that the in/out arrangement will necessarily cause problems as traffic speeds will be low on the approach road and there is a high degree on visibility over the one metre boundary wall. The proposed trees are outside the applicants control but Gallagher's who are providing the main infrastructure works could amend the precise position. I would not wish to see an overall reduction in the number of trees, nor do I necessarily believe trees will in all case be a problem within the visibility splay.
27. Amended plans have been requested to increase the roof pitch of the main slated part of the roof in accordance with the Council's Design Officer. I am discussing the Polices comments with the applicants and anticipate possible changes to the boundary treatment to give the added security requested .I cannot agree with the advice that a one metre high wall should necessarily be replaced in total by railings as a wall this low will not prevent the necessary visual surveillance. It is suggested that a boundary height of 1.8m is sought but this may be a combination of wall and railings with the aim of maintaining views in/out of the site. A condition is proposed to ensure that these shall be dealt with by condition.
28. The car parking proposed is appropriate for small units on this highly accessible site. When the Guided Bus is up and running its accessibility will be further improved.
29. Cycle parking is to be provided within a separate building, which also accommodates refuse storage. I am discussing various modifications for the height of the Bin/Cycle store and further amendments are anticipated.

Recommendation

30. Subject to revisions to revised plans increasing the roof pitch on the main slated roof **Approve** reserved matters (siting and design of building, layout of site and access detail) pursuant to outline permission S/2379/01/O. With the agreement of the applicant detailed landscaping is to be subject to a further condition.

Conditions

1. Standard Condition 5a - Details of materials for external walls and roofs and surface treatment. Reason 5aii.
2. SC51 landscaping RC51.
3. SC52 Implementation of landscaping RC52.
4. SC60 Details of boundary treatment (to include possible revisions to the height of all fencing/walls to meet where possible the requirements of the Police Architectural liaison officer). RC60.
5. Surface water drainage details.
6. Bio diversity gain.
7. Public art.
8. Lighting scheme

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)
 - P5/4** (Meeting locally identified housing needs)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
 - HG2** (900 dwellings Cambridge Northern Fringe West)
 - HG12** (Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings within Frameworks)
 - HG22** (Energy Conservation)
 - CNF1** (CNF West (Arbury Camp))

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 Ref: S/0473/07/RM, S/1651/05/RM, S/2363/05/RM and S/2091/06/RM

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