

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

6<sup>th</sup> June 2007

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

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### **S/0565/07/F - COTON**

### **Erection of 28 Dwellings Following Demolition of 14 Existing Dwellings, 4-11, 46-47 and 50-53 Silverdale Avenue**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007 (Major Development)**

#### **Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the recommendation of delegated approval by Officers conflicts with the objections received from Coton Parish Council and local residents.**

**Members will visit this site on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

#### **Site and Proposal**

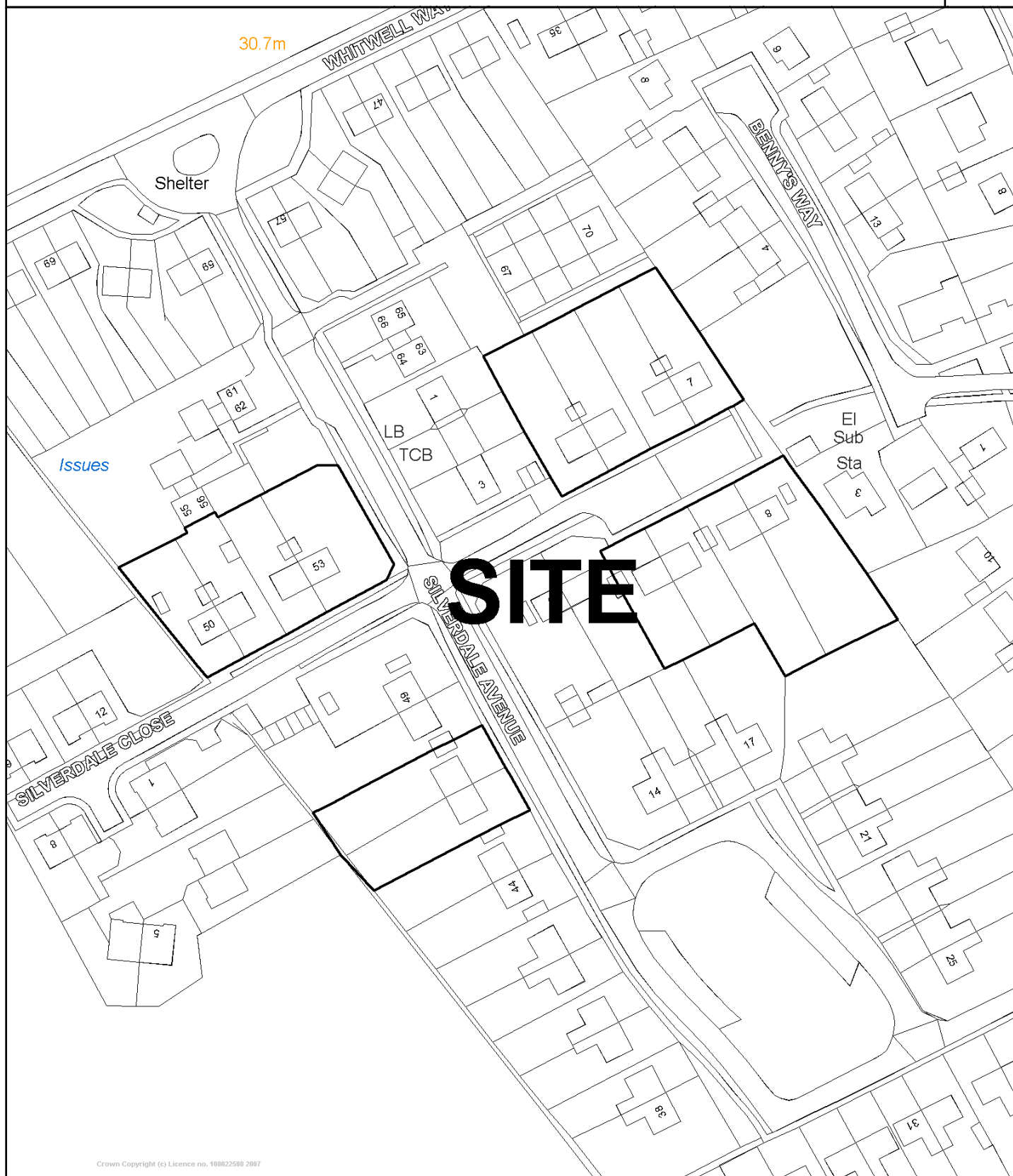
1. This full application, received on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2007, proposes the erection of 28 dwellings following the demolition of 14 existing dwellings on four separate parcels of land at Silverdale Avenue, Coton. The total site area of the four sites is 0.65ha giving an overall density of 43 dph.

#### *North west site*

2. This site has an area of 0.17ha and currently comprises two pairs of semi detached Airey houses which front Silverdale Close to the south. To the north of the site are a group of flats and to the west an area of undeveloped land before further dwellings in Silverdale Close (including an area of affordable housing currently under construction). Opposite the site to the east are a row of single storey dwellings and to the south a row of garages and the side garden of a semi-detached house fronting Silverdale Avenue.
3. The existing houses are to be demolished and replaced with a total of 8 houses, four linked units fronting Silverdale Close and four linked units fronting Silverdale Avenue. The units comprise 5 x 2-bedroom and 3 x 3-bedroom dwellings. The ridge heights of the dwellings vary between 8.6m and 7.2m.
4. A total of 12 car parking spaces are provided in three groups at front of the dwellings.
5. The proposed density of development for this site is 47dph.

#### *South west site*

6. This site has an area of 0.1ha and currently comprises a pair of semi-detached Airey houses fronting Silverdale Avenue. To the north and south the site abuts existing



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semi-detached houses in Silverdale Close and to the rear (west) the gardens of properties in Silverdale Close. Opposite the site to the east are the gardens of properties in Silverdale Avenue.

7. Again the existing houses are to be demolished and replaced with a terrace of 3 houses. The units comprise 2 x 2-bedroom and 1 x 4-bedroom dwellings. The ridge heights of the dwellings are 8.6m.
8. 7 car parking spaces are provided along the front of the site.
9. The proposed density of development for this site is 30dph.

*North east site*

10. This site has an area of 0.18ha and currently comprises two pairs of semi-detached Airey houses which front a parking/turning area and grassed amenity area in a small cul-de-sac of Silverdale Avenue. To the west the site adjoins the rear gardens of existing bungalows and to the east the rear gardens of houses and children's play area in Benny's Way. To the north the site is bounded by a rear access road and parking area and the rear gardens of four existing bungalows. Opposite the site to the south are two pairs of semi-detached houses which comprise the fourth section of the application site.
11. The existing houses are to be demolished and replaced with a total of 8 new dwellings. The units comprise 5 x 2-bedroom and 3 x 3 bedroom. A terrace of 4 dwellings is to be constructed facing the amenity area and a pair of semi-detached dwellings fronting the existing parking/turning area. These units all have a ridge height of 8.6m. Between the two sets of dwellings is an access court with a further pair of dwellings, comprising 1 x 2 bedroom and 1x3 bedroom units set at the rear. These units have a ridge height of 6.6m.
12. A total of 12 parking spaces are provided.
13. The density for the development is 44 dph

*South east site*

14. This site has an area of 0.2ha and currently comprises two pairs of semi-detached Airey houses which front a parking/turning area and grassed amenity area in a small cul-de-sac of Silverdale Avenue. To the west is a pair of semi-detached houses and to the east the gardens of houses in Benny's Way and St Peter's Road. To the rear are the gardens of existing properties in Silverdale Avenue and opposite (north) the pair of existing houses referred to above.
15. The existing houses are to be demolished and replaced with a total of 9 new dwellings. The units comprise 2 x 1 bedroom, 4 x 2 bedroom and 3 x 3 bedroom units. The arrangement of units is similar to that of the north east site except that the end unit adjoining properties in Benny's Way is a small unit with a ridge height of 7.2m, and in this case there are three dwellings set at the rear of the site.
16. A total of 10 parking spaces are provided all of which are located within the courtyard.
17. The density for this part of the development is 45dph.
18. Materials proposed are yellow facing brick, render and weatherboarding for the walls and clay interlocking roof tiles

19. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement and a Flood Risk Assessment.
20. The dwellings will be designed to meet BRE Eco Homes 'very good' and will incorporate internal and external portable water use reduction measures

### **Planning History**

21. In 2004 an application on a larger area of land for the erection of 39 houses following the demolition of 18 existing houses was withdrawn.( reference S/2589/04/F)

### **Planning Policy**

22. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") seeks to secure sustainable design in new development
23. **Policy ST/6** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007 identifies Coton as a group village. Within village frameworks residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted. Development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make best use of a single brownfield site.
24. The criteria set out in points a) to d) of **Policy SE4** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan) remain relevant in assessing this application. These state that development will be permitted provided that the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours; the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity; residential development would not conflict with another policy of the Plan.
25. **Policy HG10** of the Local Plan requires developments to contain a mix of units.
26. **Policy HG7** of the Local Plan sets out the requirements for affordable housing on sites within village frameworks.

### **Consultation**

27. **Coton Parish Council** recommends refusal. "Still too large a development for Coton – contrary to South Cambs Local Plan (SCLP) policy SE4. Plans are out of keeping with existing development regarding density of housing – too many houses in a small place – contrary to Structure Plan (SP) Policy P1/3 and P5/5, and contrary to SCLP Policy SE4(b).
  - (a) Development reduces gardens – smaller spaces for children to play. Too much concrete. Contrary to SCLP HG12 and SP Policy P1/3.
  - (b) Increased traffic will add to problems already being experienced as roads are mostly single track due to parked cars. Builders transport will add to the problems and will have to come through the village and pass the school. Also increased vehicle emissions. Contrary to SCLP Policy ES4.
  - (c) Are the facilities for the disposal of sewage adequate? Sewage disposal (apart from stating main sewer) is not mentioned in the flood risk assessment only

surface water. SCLP page 66 19.09 states – “The sewage treatment works at Coton has very limited spare capacity and may require upgrading to accept flows from any proposed development.” Since then two significant developments have been and are being built (31 houses in all) plus other small house builds, and so far as is known no upgrading of the works has been carried out.

28. The **Local Highway Authority** comments that the proposed parking bays for plots 25-27 are too close to the junction and should be moved north, so that at least 7m of clear carriageway space is left before the bays commence.
  - (a) A condition should be attached to any consent to secure appropriate vehicle to pedestrian visibility splays and any planting to the ‘courtyards’ should be such that it will not exceed 600mm in height.
29. **Anglian Water** states that foul flows can be accommodated within the existing 150mm diameter foul system, based on gravity connection from an additional 14 dwellings. However should flows require pumping from the site then further consideration will need to be given on capacity.
  - (a) Surface water to discharge to soakaways as advised with necessary approval from the Environment Agency. There are no surface water sewers available and there must be no discharge of surface water to the foul system.
  - (b) If consent is granted a condition should be imposed requiring the approval of the details of foul drainage disposal.
30. The **Environment Agency** standing advice applies. In Flood zone 1 (low to medium risk) surface water should be controlled as near to its source as possible through a sustainable drainage approach. eg soakaways (as proposed)
31. The **Ecology Officer** has no objection to the development of this site, however it appears to be well colonised by house sparrows. This should be a target for conservation within the scheme and would be achievable via advance nest box erection, retention of some existing vegetation and post construction nest box erection. The Ecology Officer is encouraged by the Biodiversity Statement. Bats could be present given the open countryside around and the well treed nature of the site in general and therefore it would be advisable to survey the buildings for bats as soon as possible.
32. The **Architectural Liaison Officer, Cambridgeshire Constabulary** is concerned with the layout and design in relation to Plots 4 and 13. Dwelling frontages should be open to view where they can benefit from high levels of natural surveillance.
  - (a) Placing dwellings in parking courtyards reduces natural surveillance from the highway. Plots 3, 14 and 15 although sited in parking courts have doors on the front elevation which aids such surveillance. However the main entrance doors for Plots 4 and 13 are closer to the rear elevation. The positioning of the bin stores in these cases provides a potential climbing aid to gain access to the rear gardens. In the case of plot 4 such access would be out of public view.
  - (b) Lighting, including that for the car parking areas, should be by means of column mounted white down lighters to BS 5489:1996.

- (c) Rear garden boundary fencing should be 1.8m high (min) close boarded or equally secure fencing, with trellis topping or other additional security where a boundary adjoins open land. Fencing between neighbouring rear gardens should be 1.2m high (min).
  - (d) The gate to the side of plot 28 appears to serve 5 dwellings which is rather a high number to ensure that the gate is kept locked. As with all gates to rear gardens, this gate should be lockable, fitted with a robust lock and, in this case, preferably self closing. No additional properties should be served by this point of access.
  - (e) The new trees to sides of plots 2 and 16 should be removed. By including them with ground cover planting views from the highway to the parking areas are restricted. Ground cover planting should not be capable of growing above 0.9m in height while tree canopies should not be allowed to fall below above 2.2m above ground level to maintain a clear visibility splay.
33. The comments of the **Development Manager**, the **Trees and Landscapes Officer**, the **Environment Operations Manager, Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)**, the **Building Control Section** and **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** will be reported at the meeting.

### **Representations**

- 34. 9 letters of objection have been received from local residents, including one from the chair of Coton Airey Housing Residents Committee. The grounds of objection are summarised below:
- 35. The type of housing proposed is urban in character and out of keeping with the style of the surrounding houses. Its high density and lack of front gardens will change the open and green character of the neighbourhood. The proposed "Mews" style of housing is not appropriate
- 36. The roof of the proposed houses are 17% higher and more steeply pitched than the Airey houses, yet the wall heights are similar. Similar roof heights would be more sympathetic to neighbouring houses and the local environment.
- 37. The gardens provided are too small.
- 38. Coton School does not have the provision for the extra children which this development would be likely to bring into the village. It has recently had its numbers restricted by the Local Education Authority
- 39. The village roads cannot support a large increase in through traffic. The provision of 42 parking spaces for this development presupposes a significant increase in car journeys through the village, and particularly on High Street and Whitwell Way, where the school is located, which are often inadequate for current traffic volumes because of the number of cars parked on the road, with numerous bottlenecks. Additional builders' vehicles will only make this situation worse and increase the potential for accidents. Whilst parking provision may meet statutory guidance it has proven inadequate elsewhere.
- 40. Vehicle access for plots 1-16 is via a short access road with crowded parking. Difficulties with access are likely to encourage residents to park at the front of properties, rather than negotiate the narrow entrance and tight access to parking

bays, which will probably lead to parking chaos. Parking spaces in some places require vehicles to cross the footpath, endangering pedestrians where parking is grouped, as visibility of motorists exiting will be restricted by other cars. It would be better and more in keeping with surrounding properties to permit residents a larger front garden with private drive.

41. Coton has a unique aspect which makes it different from other Airey developments that have or are being done, in that it is a no-through village
42. Silverdale Avenue is drained by one 9 inch main sewer. In the lower part of the estate (near Bin Brook) this dog-legs several times before joining the main sewer in Brookfield Road. Given the slow rate of effluent flow in this part of Silverdale Avenue the capacity of main sewer is sometimes exceeded. Then sewage overflows through manholes into gardens and homes. Adding more local population will exacerbate this problem.
43. Two of the zones to be developed border the Benny's Way Play area for Young Children in the adjacent Wale's Estate. For 3 years local residents have worked with the Councils Tree Officer to plant new trees and generally keep this area green, clean and tidy – and used exclusively by young children under 9 and their parents. It is of vital importance to local residents that the Play Area is maintained as such not only after the development but during the period of demolition and new building i.e. no builders lorries, white vans, caravans, earth moving equipment materials lavatories should be allowed in this area. The existing trees should be protected at all times
44. The development plans contain no proposal to deal with the single abandoned semi-detached house, 13 Silverdale Avenue, despite all the new houses to be built around it. The opportunity should be taken to deal with this property at the same time
45. The development does not meet the wishes of local residents as expressed in the Coton Village Plan. Over 95% of those who contributed to the Plan did not wish to see development of more than 10 houses in the village. The recent developments of 19 houses in Silverdale Close, other houses off Whitwell Way, the conversions at Rectory Farm and various others suggests that Coton has already done its bit for "expansion". A one for one replacement of these houses may be more compatible.
46. The internal dimensions of the dwellings are inadequate.
47. Local residents concerns have not been sufficiently heard in the design process for this development.
48. None of the houses are designed to meet the needs of elderly or disabled residents.
49. The occupiers of 3 Benny's Way are thankful for the greatly reduced impact on that property due to the elimination of the colossal wall of 5 dwellings close to the boundary in the previous scheme; the positioning of some of the new housing which retains the established building profile of the area is less jarring; and the reduced number of houses from that previously proposed which means fewer additional people and cars. There are still objections to the scheme however which are encapsulated in the above paragraphs. Should the proposal go ahead the site layout should remain unchanged; houses should not be repositioned in order to squeeze some more into 'gaps'; houses are not added, perhaps due to compulsory release of land; the sewage system must be upgraded to manage the overload. An Environmental Impact Statement is wanted which should cover protection of roads, pavements, verges, trees and other property. What arrangements are in place to

minimise these problems, who will fix it and on what timescale. There should be declared boundaries of the project so that builders cannot dump materials on inappropriate places. Noise, dust minimisation and hazardous waste handling should also be addressed (there was, and probably still is asbestos in the Airey houses). There is a need for a complaints process, enforcement policies and compensation policy.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

50. The key issues to be considered by Members are whether the development accords with Policy ST/6 in terms of the scale of development and Policy SE4 in terms of character and infrastructure. In addition Members need to consider whether the requirements of HG7 are met in respect of affordable housing.
51. The issue of whether the Airey houses should be demolished and the internal sizes of the replacements units are not matters for this Committee.
52. Coton is identified as a group village where development of up to 8 dwellings can be considered, and may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make best use of a single brownfield site. Cumulatively there is an additional 14 dwellings provided across the four areas of land however when taken individually, and allowing for the dwellings to be demolished there is no single site where the increase in the number of dwellings exceeds 5. I am therefore of the view that the number of dwellings proposed is acceptable in principle in a Group Village.
53. In order to consider the points of character and detailed impact it is necessary to refer to the areas of land individually as in the Site and Proposal section above. It is worth noting however that no objections have been received that are based on issues such as loss of light, loss of privacy or overbearing impact from any particular property.
54. It is my view that overall garden sizes are adequate.

### ***North west site***

55. In my view the proposed design and layout of this area of land has adequately addressed issues of neighbour amenity and where appropriate window locations have been chosen to avoid overlooking of existing properties.
56. The ridge height of the main units proposed, at 8.6m are higher than those of the dwellings they are to replace however I am of the view that they will not have an unacceptable impact of the street scene.
57. The Local Highway Authority is unhappy with the proximity of a section of the proposed parking to the junction of Silverdale Avenue and Silverdale Close. This area appears to have been chosen for parking to minimise the impact on existing trees on the site but is clearly unacceptable from a highway point of view. I have asked the applicant to address this point and to ensure that parking spaces in general relate better to the units they are to serve.

### ***South west site***

58. I have no objection to the replacement of the existing pair of houses with a terrace of 3 dwellings. As with the site above the ridge heights of the proposed dwellings at 8.6m will be higher than the immediately adjacent dwellings but in my view will not have an unacceptable impact on either the street scene or adjacent properties.

59. Concern has been expressed about the provision of car parking at the front of the site. Whilst this is not a traditional feature along Silverdale Avenue it is my view that provided the parking area is treated in a sympathetic way it will be acceptable. At the moment 7 spaces are provided for the 3 dwellings proposed, which is in excess of the maximum car parking provision. I have asked for this number to be reduced and re-arranged, which will in turn help to reduce any visual impact in the street scene.

***North east site***

60. I have no objection to the proposed position of dwellings within this part of the site. Although two dwellings are provided at the rear of the site they have been designed with a lower ridge and any first floor openings positioned in such a way so as to not create problems of overlooking for adjacent properties. Whilst development in a courtyard form is not typical of the area I am of the view that it is acceptable in principle.
61. I am concerned however at the level and location of car parking provision in this area. Whilst two spaces are provided for each dwelling it is difficult to see where visitor parking can take place. In my view parking provision should be better located in terms of the dwellings they are to serve. Given that four of the properties will front directly onto the green amenity area it is important that well related parking spaces are provided.
62. Revised drawings have been requested.

***South east site***

63. I have no objection to the arrangement of dwellings within this area of the site. Again although the courtyard form is not typical of the area it allows best use to be made of the site whilst having regard to neighbour amenity.
64. I am concerned however at the level and arrangement of parking provision, with only 10 spaces being provided for 9 dwellings and I have asked the applicants' agent to look at this area again. It may be that a unit needs to be removed from within this area to allow the parking issue to be satisfactorily resolved.
65. The Local Highway Authority has not raised any objection to the principle of the overall number of dwellings proposed. Given the concerns received from local residents on this point I have sent a copy of the comments to the Highway Authority and have asked for its further views.
66. Anglian Water has confirmed that the existing sewage system is adequate to cope with the new development but states that consideration on capacity will need to be given if flows are to be pumped. I have asked the applicants agent to supply further details of the proposed method of foul water drainage and will go back to Anglian Water if necessary.
67. The scheme will provide 14 new social rented 'affordable' dwellings. This will need to be controlled through the sale of the land rather than a Section 106 Agreement in this case as the Council is landowner.
68. I have not received a request from Cambridgeshire County Council as Education Authority for a contribution towards education provision

69. The provision of nest boxes required by the Ecology Officer can be dealt with by condition. I will pass on his comments about the possible presence of bats to the applicants agent. Again this point can be dealt with by condition if necessary.
70. The 'Environmental Impact Statement' referred to in one of the letters of objection relates to issues that should be dealt with under any contract for the eventual building works. As this Authority is landowner in this case I will pass the comments made onto the relevant section.
71. I will pass on the comments made about 13 Silverdale Avenue to the relevant section.
72. In the Design and Access Statement the applicant states that all dwellings will meet access and mobility standards laid down by the Housing Corporation and National Housing Federation as well as meeting the sixteen criteria of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Lifetime Homes Standards.

### **Recommendation**

73. I will report the response to outstanding consultations but subject to revised drawings that satisfactorily address the above issues I will recommend that delegated powers of approval be given subject to safeguarding conditions.

### **Informatives**

#### **Reasons for Approval**

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy**, adopted January 2007  
**ST/6** (Group Villages)
  - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**  
**P1/3** (Sustainable design in built development)
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**  
**SE4** (Group Villages)  
**HG7** (Affordable Housing on Sites Within Villages)  
**HG10** (Housing Mix and Design)

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File Refs: S/0565/07/F and S/2589/04/F

**Contact Officer:** Paul Sexton – Area Planning Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713255