

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

4<sup>th</sup> July 2007

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

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### **S/0596/07/F – GREAT SHELFORD**

**Erection of 8 houses following demolition of existing house, 66 Cambridge Road, for David Reed Homes Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007**

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

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application relates to 0.35ha land comprising an existing two-storey house and its rear garden area, at 66 Cambridge Road, together with land at the rear of Nos 68 and 70 Cambridge Road. To the north west, the site adjoins the development of detached houses at Marfleet Close, and has a boundary with the side garden area with agricultural access of No.7, Marfleet Close. To the south east, the site adjoins a development of detached houses at The Hectare, where it has a boundary with Nos 7 and 9. The development boundary for the village coincides with the rear boundary of the site. The two Silver Birches on the Cambridge Road frontages of Nos 66 and 68 are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
2. The full application, dated 21<sup>st</sup> March 2007, proposes the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of 8 houses, comprising two each of two- and three-bedroom semi-detached, and four- and five-bedroom detached houses. An access drive is to be formed from Cambridge Road, adjoined on the north by No.68 Cambridge Road and to the south by No.64 Cambridge Road.
3. The frontage houses on Plots 1 and 2 comprise a semi-detached pair with a ridge height of 7.5m, adjoining the side elevation of No.64. To the rear of these, Plots 3 and 4 are a pair of semi-detached dwellings with a ridge height of 8.5m. To the west of these, at the rear of No.68, Plot 5 is a detached house with a ridge height of 8.1m. The rear of the site is occupied by detached houses on Plots 6, 7 and 8 each with a ridge height of 8.5m. The external materials are to be facing brick, render and boarding, pantiles and plain tiles.
4. The access is to be a shared surface drive with a vehicular ramp at the entrance and a width of 5.5m for a distance of 60m, and incorporating a turning head for service vehicles. Thereafter, a 4.2m private drive with a turning head is to serve six dwellings. The boundary of the driveway and the garden of 7, The Hectare, is to be marked with a new 2.0m high brick wall, and a new 1.8m high wall is to be placed on the northern boundary to the front of No.68. Elsewhere the site boundary is to have 2.0m high close-boarded fencing. New tree planting is proposed on the north eastern and north western boundaries.



5. The development represents a density of 22.9 dwellings per hectare.

### **Planning History**

6. A similar application to erect 8 dwellings on the cleared site was withdrawn prior to determination earlier this year following concerns raised by Great Shelford Parish Council, nearby residents and officers – **S/2411/06/F**.
7. Part of the site, relating to the land at No.66 only, has been the subject of several recent planning refusals and dismissals at appeal. Application **S/1909/04/O** dated 6 September 2004 proposed the retention of No.66 and the erection of 3 new dwellings on land to the rear. Application **S/2533/04/O** dated 8 December 2004 was similar, but with one less new dwelling. Application **S/0917/05/O** dated 27 April 2005 proposed the demolition of No.66 and the erection of 4 new dwellings. The Inspector, in dismissing these appeals by letter dated 1 February 2006, considered the layout of development to be unduly cramped in contrast to the reasonably spacious appearance of development fronting Cambridge Road.

### **The Inspector commented:**

8. “The few cases where new development has been ‘shoehorned’ in between existing houses does not create an attractive environment and is not an example that should be followed”. The Inspector considered that the relatively low-density and more extensive developments at Marfleet Close and The Hectare did not provide a “meaningful comparison” to the development proposals before him. The Inspector was also concerned that the development in the last appeal would harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No.68 through over-dominance.

### **Planning Policy**

9. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007.**
10. **ST/4** (Rural Centres) Development and redevelopment without any limit on individual scheme size will be permitted within the village frameworks of Rural Centres, provided that adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development.
11. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document** (Inspector’s Report on the Examination received May 2007).
12. **DP/1** (Sustainable Development) Development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, as appropriate to its location, scale and form. It should make efficient and effective use of land by giving priority to the use of brownfield sites and achieve adaptable, compact forms of development through the use of higher densities.
13. **DP/2** (Design of New Development)  
All new development must be of high quality design and, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, should:
  - a. Preserve or enhance the character of the local area;
  - b. Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area;

- c. In the case of residential development, provide higher residential densities, and a mix of housing types including smaller homes;
- d. Include high quality landscaping compatible with the scale and character of the development and its surroundings.

14. **DP/3** (Development Criteria)

- 1. All development proposals should provide, as appropriate to the nature, scale and economic viability:
  - a. Affordable housing (in housing schemes);
  - b. Appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety, enhanced public and community transport and cycling and pedestrian infrastructure;
  - c. Car parking, with provision kept to a minimum;
  - d. Safe and secure cycle parking;
  - e. Outdoor play space;
  - f. Safe and convenient access for all to public buildings and spaces, and to public transport, including those with limited mobility or those with other impairment such as of sight or hearing;
  - g. For the screened storage and collection of refuse, including recyclable materials;
  - h. A design and layout that minimises opportunities for crime;
  - i. Financial contributions towards the provision and, where appropriate, the maintenance of infrastructure, services and facilities required by the development in accordance with Policy DP/4;
- 2. Planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact:
  - a. On residential amenity;
  - b. From traffic generated;
  - c. On village character;
  - d. On the countryside, and landscape character;
  - e. From undue environmental disturbance such as noise, lighting, vibration, odour, noxious emissions or dust;
  - f. On ecological, wildlife and archaeological interests;
  - g. On flooding and flood risk;

- h. On the best and most versatile agricultural land;
15. **DP/7** (Development Frameworks) Development and redevelopment of unallocated land and buildings within development frameworks will be permitted provided that:
- a. Retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character; and
  - b. Development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours; and
  - c. There is the necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development;
16. **HG/1** (Housing Density) - Residential developments will make best use of the site by achieving average net densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment. Higher average net densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare should be achieved in more sustainable locations close to a good range of existing or potential services and facilities and where there is, or there is potential for, good local public transport services.
17. **HG/2** (Housing Mix)
- 1. Residential developments will contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, to meet local needs.
  - 2. Affordable housing should be of an appropriate mix to respond to identified needs at the time of the development, in accordance with HG/3.
  - 3. In developments of up to 10 dwellings, market properties should provide:
    - a. At least 40% of homes with 1 or 2 bedrooms; and
    - b. Approximately 25% of homes with 3 bedrooms; and
    - c. Approximately 25% of homes with 4 or more bedrooms;Unless it can be demonstrated that the local circumstances of the particular settlement or location suggest a different mix would better meet local needs. In developments of more than 10 dwellings a mix of units will be sought providing a range of accommodation, including one and two bed dwellings, having regard to economic viability, the local context of the site and the need to secure a balanced community. A proportion of new dwellings should be designed to lifetime mobility standards.
18. **HG/3** (Affordable Housing)
- 1. Proposals for housing developments will only be permitted if they provide an agreed mix of affordable housing, as defined in PPS3<sup>1</sup>, to meet local needs.
  - 2. The amount of affordable housing sought will be 40% or more of the dwellings for which planning permission may be given on all sites of two or more dwellings. The occupation of such housing will be limited to people in housing need. It must be available over the long-term.
  - 3. Within individual developments, the proportion and type of affordable housing will be the subject of negotiation with applicants. Account will be taken of any

particular costs associated with the development (e.g. site remediation, infrastructure provision) and other viability considerations, whether there are other planning objectives which need to be given priority, and the need to ensure balanced and sustainable communities

#### **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004**

19. **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design) - Requires residential developments to have a mix of units 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.
20. **HG11** (Backland Development) – Development to the rear of existing properties will not be permitted where development would: 1) be overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of an existing residential property, 2) be noisy or disturbing to an existing residential property through use of its access, 3) give rise to highway dangers through use of its access, 4) be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
21. **CS10** (Education) – Where planning permission is granted for schemes of 4 or more dwellings, financial contributions will be sought towards the provision of local educational accommodation.
22. **TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel) – Car parking requirements will be restricted to the maximum levels set out in Appendix 7/1. (For dwellings, Appendix 7/1 gives a level of an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling, up to a maximum of two per 3 or more bedrooms in poorly accessible areas. Visitor/ service parking should not fall below 0.25 spaces per dwelling provided with 2 parking spaces).
23. **EN5** (Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows) - The District Council will require trees, hedges and woodland and other natural features to be retained wherever possible in proposals for new development.

#### **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003**

24. **P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development) - Requires compact forms of development through the promotion of higher densities that responds to the local character of the built environment. A high standard of design and sustainability for all new development will be required which: Provides a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment is integrated with adjoining landscapes;
25. **P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas) – Small scale housing developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account the need for affordable rural housing, the character of the village and its setting, and the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport provision in the immediate area.

#### **Great Shelford Village Design Statement (SPG 2004)**

26. **Buildings and Spaces** – Principles Buildings in Great Shelford are predominantly domestic in scale, and diverse in style, ground plan, ownership, setting and alignment. Future development should mirror that scale and diversity.
27. **Guideline** - Protect good examples of historic and modern buildings and building types, their features and details, whether or not they are listed.

## Consultations

28. **Great Shelford Parish Council** – Recommendation of refusal, with the following comments:
- a. This layout only differs slightly from the previous application which was withdrawn, so our comments on S/2411/06/F also apply to this one.
  - b. The houses on plots 1 - 2 are cramped and out of character with adjoining development. The long high wall along the road and No 68 and the high close-boarded fences around plots 1 - 4 will create a hard effect, which will be detrimental to the visual appearance of the area. This effect will be compounded by the 4 parking spaces in the front of plots 1 - 2 and the turning area and car parking to the rear of plot 5. The movement of traffic within this area will adversely affect the amenities of No 68, as will that along the access road affect 64 and 7 the Hactare.
  - c. The houses on plots 3, 4 and 5 will overlook 68 and 70 Cambridge Road and the house on plot 6 will be overbearing and intrusive to 7 Marfleet Close.
  - d. In addition the layout appears to give inadequate consideration to the occupiers of the new properties. They will have small gardens which will be overshadowed by the boundary treatment, and overlooked by adjoining properties. A more imaginative scheme which respects both the existing residents and the new residents is required.
  - e. This proposal amounts to overdevelopment of the site with buildings of an inappropriate design and of a layout and density which will do significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of adjoining residents.
  - f. (The inspector did not feel that an objection could not be made on highway grounds to the previous proposal. We believed that with many more houses the increased use of an access close to Marfleet Close will create a highway problem.)
29. **Chief Financial Planning Officer Cambridgeshire County Council** – Requests a financial contribution in respect of local primary school education facilities.
30. **Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology** – Recommends a condition to be attached to any planning permission issued to require a scheme of archaeological investigation to be prepared.
31. **Local Highway Authority** – The LHA does not object to the proposal, although it has expressed concern about the use of a shared surface road on the grounds of pedestrian safety and the forward siting of the parking for Plots 1 and 2. The LHA requests a condition for details to ensure that refuse vehicles can enter and leave the site in forward gear.
32. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** – No objection, but recommends a condition and informatives to safeguard the amenity of nearby residents from noise disturbance during the construction period.
33. The comments of the Landscape Design Officer, Trees and Landscape Officer and Environmental Operations Manager are awaited.

## Response from the applicant's agent

34. In response to the concerns raised by the Parish Council, the agent has add the following comments:

- a. "The houses on plots 1 and 2 have been designed with the many influences from surrounding properties. Cambridge Road is made up of many different styles and designs ranging from single storey properties to newly built flats and houses. Many of these are semi-detached houses with gables and hips. We do not feel that these two proposed units are out of character.
  - b. With regard to the issue of the parking spaces the Parish mention 4 spaces to the front of plots 1 and 2. In fact there are only 3 parking spaces. The existing property No. 66 already has hard standing for several cars as do most of the properties surrounding the site and therefore we do not believe there will be any further detriment to the visual appearance of the area.
  - c. Clearly fencing is in existence within the surrounding properties but it was felt that a new wall separating No. 64 from the proposed site would not only provide a better screen but also would provide a much better approach to the site.
  - d. It is our intention that by repositioning the road further away from the rear garden of No. 64 it would have much less impact than the previous application, and that with a high brick wall alongside No. 7 The Hectare, both properties would have better screening from the development.
  - e. The houses on plots 3, 4 and 5 are a minimum distance of 27 metres from the rear of No's 68 and 70 and we feel that this is more than adequate in these circumstances. Screen trees have also been suggested to the rear boundaries to avoid any impact or overlooking.
  - f. We feel that we have provided a good mix of units within this site and believe that the proposed development adheres to the current guidelines and is certainly not over development of the site.
  - g. As you are aware Mrs Reynolds has seen the proposals for this new access and has no concerns over its position in relation to Marfleet Close.
35. We can also confirm that David Reed Homes accept the educational contribution payment."
35. Objections to the development have been received from Nos 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 70 and 73 Cambridge Road, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 Marfleet Close, 7 and 9 The Hectare. In summary, the concerns are:

**Traffic issues**

- 36. There are already exits from Marfleet Close and The Hectare onto Cambridge Road, which is a busy road, and is expected to become more so in the future. Another access would be dangerous.
- 37. If future residents left their bins out on the road this would block the view to drivers leaving Marfleet Close.

**Neighbour amenity**

- 38. Access driveway - Impact of extra traffic on the amenity of occupiers of No.64 because of noise, vibration and glare from headlights, within 1m of the boundary. Noise from use of gravel driveways. Noise disturbance from traffic on 7, The Hectare. Security risk to No.64 from intruders using the new access road.
- 39. Overlooking of neighbouring properties, such as 64 Cambridge Road and 7 and 9 The Hectare.



40. Overbearing on neighbouring properties. The Inspector on appeal considered that the plot midway along the site should be limited to single-storey height. The current proposal shows two-storey height.
41. Roof heights of dwellings to the rear should be no higher than the frontage plots, to prevent overbearing impact. If planning permission is granted, a condition should be attached to prevent dormer windows being constructed in these dwellings in the future.
42. Plot 2 - Overlooking of the rear garden of No.64 from the rear windows. The refuse store at the rear will be likely to cause smell to the occupiers of No.64 and to be of an unsightly appearance.
43. Plot 3 - Overlooking from windows over dwellings at 7 The Hectare and 68 and 70 Cambridge Road.
44. Plot 4 - Overlooking from windows over dwellings at 7 The Hectare and 68 and 70 Cambridge Road.
45. Plot 5 - Overlooking of rear garden of No.70 and 7, Marfleet Close.
46. Plot 6 - Overlooking of rear garden of No.70. Overbearing on 7 Marfleet Close. Future occupiers of Plot 6 will remove the boundary fencing so as to increase natural lighting to the dining room, which would then result in overlooking of 7 Marfleet Close. They could put additional first floor windows in facing elevations in the future. There will be noise disturbance from activity in Plot 6.
47. Plot 8 – loss of light to utility room and en-suite bathroom in 9 The Hectare. Overlooking of 9 The Hectare from ground floor windows in the south east elevation.

#### **Character**

48. Not in keeping with the character and pattern of development in the area.
49. The close spacing of the access road to Marfleet Close and The Hectare is not in keeping with the more spacious character of the rest of Cambridge Road. The frontage as viewed from Cambridge Road will look like high density development and will be a marked change of character from the existing situation.
50. Close-boarded fencing is not in character with the appearance of the area.
51. Development at Marfleet Close and The Hectare is lower density and has more capacity than the proposal.
52. The siting of plots 1 and 2 is too 'squashed over' towards No.64 and will look out of place in the street scene.
53. Not in compliance with the Great Shelford Village Design Guide.

#### **Overdevelopment**

54. Plots 6, 7 and 8 – These are too large for the plot size. Who will be using the amenity land to the rear of these dwellings?

#### **Landscaping**

55. The existing landscaping on the boundary of 64/66 and at 7, Marfleet Close is not shown accurately.

56. Mature trees are to be felled. The conifers to be removed are a feature of the area. An Oak and Elm will be lost to accommodate Plot 6.
57. Will the new access harm the roots of the frontage protected Silver Birches?
58. There is not enough space to plant trees on the north west boundary of Plot 6.

#### **Infrastructure**

59. No upgrades have been made to sewerage, gas and electricity infrastructure.

#### **Other**

60. Why are there not more 'affordable' dwellings?

#### **Planning Comments**

61. The application represents backland development on previously developed land in a Rural Centre. In these circumstances I consider that there is a presumption in favour of development unless overriding harm to material interests can be identified.

#### ***Character of the area***

62. The rear garden area of No.3.66-70 is located between similar developments of housing infill in-depth, served by an access road from Cambridge Road. I do not consider that the development, which has frontage dwellings located on stepped line between existing dwellings 64 and 68 Cambridge Road, represents a form of development which is out of keeping with the existing pattern of development. This conclusion differs from the Inspector in the recent appeal, but in that case the applications before him related to development of a more confined and linear site, which was different in character to the current application site. I accept that the design of the prominent boundary wall will require careful design and, if approved, I recommend that a condition be attached to require relevant details to be submitted for approval.
63. The density of development does not meet the requirements of former SCLP Policy SE2 (Rural Growth Settlements), but on this edge-of-settlement location, adjacent to development of similar density, I consider that there are strong design grounds that apply to the assessment of the proposal.

#### ***Neighbour Amenity***

64. The proposed access road passes close to the rear gardens of No.64 Cambridge Road and No. 7 The Hectare, from whom objections have been received. In the case of No.64, the boundary is to be marked by a close-boarded fence, and the area of garden affected is some distance from the main sitting out area to the rear of the dwelling. In No.7's case, there is a potentially serious impact, however the applicant proposes to erect a wall on this boundary, which I consider will provide sufficient amelioration of the potential noise nuisance.
65. Concerns about potential overlooking of existing properties have been raised by the Parish Council and many of the occupiers who would be affected. No. 68 Cambridge Road would be faced by first floor windows in the rear elevation of Plot 5, but this would be at a window-to-boundary distance of 13m and a window-to-window distance of 25m. No.70 Cambridge Road would not be directly overlooked by any clear-glazed windows except in Plot 6, where the window-to-window distance would be 52m. No.7 Marfleet Close would be faced at first floor level only by two en-suite windows in the side elevation of Plot 6, which are to be obscure glazed. Ground floor windows would be obscured from view by the intervening close-boarded fence. Subject to a suitable condition to ensure that potentially overlooking windows in relevant elevations are

restricted, I do not consider that any serious overlooking of adjoining properties will result from the proposed development.

66. I have considered the potential overbearing impact and overshadowing of the development on Plot 6 on the side garden area of 7, Marfleet Close. The distance between the dwellings would be 15m approximately, and the land between them includes an agricultural access to the adjoining field, which would not be used as the main sitting-out area. I conclude that, while there would be a degree of overshadowing and the replacement of a conifer belt with a substantial side elevation, this would not result in serious harm to the amenity of the occupiers of 7, Marfleet Close.
67. I have considered the other neighbour amenity issues raised by nearby occupiers, but I do not consider that any gives rise to sufficient ground to refuse planning permission or impose a condition on any consent granted.

***Traffic issues***

68. The concerns of the Parish Council and local residents about the possibility of highway dangers being created are noted. These concerns have not been supported by the Local Highway Authority nor, albeit to a lesser amount of development, by the previous Inspector on appeal. I do not consider that sufficient ground exists for a refusal on this basis.

***Other Matters***

69. Concerns have been raised about issues of landscaping, tree protection and refuse collection. I will report on these matters verbally at the meeting with consultation responses, if received.

**Recommendation**

70. Approval, subject to the following conditions:
1. Standard Condition A - (Reason -A);
  2. SC5 details of materials; design of frontage wall adjoining No.68 - (RC5);
  3. SC51 details of landscaping (RC51);
  4. SC52 maintenance of landscaping - (RC52);
  5. SC22 No windows at first floor level north west elevations Plot 5 and Plot 6, nor in south west (rear) elevation of Plot 5. Windows shown to be obscure glazed - (RC22);
  6. SC66 Archaeological investigation - (RC66);
  7. SC20 retention of parking spaces - (RC20);
  8. B10 provision of access - (Reason - In the interests of highway safety);
  9. Submission of details to ensure that refuse vehicles can enter and leave the site in forward gear - (In the interests of highway safety);
  10. Requirement for a S106 legal agreement for the provision of a financial contribution in respect of local primary school education facilities. (Reason - To ensure the development makes a gain for education provision as required by Policy CS10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004);

11. SC26 – [Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery] – Add at beginning “During the period of construction...”, then “8am/8am/6pm/1pm” - (RC26).

### **Informatives**

1. Land to the rear of Plots 6, 7 and 8 does not part of the hereby approved development area.
2. As recommended by the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services).

### **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/4** (Rural Centres)
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**  
**HG10** (Housing Mix and Design)  
**HG11** (Backland Development)  
**CS10** (Education)  
**TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)  
**EN5** (Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows)
  - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**  
**P1/3** (Sustainable design in built development)  
**P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas)
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material considerations, which have been raised during the consultation exercise: **layout and density; design and appearance; neighbouring amenity; landscaping and highway safety.**

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Great Shelford Village Design Statement (SPG 2004)
- Planning Files refs S/2411/06/F, S/0917/05/O, S/2533/04/O and S/1909/04/O.

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