

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

1st August 2007

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

S/0624/07/F – FEN DITTON

**45 Lighting Columns at Vehicle Park R/O North Works Newmarket Road
for Marshall Group**

Recommendation: Approve

Date for Determination: 22nd May 2007

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Parish Council's recommendation of refusal is contrary to that of the officer recommendation of approval.

Departure Application

Site and Proposal

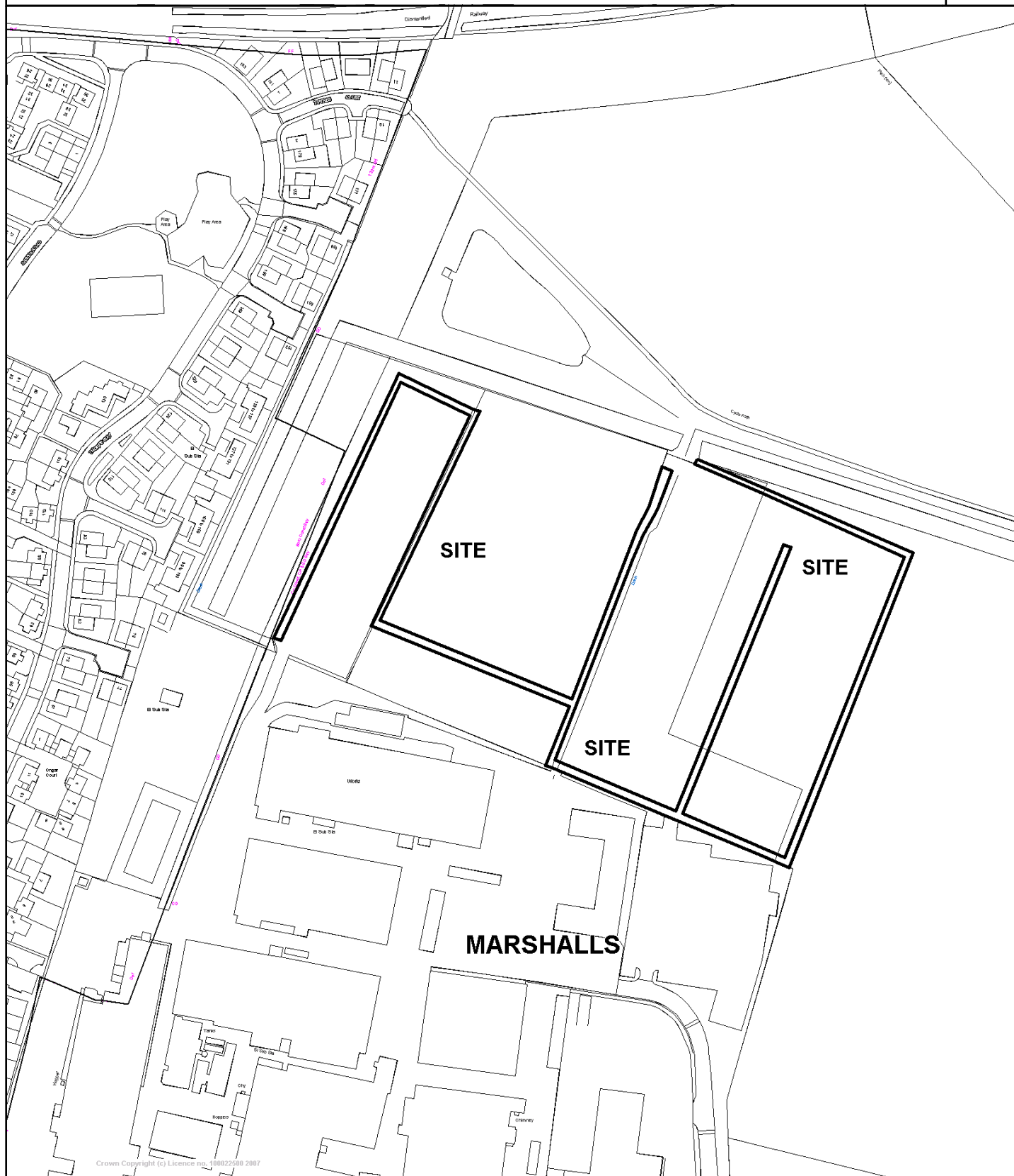
1. The site consists of 4.5 hectares of land at the rear of the Marshall North Works site. The site is outside of the village framework and within the Cambridge Green Belt. The site currently has permission for use for vehicle parking for a limited period and the site is now used as a staff car park serving Marshall's. The site has a gated entrance and is clearly signposted for staff parking only. To the west and north is a wide belt of landscaping which screens the adjacent housing. Most of the area has been laid to parking with a small area still covered in grass. There are about 12 lighting columns already on the car park but the applicant states that this number is insufficient to illuminate the area to the necessary Health and Safety standard.
2. The application, received 27 March 2007, proposes 45 galvanised steel lighting columns which are 8 metres high and 12cms in diameter. These columns will support 63 lighting fitments.

Planning History

3. **S/0272/07/F** Use of land for vehicle parking (renewal of time period consent S/0232/03/F) granted for temporary period until 31 December 2009.
4. Planning Application **S/0232/03/F** for the temporary use of land for vehicle parking was approved until the 30th of June 2008.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003



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AUGUST PLANNING COMMITTEE 2007

5. **P1/2 “Environmental Restrictions on Development”** states that development will be restricted in the countryside unless proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
6. **P9/2 “Green Belt”** states that development in the Green Belt will be restricted to that required for agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport, cemeteries or other uses appropriate to a rural area.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

7. **ES3 “Commercial Lighting Facilities”** - In considering development proposals requiring or likely to require external lighting other than road and footway lighting, the District Council must be satisfied that:
 - (1) the proposed lighting scheme is the minimum required to undertake the task;
 - (2) there is no light spillage above the horizontal;
 - (2) appropriate measures are in place to ensure the lighting does not have an adverse impact upon neighbouring or nearby residential properties;
 - (3) in edge of village or countryside locations appropriate measures are undertaken to screen the lighting to reduce the impact upon the surrounding countryside;
 - (5) there will be no dazzling or distraction to drivers, cyclists or pedestrians
8. **GB2 – “Green Belt”** states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Development is defined as inappropriate unless it comprises (in part):
- 9 **Policies NE/14 and GB1** of the Local Development Framework 2007 repeat the above considerations.

Consultation

10. **Fen Ditton Parish Council** - Refuse commenting “excessive light pollution”
11. **Teversham Parish Council** - Approve “noted that lights pointed downwards supposedly eliminating the giant orb of light effect at night”
12. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** - no objections from a noise or environmental pollution point of view.
13. **Cambridge City Council** - Some concerns that the number of lighting columns and fitments proposed appears excessive and considerably more than the minimum number required to satisfactorily illuminate this area given its use, sensitive siting at the edge of the City of Cambridge and proximity to residential properties. The number of columns their spatial extent and height would be visually intrusive in this edge of City location. The proposal would lead to the erosion of the open character of the area by reason of the proliferation of such columns.

Representations

None

Planning Comments – Key Issues

14. The site is within the Cambridge Green Belt and is on land which forms the vehicle park for the North Works. The development proposed is by definition inappropriate in the Green Belt. Very special circumstances will need to be put forward by the applicant to warrant a departure to the Development Plan. In this case the applicant has put forward the following very special circumstances. " Firstly this site is proposed to be released from the Green Belt as part of the Area Action Plan for Cambridge East. There are no substantive objections in principle to its development. The release of this site from the Green Belt has already gone through prolonged public consultation and is a site which is continued to be positively promoted as an urban extension. Considerable weight can be attached to the LDF documents some of which have already been adopted. Secondly the site has planning permission for a vehicle park and has been laid out for this purpose. The lighting scheme is to provide necessary illumination to ensure Marshall employees can use them safely. The scheme has been carefully designed to minimise the number of columns and fitments. Marshall has paid particular attention to controlling lighting spillage because of the relationship to the nearby runway approach lighting. The lights will be switched off when not required. The woodland planting belts screen the site so that it is not visible to any public view."
15. The site is currently allocated for development as part of the Cambridge East Area Action Plan and it is anticipated that it will be required as part of phase 1 of the development of the north of Newmarket Road. The Council has been working with Marshall's in bringing forward land at Cambridge East for development and finding a means to ensure that the company can relocate its businesses without undue disruption. The land in which this temporary car park is located is an important part of the redevelopment and therefore the applicant requires certainty over the timing of this development.
16. The Cambridge East Area Action Plan is currently being examined with the expectation that the plan will be adopted towards the end of 2007. Therefore a planning application for phase 1 north of Newmarket Road should be capable of being determined before the end of 2008 with development commencing by early 2009, with the first housing occupations by the end of 2009.
17. The use of the land for vehicle parking has temporary planning permission until the end of December 2009. It is considered that the very special circumstances put forward on planning grounds are sufficient to accept the proposed development.
18. In light of the above, a temporary consent to the end of December 2009 would be acceptable, as it would accord with the temporary permission for the vehicle park and with the Housing Trajectory that has been agreed with Marshall's.
19. The lighting according to the manufacturer has been designed to give zero upward light pollution. No objections have been raised by the Councils Chief Environmental Health Officer on noise or environmental pollution grounds.
20. For the reasons detailed above, I do not consider that the application needs to be referred to the Secretary of State under the Town and Country Planning (Green Belt) Direction 2005.
21. Having regard to the very special circumstances identified above I do not consider that the application needs to be referred to the Secretary of State either under the Departures or Green Belt Directions 1999 and 2005 respectively.

Recommendation

22. Approval subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be removed from the site on or before the 31 December 2009.
(Reason The approval of the proposal on a permanent basis would be contrary to the planned development of the area incorporated within the Local Development Framework Cambridge East Area Action Plan);

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:

P1/2 Environmental Restrictions on Development

P9/2 Green Belt

Local Development Framework 2007

NE/14 Lighting Proposals

GB/1 Development in the Green Belt

2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:

- Excessive light pollution

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/0272/07/F

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