

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

1<sup>st</sup> August 2007

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

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### **S/0956/07/F – GREAT SHELFORD**

**Erection of single storey building to accommodate Cambridge Cancer Help Centre, Scotsdales Garden Centre, 120 Cambridge Road for Mr D Rayner**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because approval of the application would be a departure from the development plan.**

### **Departure Application**

#### **Site and Proposal**

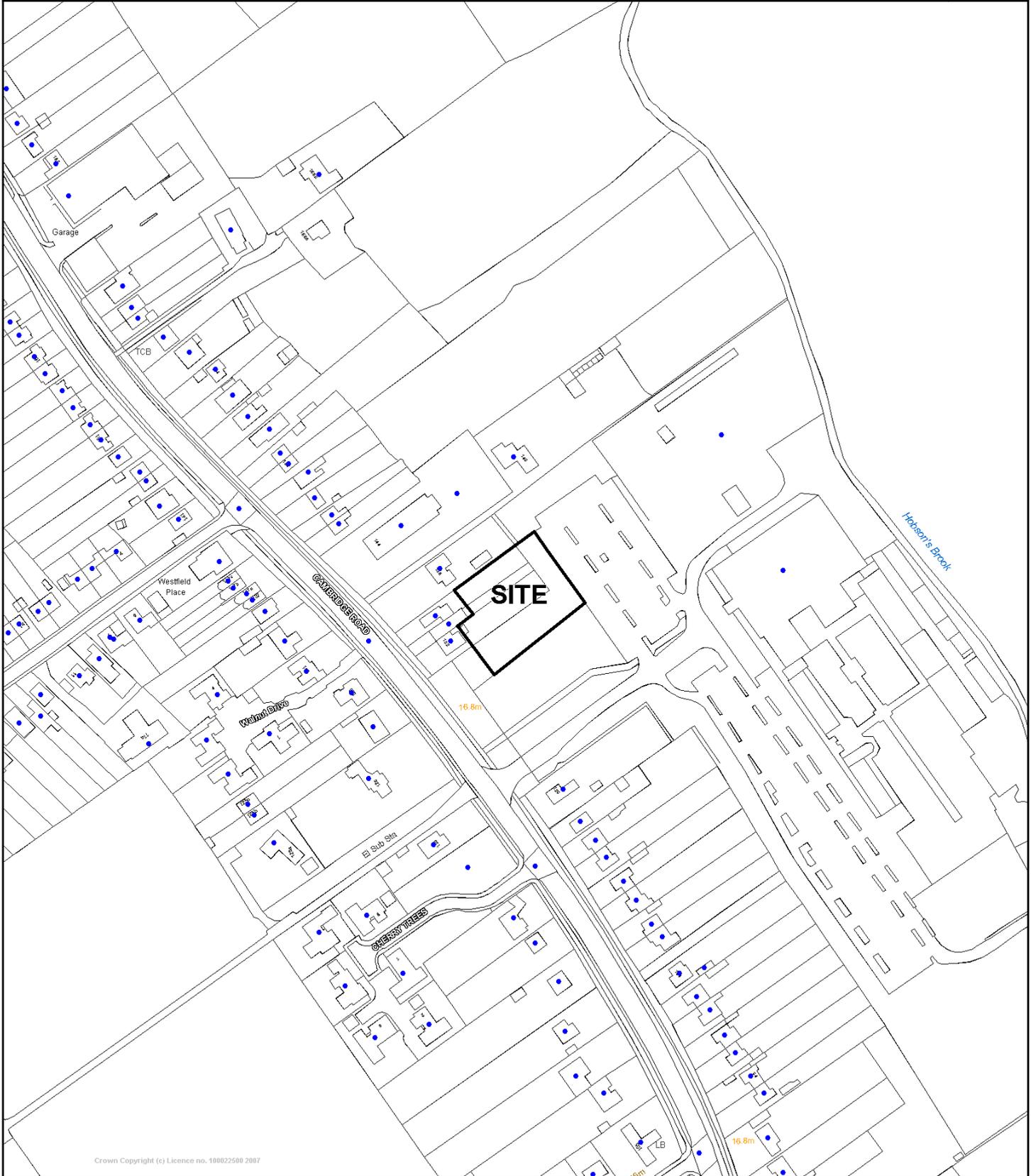
1. The application relates to a 52m x 28m area of land comprising part of the grassed/landscaped area at the front of the garden centre and part of the rear garden areas of Nos 132 and 134 Cambridge Road. A number of storage sheds and trees have recently been cleared from the site. The site is bounded to the northeast by the garden centre car park, by the landscaped setting of the garden centre to the southeast and southwest, and the rear garden area of No.136 Cambridge Road to the northwest.
2. This full application, registered on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2007, proposes the erection of a single-storey building to be used by Cambridge Cancer Help Centre as a social/meeting place with therapy rooms. The building is of a simple rectangular design with a gabled entrance. The lower walls are to be finished in brick with stained boarding above, and the roof in concrete tiles of Old English Dark Red. The footprint of the building is shown to be 39.0m x 15.3m. This will provide a floorspace of 625 square metres, and will have a ridge height of 5.5m.

#### **Planning History**

3. Planning permission for a Community Cancer Help Centre was granted 11<sup>th</sup> May this year (**S/1839/06/F**). The permission related to the same site as the current application. This design included two distinctive pyramidal roofs, 6.5m high, providing a floorspace of 417 square metres.
4. Consent for an ornamental display garden and log cabin was granted on the adjacent grassed area to the south east of the site in 2005 for a temporary period of five years (**S/1529/05/F**).

#### **Planning Policy**

5. Approximately half of the proposed building would be within the village framework, and half in the countryside and Green Belt.



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Scale 1/2500 Date 23/7/2007

Centre = 545530 E 253531 N

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**South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy  
(2007)**

6. **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.

**South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan  
Document (2007)**

7. **GB/1** (Development in the Green Belt)

There is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Cambridge Green Belt as defined on the Proposals Map.

8. **GB/2** (Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt)

1. Any development considered appropriate within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that it does not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.
2. Where development is permitted, landscaping conditions, together with a requirement that any planting is adequately maintained, will be attached to any planning permission in order to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated.

9. **GB/3** (Mitigating the Impact of Development Adjoining the Green Belt)

1. Where development proposals are in the vicinity of the Green Belt, account will be taken of any adverse impact on the Green Belt.
2. Development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality in order to protect the purposes of the Green Belt.

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

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;
- i. On quality of ground or surface water;
- j. On recreation or other community facilities.

11. **DP/7** (Development Frameworks)

1. Outside urban and village frameworks, only development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside will be permitted.
2. 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; and
  - d. Development would not result in the loss of local employment, or a local service or facility, protected by Policies ET/6: Loss of Rural Employment to Non-Employment Uses: SF/1: Protection of Village Services and Facilities and SF/9: Protection of Existing Recreation Areas.

**Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003**

12. **P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development)- development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
13. **P9/2a** (Green Belt) – within the Green Belt new development will be restricted to that required for agriculture or otherwise appropriate to a rural area.
14. The **Great Shelford Village Design Statement 2004**, adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance, refers to the importance of preserving glimpses of the countryside from inside the village. Paragraph 4.1 of the Landscape section states: “The sense of enclosure makes the glimpses of countryside from inside the village of great importance. Much of the rural and agricultural landscape is hidden by buildings. So the gaps between them and those places where fields abut the road, are very important. They keep the link between village and surrounding countryside.” Additionally, paragraph 8.2 of the Character Areas section states, in describing the character of Cambridge Road, that the generous verges and trees give a valued green aspect to

the road, as do the views between development into the rural setting beyond to east and west. The open space at the front of Scotsdales is identified in the map accompanying the design statement as an important viewpoint.

### **Consultations**

15. **Great Shelford Parish Council** – The Parish Council has made the following comments: “No objection to the amended design and materials. The floor area of this building is 55% greater than the original approval therefore there is less outside space for the users. To create such a space would impinge on the openness of the Green Belt. It is necessary to have details of hard and soft landscaping, incorporating the remaining trees, to the south of the new building (as required in the conditions on the previous approval) to assess the overall impact of the larger building on a valued view in the open countryside. There are no details of energy saving features in the building. We hope these will be considered to minimise the Charity’s running costs.”
16. **Landscape Design Officer** – comments to be reported verbally when received.

### **Representations**

17. A letter of objection has been received from the occupier of 138 Cambridge Road, which adjoins the northern boundary of the site. The objector considers that the scale and footprint of the building is far too large within the garden of a low density residential area. The footprint is approximately five times as large as that of any of the surrounding houses, and the building would occupy virtually the whole rear garden area. The bungalow at No.132 Cambridge Road would be left with virtually no garden. If allowed, this would set an unwelcome precedent. The size of the building should be limited to approximately half of the proposed footprint, without any extension into the Green Belt and with a significant part of the garden restored for use by No. 132. The writer is also concerned that work has commenced on site, and foundations put in, in advance of any planning permission being granted. The writer notes that the application relates to the rear garden of 132 Cambridge Road, and not to 120 Cambridge Road as stated in the application form.

### **Planning Comments**

#### **Green Belt and countryside**

18. The principle of the erection of a building for use as a community cancer help centre has been established by previous permission S/1839/06/F. This was referred to the Secretary of State as a departure from the development plan, but was not called in for determination. The current proposal is 1.0m lower than the approved scheme, and has a floorspace 50% or so larger. For the most part, the additional floorspace is located in the former garden area of No.132, which is within the village framework. The part of the building that encroaches into the Green Belt and countryside extends some 7m beyond the village boundary, which is less than the approved scheme, which extended 9m into the Green Belt. The amount of floor area to be sited in the Green Belt is equivalent to that previously approved. I consider that the proposal is not likely to have any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt or character of the countryside than the approved development.

#### **Neighbour amenity**

19. The proposed building is shown to be sited 4.2m from the boundary with No.136 Cambridge Road, to the north west and approximately 13.2m. from the boundary with

No.138 beyond. This is 1.5m closer than the previous scheme, and there is proposed a greater length of building adjacent to this boundary. As the building has been reduced in height, I do not consider that undue loss of amenity due to overshadowing or overbearing impact will result to this garden area as a result of the development.

20. The building is shown to be sited closer to the bungalow at No.132 Cambridge Road than the approved scheme, however a separation of 9.5m between these buildings will remain, which is sufficient to avoid any undue overbearing impact on that property. The site area, including loss of garden area to No.132, is the same as previously approved.

### **Sustainability**

21. The applicant has stated that the Directors of Scotsdales will be assessing the building with a view to introducing measures for energy conservation, recycling of waste products, and reducing identified carbon emissions. The roof design will incorporate photovoltaics to provide electricity. Solar panels will contribute towards water heating in the building.

### **Recommendation**

Approve, without further reference to the Secretary of State, taking into consideration that the previous application, was not called in and this proposal has no greater impact upon the Green Belt

1. Standard Condition A Time limit (Reason A).
2. SC40 'the provision of non-residential health care and associated services', 'Class D1' - (RC40 a).
3. SC5 a) part a)'walls and roofs' - (RC5 a)ii  
b) part f) delete all after 'site – materials to be used for hard surfaced areas (RC5(a)(ii)  
c) part i) (RC i)-means of access for disabled persons (RC5i)
4. SC51 landscaping - (RC51)
5. SC52 implementation of landscaping - (RC52)
6. SC60 'all site boundaries', 'building is' (RC60)
7. SC26 – *Add at beginning* "During the period of construction", *then* "8am/8am/6pm/1pm" - RC26

### **Reasons for Approval**

1. Although the proposal is not in accordance with Policies P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development) and P9/2a (Green Belt) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy GB/1 (Development in the Green Belt) of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007), nor with the identification of the site as being within an important viewpoint in the Great Shelford Village Design Statement 2004, it is considered that an exception to these policies is acceptable in this case, taking into account the following factors:

- The absence of a suitable alternative site, despite an extensive search having been made;
  - The lack of any significant adverse impact upon the openness of the Green Belt;
  - The nature of the site as partly previously developed land;
  - The nature of the proposed use and service to be provided
  - The prior existence on site of adequate car parking facilities, thereby not requiring additional car parking in the Green Belt.
2. The proposal is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material considerations, which have been raised during the consultation exercise: **scale of development; impact on the openness of the area; sustainability.**

**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 Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Great Shelford Village Design Statement 2004
- Planning Files refs S/0956/07/F, S/1839/06/F, S/1529/05/F

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