

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

5th December 2007

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

S/1767/07/O – IMPINGTON
Affordable Housing at
Land adjacent St Georges Court off Milton Road for
H.R. Builders Ltd and Bedford Pilgrim Housing Association

Recommendation: Approval
Date for determination: 10th December 2007

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the proposal is for affordable housing outside of the defined settlement framework within the Green Belt.

Members will visit this site on 5th December 2007.

Departure

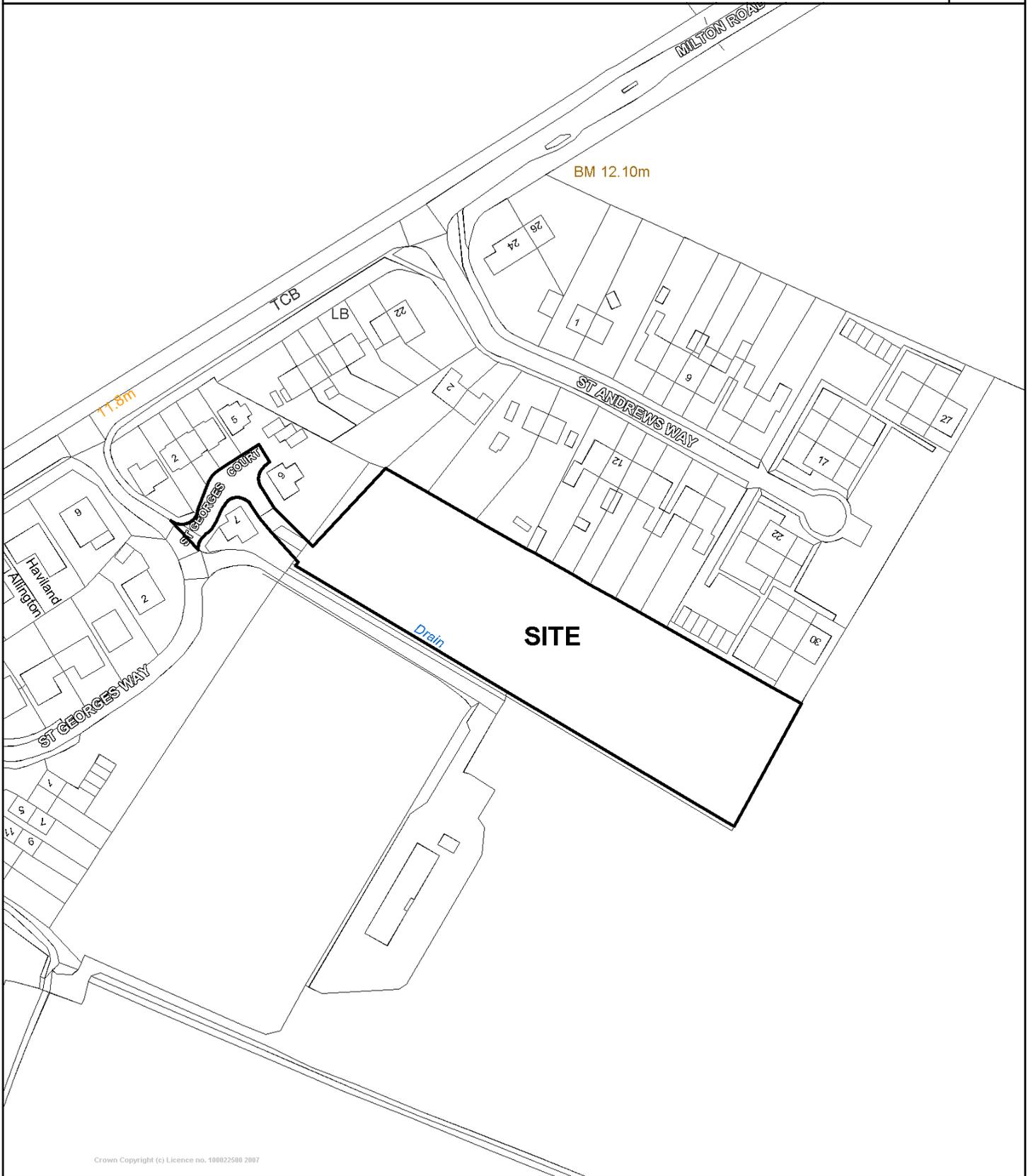
Site and Proposal

1. The application relates to a 0.56 hectares site which is currently an area of paddock land with hedgerows to the north, east and southern boundaries. It lies outside of but immediately adjacent to the village framework. The dwellings on the south side of St Andrews Way are to the north. St Georges Court, to the north west, consists of 7 dwellings. St Andrews Way is a mix of detached and terraced dwellings. To the south west is Middle White Farm, a former piggery, which is now used as a veterinary surgery. The site is generally flat.
2. This outline application seeks approval now for access, with layout, scale, appearance and landscaping to be determined at a later date. This application was registered on the 17 September 2007 and proposes the erection of 20 affordable dwellings. Access to the site is to be obtained via St Georges Court.
3. Parking for 20 cars is to be provided, with 2 disabled parking bays and 2 visitor spaces making a total of 24 car spaces. These are arranged in two parking areas with the access road along the southern side of the site.
4. This application contains a planning statement, detailed drainage information and a letter from the Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association.

Planning History

Application Site

5. In 1981 outline planning permission was refused for residential development for the reasons that the site was within the Green Belt and rural area where development



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Scale 1/1500 Date 20/11/2007

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December Planning Committee 2007

was restricted to agriculture. An appeal was dismissed on the basis that, with the site being in the Green Belt, a development of this nature was unacceptable. This was for market housing and not affordable housing.

6. An outline planning application was withdrawn in March 2007 for a scheme of 20 affordable houses.

St Georges Court

7. Planning permission granted in 2001 for 7 houses.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

8. **P1/3** relates to sustainable design in built development and requires a high standard of design for all new development which responds to the local character of the built environment.
9. **P6/1** relates to the provision of contributions towards community and infrastructure requirements.
10. **P9/2a** development in the Green Belt is restricted to that required for agriculture and other uses appropriate to a rural area.

Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007

11. **ST/4** identifies Impington as a rural centre within the settlement hierarchy.

Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 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.
13. **DP/2 Design of New Development:** must be of a high quality design and appropriate in scale.
14. **DP/3 Development Criteria:** sets out the main principles for new development.
15. **DP/4 Infrastructure and New Development:** requires new development to make arrangements for improvement to the infrastructure.
16. **DP/7 Development Frameworks:** outside of urban and village frameworks only development which needs to be located in the countryside will be permitted.
17. **GB/1 Development in the Green Belt:** there is a presumption against inappropriate development.
18. **GB/2 Mitigating the Impact of Development In the Green Belt.**
19. **HG/1 Housing Density:** residential will make best use of land by achieving an average density of 30 dwelling per hectare.
20. **HG/2 Housing Mix:** there should be a range of types sizes and affordability.

21. **HG/3 Affordable Housing.**
22. **HG/5 Exception Sites for Affordable housing:** as an exception planning permission for 100% affordable housing may be granted subject to criteria to meet identified local housing needs on small sites within or adjoining villages.
23. **SF/6 Public Art and New Development.**
24. **SF/10 Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments.**
25. **SF/11 Open Space Standards.**
26. **NE/1 Energy Efficiency.**
27. **NE/3 Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development:** development over 10 dwellings will include technology for renewable energy.
28. **NE/4 Landscape Character Areas:** development will only be permitted where it respects the local character.
29. **NE/6 Biodiversity:** new development should aim to maintain, enhance , restore or add to biodiversity.
30. **NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure:** permission will not be granted where there is inadequate water systems.
31. **NE/11 Flood Risk:** applications will be judged against PPS25.
32. **TR/1 Planning for more Sustainable Travel:** permission will not be granted for development which is likely to give rise to a material increase in travel demands.
33. **TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards.**

Consultations

34. **Impington Parish Council.** S/1767/07/O is substantially identical to application S/0273/07/O which was withdrawn before determination. As such the Parish's response, one of recommending refusal, is unchanged in principle. However, further detail has been added in response to points made by the applicant, and to correct factual errors.

Relevant Policies

Two recently adopted policies appear to be relevant:

1. Core DPD Policy ST/4 Rural Centres
and, since the proposed development is in the Green Belt:
2. Development Control DPD Policy HG/5 Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing

Location

The St George's Way/St Andrew's Way developments are at the very edge of the settlement of Histon & Impington, and are poorly served by public transport, and do not have good access to village facilities.

In addition, there is pavement to just one side of the road, and this is of less than standard width. Traffic calming has been introduced in the last few years in order to bring average speeds down. When measured immediately after installation, the 85% percentile figure was still over 32 mph, and perception is that this has risen, together with the number of HGVs using the route.

Drainage

Residents in the neighbouring St Andrew's Way have repeatedly reported problems with drainage, as recently as 9th October, after only moderate rainfall.

Air Quality

South Cambridgeshire District Council has recently declared an air quality management area running along the A14 from Milton to Bar Hill. The site is 1.5km from the A14, with a southerly prevailing wind bringing pollutants towards the site.

In addition, the site is 1.4km from the HWRC and landfill site at Butt Lane, Milton. Noxious odours from the site, and processing operations there, do reach this area.

Relationship to the built up area of the settlement

Whilst adjacent to St Andrews Way, one must regard St Andrew's Way as poorly related to the overall settlement. It is further from public transport, village facilities, and would be unlikely to be granted permission in today's planning climate.

Relationship to facilities and services

The Council's previous objection reported that the site is:

1. Approximately 1900 metres from the shops in the village centre
2. Long distance from the Junior School (1700 metres) and further from the Nursery and Infants' Schools
3. 900 metres to the stop at the Village College, exceeding 800 metre planning distance for access to public transport

The walking route along Milton Road is along a narrow footpath, in places barely wide enough for a buggy. One route from there is along a section of road without footpath, alternatively, a longer route is available that has a footpath.

The applicant highlights Impington Village College (IVC) and St Andrew's, Impington.

IVC does not have a playgroup, nor does it host holiday activities. St Andrew's Impington is part of a joint benefice with St Andrew's Histon, and does not provide any children's worship or facilities.

A measure of the accessibility of local services can be taken from the 2001 census results that show just 8 out of 139 households in output area 12UGHN0027 do not have a car. These are likely to include the Council bungalows at the end of St Andrew's Way. The remaining 131 properties had then 200 cars, an average of 1.53 cars per property. With the cessation of the bus service along Milton Road since that date, this figure is unlikely to have improved.

Reference is also made to the Park & Ride site being developed on the A10. It should be noted that specific provision is being made there to prevent (or at least deter) exit from the site towards Impington, though the community recognises that there is still likely to be an increased level of traffic on Milton Road during morning and evening rush hours as out of settlement traffic accesses the site.

Alternative sites

Policy HG/5 para 2 requires that no alternative appropriate sites can be found.

The applicant refers to a dismissed appeal on S/0321/05/O. The Inspector holding the inquiry into the LDF has made it clear that he expects to approve a number of objection sites in order to meet a perceived shortfall in housing numbers, and there is such a site to the rear of Impington Lane, adjacent to the site of this rejected appeal.

The Impington Lane site has also been actively marketed since the appeal by two agents, and is still unlet, and in rapidly deteriorating condition.

It is quite possible, therefore, that this site, together with the objection site, will come forward in 2008, and be likely to deliver 60+ affordable units.

Adequate services

Policy ST/4 Rural Centres, specifies that development will only be permitted "provided that adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development".

The Council has consistently argued that local services, facilities and infrastructure are not adequate.

For example:

1. the settlement is well short of public open space/recreation facilities
2. has limited GP provision, and that on a site that is landlocked
3. the main route into the village (B1049) is forecast to be at between 150% and 175% of capacity by 2015 (Cambridge NW traffic study)

Let alone questions over the capacity of schools, where again sites provide limited (in some cases very limited) scope for expansion.

Recommendation

The Parish Council recommends refusal on the following grounds:

1. The Housing Needs Survey is out of date, suggests requirements for a mix of housing sizes not met by the application, and presents a confusing picture of demand and not necessarily need;
2. The application is fails to meet Policy HG/5 1(d), in that it is not site is well related to facilities and services within the village;
3. The application is fails to meet Policy HG/5 1(c), in that the site of the proposal is not well related to the built-up area of the settlement - in that this area of is not of itself well related to the rest of the settlement;

4. The application fails to meet Policy HG/5 1(c), in that it does not demonstrate secure arrangements for ensuring that all the dwellings within the scheme provide affordable housing in perpetuity for those in housing need;
5. That it believes alternative appropriate sites can be brought forward in the next 12 months;
6. The application fails to meet Policy ST/4 para 2, in that it does not demonstrate that there are adequate services, facilities and infrastructure in Histon & Impington;
7. There is inadequate parking for the number of cars that would reasonably be expected to be needed by residents.

Conditions

Should SCDC be minded to approve the application, the Council asks:

1. That further work be done to ensure that adequate drainage is provided, not only for the development itself, but also to ensure that neighbouring sites (particularly St Andrew's Way) are not adversely affected;
 2. That housing on the site will be affordable in perpetuity;
 3. That the Council is formally consulted regarding potential residents at the site as to their association with the community;
 4. That an offsite provision, secured by S106 agreement, is made for public open space/recreation space.
35. **Housing Development Officer:** Supports the application and considers that the possibility of another exception site in a more favourable location becoming available is fairly remote.
36. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services):** The air quality management area does not extend this far and all pollutants are expected to be within health based objectives for this site.
37. **Trees and Landscape Officer:** No objection. The boundaries of site need to be protected during development with Heras fencing. A good landscaping scheme to be submitted.
38. **Ecology Officer:** The layout is better than previous in that there are greater areas of planting. The hedge to the south should be retained and he would wish to ensure that it is retained in a semi – natural fashion. Existing hedging should be strengthened through additional planting. Artificial nest and bat boxes should be integrated into the development.
39. **Drainage Manager:** Surface water drainage is acceptable. The design involves a soakaway system and is in line with national standards. It should be confirmed that the Cambridgeshire County Council should adopt the highway soakaway system and request that the domestic surface water sewerage system and associated soakaways shall be the responsibility of the Housing Association and maintenance in perpetuity shall be the sole responsibility of the Association and its successors.

40. **Environment Agency:** The Local Planning Authority is to assess. For operational developments of less than 1 hectare site size falling within Flood Zone1, the main flood risk issue to consider will usually be managing surface water run-off.
41. **Local Highway Authority:** Requested a dimensioned plan to show footways and cycle parking; and evidence to show that the existing access was constructed to adoptable standards.
42. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer:** Nothing further to add to previous comments which are:
- a) concerns over the provision of tree and hedgerow planting to the rear of plots 5-12;
 - b) it creates an area of public realm which will leave the dwellings vulnerable to crime;
 - c) similar comments made regarding the landscape buffer to rear of plots 1-4 and 13-20;
 - d) defensible space may be necessary to the side elevation of plots 5 and 12.
43. An **Affordable Housing Panel** was held on Wednesday 21 November 2007 the outcome of this will be reported verbally.

Representations

44. Five letters of objection have been received, summarised as follows:
- a) Lack of car parking
 - b) Not a sustainable location in relation to local services
 - c) Poor drainage in St Andrews Way
 - d) Affordable housing already provided by Arbury Park
 - e) Arbury Park has its own school and doctors surgery, the schools and surgeries are full in Histon and Impington
 - f) No facilities for children
 - g) No footway to proposed Park and Ride at Butt Lane
 - h) No material difference to the previous application
 - i) Traffic congestion already and this will add to this
 - j) Noise disturbance
 - k) Lack of privacy
 - l) Light pollution
 - m) Loss of habitat

Planning Comments – Key Issues

Need

45. The Council's Housing Development Officer confirms that there is a need for the number of dwellings proposed. Whilst it may be the understanding that Arbury Park has addressed the needs of the village this is not the case. Even with the housing at Arbury Park there is still a need for affordable housing. The most recent survey was in 2005. In Impington there is a need for 130 affordable houses over the next two to five years. In addition there are 1305 people on the active housing register for Impington as at April 2006. Arbury Park is likely to result in 280 affordable housing units over the next two to three years. However these are being allocated to the villagers of other areas and Cambridge City and not just Impington. The expected affordable housing that may come forward from the site within the village at the Unwins site may generate as many as 60 units, however the need is such that there will be a demand for more affordable housing units. The size mix and tenure will be confined to and appropriate to the strict extent of identified local need. A legal

agreement will put in place measures to ensure that the housing is affordable in perpetuity and that the prospective tenants have an association with the area of the parish.

Green Belt

46. The site is outside of the village framework and within the Green Belt. The key question is whether this site is the most appropriate and that there are no other sites of a similar scale and type that may be more suitable. Any site adjoining Impington will be within the Green Belt. Therefore it is then a question of whether there are any other sites which have a lesser impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The applicants state that to date there have been no other sites coming forward as exception sites. A site has been allocated in Impington for an estimated 42 houses on the north side of Impington Lane and east of Glebe Way. The site could therefore provide up to 14 affordable houses. In addition a recent planning application on the Unwins site at Impington Lane was refused and dismissed at appeal for reasons associated with archaeology, loss of employment and flood risk. On this basis it is considered that there are no other alternative appropriate sites ready to come forward in the near future.

Visual Impact

47. The dwellings would be viewed against the backdrop of the dwellings in St Andrews Way thereby not adversely affecting the openness of the Green Belt in this location. The key features of the site are the boundary hedges which should be retained. The indicative layout does not show clearly the retention of these hedges and therefore the visual impact of the development would be greater. On the basis of this layout the development would not be acceptable however it is considered that the site could be developed where by the hedgerows are retained The layout is for approval at a later stage. There is a landscape buffer to the eastern boundary of 10m which will substantially screen the development.
48. There are no public footpaths adjacent the site to afford a public view from the countryside. The main views are from St Georges Way and glimpses from Milton Road.

Sustainability Issues

49. Whilst it is acknowledged that the site is located away from the centre of Impington and local services it is located on the edge of a village which is designated a rural centre within the settlement hierarchy. The Core Strategy refers to rural centres as the larger more sustainable villages whereby there is no strategic constraint to the amount of housing that can come forward subject to compliance with other policies in the Development Plan. As an exception site it is adjacent to the village framework. On balance the need for affordable housing outweighs the edge of village location.

Highway Safety

50. The applicant has confirmed that the access from St Georges Court is constructed to adopted standard. The road width issue will be a matter of the reserved matter application to be agreed later on.

Car Parking

51. The Council's car parking standards require an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. This equates to 30 for this development and a maximum of 2 per 3 or more bedrooms in poorly accessible areas equates to 40. The proposed parking provision is 24 spaces. It is considered that 24 spaces are sufficient and I note that the Local Highway Authority are not objecting to the proposal on this particular issue.

Neighbour Amenity

52. The indicative back to back distances to existing dwellings ranges from 28 metres to 41 metres. This is more than sufficient to protect the residential amenities of the adjacent occupiers. The side elevation of plot 20 is however too close to the boundary with the dwellings to the north which have rear gardens of 12m deep. This can be addressed through the detailed submission.

Drainage

53. The Council's Drainage Manager has not raised any objections. The details submitted show two highway soakaways and domestic soakaways. The calculations provided demonstrate that these soakaways can accommodate the run off from the development. In relation to flood risk the site is located a significant distance from any main river.

Ecology

54. The indicative layout does not accommodate the important hedgerow features. Again this will be a matter for the reserved matters application. The applicant has confirmed that there will be sufficient space to accommodate the southerly hedgerow.

Contribution for Education and Open Space

55. It has been previously generally held that where exception sites for 100% affordable housing are proposed the normal additional infrastructure requirements for education and open space are waived. This is the situation in this case as negotiations have taken place prior to the adoption of the Development Control Policies DPD it would be unreasonable to now insist such contributions. The application is not of a sufficient scale or nature to result in significant prejudice to the implementation of the development plan and as such is not required to be referred to the Secretary of State for determination.

Conclusion

56. The concerns and objections raised are duly noted. However in this case it is considered that the overriding need for affordable housing outweighs the locational concerns. The proposal subject to conditions is considered acceptable.

Recommendation

57. Approval subject to the signing of a section 106 Legal Agreement to cover affordable housing,
1. Standard Time Condition B – Time limited permission (RCB).

2. No development shall commence until full details of the following reserved matters have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - i. Scale
 - ii. Appearance
 - iii. Landscaping
 - iv. Layout(Reason-The application is for outline permission only and gives insufficient details of the proposed development).
3. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
(Reason - To enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area).
4. SC5b and c – Details of surface and foul water drainage (RC5b and c).
5. Details of the treatment of site boundaries shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the work completed in accordance with the approved details before the building(s) are occupied or the development is completed, whichever is the sooner.
(Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the site does not detract from the character of the area).
6. The permanent space shall be reserved on the site for permanent parking shall be provided before the occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted and thereafter maintained.
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety).
7. No development shall be commenced until a tree survey and arboricultural method statement detailing the retention and protection of existing trees and hedgerows, and ensuring the supervision and inspection of such measures, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the protection measures shall be implemented as approved.
(Reason - In order that the layout of the site and the siting of buildings can be assessed in relation to existing trees and to ensure their future retention).
8. Prior to the commencement of the development, hereby approved, details of the scheme of public art provision and timeframe for its implementation within the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed scheme and timescale for its implementation.
(Reason –To ensure that public art is incorporated into and to enhance the character of the development in accordance with Policy SF/6 of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD, 2007).
9. Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved a biodiversity strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. Thereafter the approved strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed scheme and timescale for its implementation. (Reason - To enhance the biodiversity of the development in accordance with Policy NE/6 of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD, 2007).

10. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a strategy and timescale for the use of renewable energy resources and water efficiency shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the approved strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed timescale.
(Reason – To ensure that the development meets the sustainability aims of Policies NE/2 and NE/12 of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD, 2007).
11. No development shall commence until details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - a) Refuse storage accommodation.
(Reason - To ensure refuse storage is adequately provided on site without causing visual harm to the area).
 - b) Materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas.
(Reason - To ensure that the development enhances the character of the area.)
 - c) Car parking provision in accordance with the Local Authority standards.
(Reason - To ensure adequate car parking provision is provided and suitably laid out).
12. No built development shall be occupied until the access road and footpaths necessary to serve that development shall have been completed to base course level. (Reason - To protect the safety of users of the access roads and footpaths and to safeguard the appearance of the built environment).

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 relates to sustainable design in built development.
Policy P9/2a development in the Green Belt is restricted to that required for agriculture and other uses appropriate to a rural area.
 - **Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007**
ST/4 identifies Impington as a rural centre within the settlement hierarchy.
 - **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007**
DP/1 Sustainable Development development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
DP/2 Design of New Development must be of a high quality design and appropriate in scale.

DP/3 Development Criteria sets out the main principles for new development.

DP/4 Infrastructure and New Development requires new development to make arrangements for improvement to the infrastructure.

DP/7 Development Frameworks outside of urban and village frameworks only development which needs to be located in the countryside will be permitted.

GB/1 Development in the Green Belt there is a presumption against inappropriate development.

GB/2 Mitigating the impact of Development In the Green Belt.

HG/1 Housing Density residential will make best use of land by achieving an average density of 30 dwelling per hectare.

HG/2 Housing Mix there should be a range of types sizes and affordability.

HG/3 Affordable Housing.

HG/5 Exception sites for affordable housing as an exception planning permission for 100% affordable housing may be granted subject to criteria to meet identified local housing needs on small sites within or adjoining villages.

SF/6 Public Art and New Development.

SF/10 Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments.

SF/11 Open Space Standards.

NE/1 Energy Efficiency.

NE/3 Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development development over 10 dwellings will include technology for renewable energy.

NE/4 Landscape Character Areas development will only be permitted where it respects the local character.

NE/6 Biodiversity new development should aim to maintain, enhance , restore or add to biodiversity.

NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure permission will not be granted where there is inadequate water systems.

NE/11 Flood Risk applications will be judged against PPS25.

TR/1 Planning for more Sustainable Travel permission will not be granted for development which is likely to give rise to a material increase in travel demands.

TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards.

2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise: highway matters; drainage; sustainability; green belt; amenity, impact on openness.

Informatives

Should driven pile foundations be proposed, before development commences, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations should be submitted to

and agreed by the District Council's Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.

During construction, there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the District Council's Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

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

- Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007
- Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning files Ref: S/0273/07/F and S/1767/07/O

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