

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

6<sup>th</sup> August 2008

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

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### **S/0935/08/O - MILTON**

**Outline Planning Application for the Demolition of Existing Buildings, Removal of Existing Pylons/Mast etc from Training Grounds and Construction of 121 Retirement Units (Including Restoration of North Lodge for Use as a Retirement Dwelling) 1 Wardens Unit, Visitor Accommodation, Central Facilities Building, Provision of Formal and Informal Open Space, Associated Landscaping and Improvements to the Existing Access at the Former EDF Depot and Training Centre, Ely Road, Milton for Helical (Milton) Ltd**

**Recommendation: Refusal**

**Date for Determination: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008 (Major Application)**

#### **Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination at the request of the Development Control Manager due to the scale, nature and location of the development, planning issues concerned and nature of representations received.**

**Members will visit this site on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008**

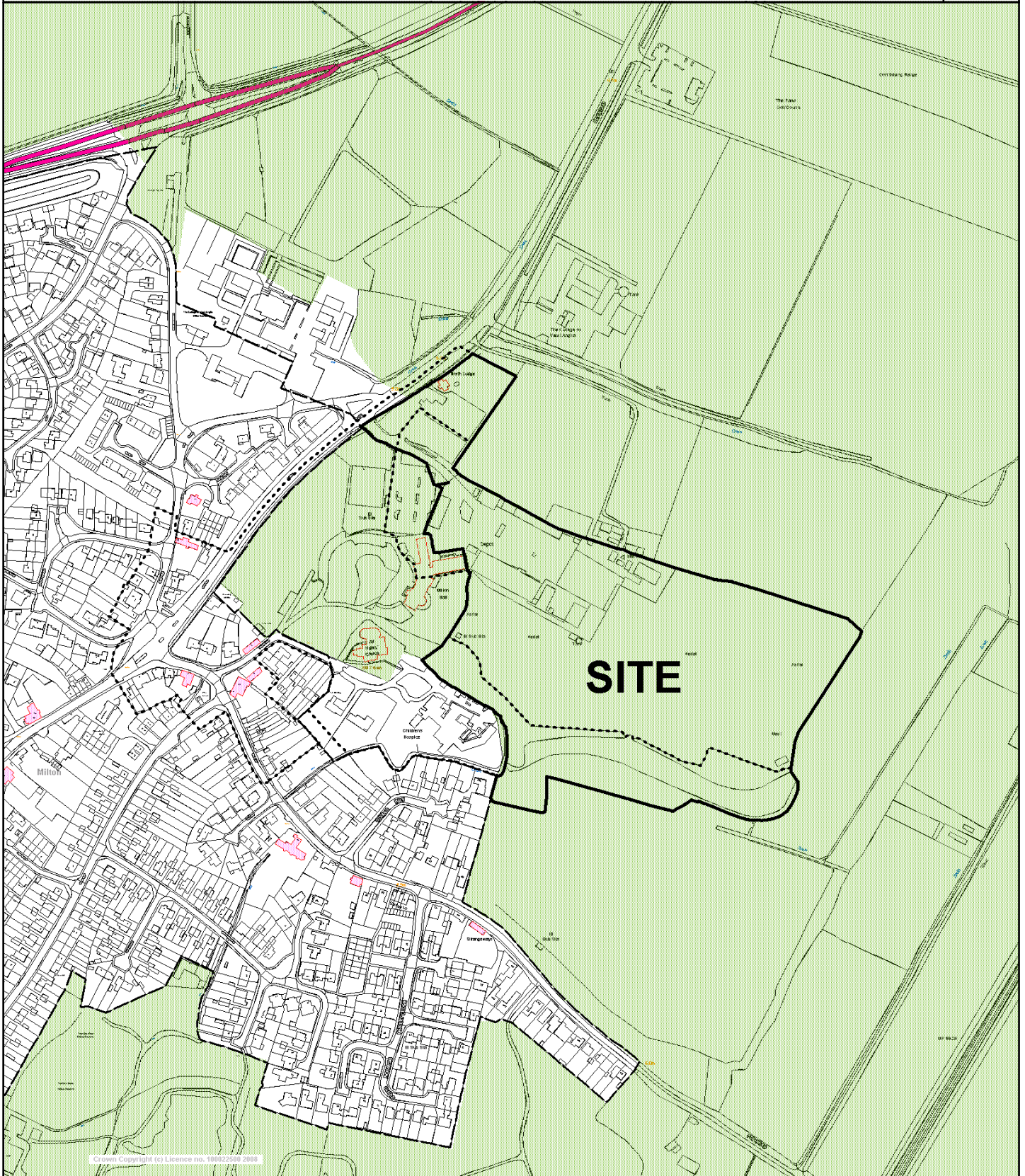
**Part within Conservation Area**

**Conservation Area**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site comprises an area measuring in total approximately 8.42 hectares (ha). Within the site are distinct areas including:
  - (a) An existing access road from Ely Road that is at least 7 metres wide at the north-western end of the site. This also serves an office building fronting Ely Road;
  - (b) North Lodge, an unoccupied, semi-derelict Grade II Listed house associated with Milton Hall and car park at the northern end of the site accessed from the above road. This area measures approximately 0.75ha;
  - (c) Former electricity depot that comprises a large, hard-paved parking / yard area around which are a number of mainly single-storey buildings used for offices, storage, workshops and training rooms forming a complex. These buildings comprise a footprint of approximately 3,450m<sup>2</sup>. This area measures approximately 1.64ha. Within this area





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is a pair of trees grouped at the western end of the parking / yard area and a single oak tree centrally located. At the north eastern end of this yard is a telecommunications mast, which is to remain;

- (d) Beyond the complex, to the south and east, is an open area of grassland bounded to the south by woodland, within which is a pond / lake. Within the grassed area are many structures including pylons, electricity lines, substations etc. that are not connected but are remnants of the training facility. This area measures approximately 6.03ha. This area forms part of a landscaped setting to Milton Hall believed to have been designed by the famous landscape gardener, Humphrey Repton and set out in accordance with his design.
- 2. Beyond the site to the north is agricultural land, including adjoining riding stables. To the east is agricultural land, beyond which are the Ely – Cambridge mainline railway and River Cam. To the south are All Saints Church, Children's Hospice and agricultural land. To the west is Milton Hall (Grade II Listed), which is used as an office. The Hall has modern extensions by way of two wings that project to the north and east of the original building in close proximity to the boundary with the application site. North of the Hall, the site bounds the car park to offices referred to at paragraph 1(a), above. The car park and North Lodge front Ely Road with mature tree planting providing a significant landscaped screen to the site. Pedestrian access to North Lodge is sited adjacent to the house, within the frontage.
  - 3. Parts of the site are within the Milton Conservation Area. Specifically the woodland along the southern part of the site entrance, frontage and area surrounding North Lodge. Trees within the Conservation Area are afforded statutory protection.
  - 4. This outline planning application submitted on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008 seeks outline planning permission for:
    - (a) Demolition of existing buildings (n.b. this does not include North Lodge);
    - (b) Removal of existing pylons/mast etc. from training grounds;
    - (c) Construction of 121 retirement units (including restoration of North Lodge for use as a retirement dwelling);
    - (d) 1 wardens unit;
    - (e) Visitor accommodation;
    - (f) Central facilities building;
    - (g) Provision of formal & informal open space (likely to include two junior football pitches and sports pavilion);
    - (h) Associated landscaping, including restoration of the Repton designed landscape;
    - (i) Improvements to the existing access from Ely Road including, amongst others, provision of footpaths, entrance feature and speed calming on the existing entrance road); and
    - (j) Car parking is indicated to include 137 spaces for the occupiers, visitors and staff, with 40 for the football pitches.

All matters are to be reserved, with the exception of the access, and as such all details submitted relating to appearance, landscaping, layout and scale, are indicative only.

5. The application is accompanied by supporting documents including: Planning Statement; Design and Access Statement; Landscape and Visual Appraisal; Heritage Appraisal; Heritage Design report; Ecological Appraisal; Transport Assessment, Archaeological Desk based assessment; Aerial Photographic Assessment (for archaeology); Geophysical Survey Report; Brief for Archaeological Evaluation, Flood Risk Assessment; Site Investigations, Risk Assessment and Development of Remediation Strategy; and a draft Section 106 Agreement (S106). Indicative plans regarding the building scale parameters, amount of development and site layout are included.

### **Planning History**

6. Eastern Electricity/EDF:

- (a) **S/0205/99/F** Change of use of store to training school including elevation alterations (Approved).
- (b) **S/1727/98/F** Alterations and extensions (Approved).
- (c) **S/1413/98/F** Temporary office accommodation (Approved).
- (d) **S/1742/91/F** 3 metre high perimeter security fence (Approved).
- (e) **S/2141/90/A** Company flag on vertical wall mounted flag pole (Approved).

The main complex of the site historically was used as a depot for the storage and distribution of materials and a base for operations in connection with the maintenance of the electricity supply network. The use of the site changed in the early 1980s when the site became a training facility for electricity operatives.

7. Telecommunication Mast:

- (a) **S/0165/05/F** Installation of 2 antennas and retention of 4 antennas on existing tower (Approved).
- (b) **S/1941/01/PNT** Erection of antennae, equipment cabin and associated development (No objections).
- (c) **S/0078/01/PNT** 3 UMTS antennae, equipment cabinet and meter cabinet (No objections).
- (d) **S/2041/97/PNT** 3 cross sector antennas, 2 microwave dishes, 6 equipment cabinets at base and ancillary equipment on existing mast
- (e) **S/1138/96/F** New telecomm building (Approved).

Part of the site comprises a telecommunications mast, which appears to date from the mid 1990s.

8. North Lodge:

- (a) **S/1038/02/F** Erection of Garage/Utility, Fences and Gates (Approved).
- (b) **S/1039/02/LB** Internal and external alterations and refurbishment, installation of dpc and reinstatement of front door, rear windows and chimneys, works to entrance walls and gates. (Approved).  
**S/1325/94/LB** Part demolition, alterations and refurbishment including reinstatement of chimneys (Approved).

The Lodge is a dwellinghouse. It is not clear how long it has been vacant, however it has been marketed over previous year, prior to the applicants purchasing the site.

## **Planning Policy**

### ***Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts***

9. Identifies the purposes of including land within Green Belts (para. 1.5) and uses of land that can play a positive role to fulfil Green Belt objectives (para. 1.6). It establishes that there is a presumption against 'inappropriate development' as this is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Applicants must identify very special circumstances to clearly outweigh harm by way of inappropriateness and other harm that maybe caused by the development proposed (paras. 3.1-3.3). Annex C sets out the approach to be taken to major sites, identified within the Local Development Framework (LDF) as 'major developed sites' in the Green Belt.

### ***Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing***

10. Establishes that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should have regard to achieving housing that is high quality; of a good mix to reflect the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular families and older people; located on suitable sites; and uses land effectively and efficiently.

### ***Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas***

11. This requires LPAs to identify suitable sites for future economic development, especially in rural areas where there is a need for employment creation; and the criteria for permitting economic development such as expansion of business facilities to facilitate healthy and diverse economic activity in rural areas. It advises that LPAs follow the approach of PPG3 (now PPS3) in relation to housing in terms of providing housing to meet the needs of local people and applying strict control over new house building away from established settlements or areas allocated for housing.

### ***East of England Plan 2008***

12. **Policy H1: Regional Housing Provision 2001 to 2021** requires LPAs to: manage the supply of housing in accordance with PPS3 and LDFs, facilitate the delivery of housing over the next 15 years.
13. **Policy ENV7: Quality of Built Environment** requires new development to be of a high quality that complements the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area and promotes urban renaissance and regeneration.
14. **Policy CSR3: Green Belt** states that in making provision for housing, employment and all other development a green belt should be maintained around Cambridge to define the extent of urban growth in accordance with the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt which are:
  - (a) Preserve the character of Cambridge as a dynamic city with a thriving historic centre;
  - (b) Maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting; and

- (c) Prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.

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

- 15. **Policy P6/1 – Development Related Provision** only permits development where the additional infrastructure and community requirements generated by the proposals can be secured, which may be by condition or legal agreement or undertaking.

***South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007:***

*Core Strategy*

- 16. **Policy ST/1 - Green Belt** establishes that a Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge to define the extent of the urban area. The purpose of the Green Belt is to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre; maintain and enhance the quality of its setting; and prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.
- 17. **Policy ST/2 - Housing Provision** sets out the need to make provision for 20,000 new homes, including affordable and key worker homes, in the period 1999 to 2016 in locations in order of preference:
  - (a) On the edge of Cambridge;
  - (b) At the new town of Northstowe;
  - (c) In the rural area in Rural Centres and other villages.
- 18. **Policy ST/3 - Re-Using Previously Developed Land and Buildings** states that between 1999 and 2016 at least 37% of new dwellings will either be located on previously developed land or utilise existing buildings.
- 19. **Policy ST/6 - Group Villages** identifies Milton and states residential development with a maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within village frameworks. Development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make best use of a single brownfield site. Group villages are less sustainable locations for new developments, having fewer services and facilities for basic day-to-day requirements.
- 20. **Policy ST/8 - Employment Provision** aims to ensure sufficient employment land is available to enable further development of high technology clusters and meet local needs.

*Development Control Policies*

- 21. **Policy DP/1 - Sustainable Development** states 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.
- 22. **Policy DP/2 - Design of New Development** states all new development must be of high quality design and, inter alia:
  - (a) Preserve or enhance the character of the local area.
  - (b) Conserve or enhance important environmental assets of the use.

- (c) Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, etc. in relation to its surroundings.
- (d) Provide higher residential densities, and a mix of housing types including smaller homes.
- (e) Provide high quality public spaces.
- (f) Provide an inclusive environment that is created for people that is and feels safe, and that has a strong community focus.
- (g) Include high quality landscaping compatible with the scale and character of the development and its surroundings.

23. **Policy DP/3 - Development Criteria** states:

All development proposals should provide, as appropriate to the nature, scale and economic viability, inter alia:

- (a) Affordable housing.
- (b) Appropriate and safe access from the highway network.
- (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.
- (g) Screened storage and collection of refuse, including recyclable materials.
- (h) A design and layout that minimises opportunities for crime.
- (i) Financial contribution towards the provision and, where appropriate, the maintenance of infrastructure, services and facilities required by the development.

It also states planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact, inter alia:

- (a) Residential amenity
- (b) From traffic generated
- (c) On village character
- (d) On the countryside, and landscape character
- (e) On ecological, wildlife and archaeological interests.
- (f) On flooding and flood risk.
- (g) On quality of ground or surface water.
- (h) On recreation or other community facilities.

24. **Policy DP/4 - Infrastructure and New Developments** states planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to made the scheme acceptable in planning terms. Contributions may be necessary, inter alia, for the following:

- (a) Affordable housing
- (b) Education
- (c) Public open space
- (d) Community facilities
- (e) Landscaping and biodiversity
- (f) Drainage / flood prevention
- (g) Waste management
- (h) Arts and cultural provision
- (i) Preservation or enhancement of historic landscape or townscape.

25. **Policy DP/6 - Construction Methods** states where practicable, development which by its nature or extent is likely to have some adverse impact upon the local environment and amenity during construction and/or is likely to generate construction waste should, inter alia:
- (a) Recycle construction waste.
  - (b) Prepare a "Resource Re-use and Recycling Scheme" to cover all waste arising during the construction.
  - (c) Be bound by a "Considerate Contractors Scheme" or similar arrangement, including restrictions on hours of noisy operations.
  - (d) Where appropriate accommodate spoil within the site.
  - (e) Maximise the re-use and recycling of any suitable raw materials currently available on sites during construction.
26. **Policy DP/7 - Development Frameworks** states outside urban and village frameworks only development for agriculture, forestry or outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be in the countryside will be permitted. 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.
  - (b) Development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours.
  - (c) There is the necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development.
  - (d) Development would not result in the loss of a local service or facility.
27. **Policy GB/1 - Development in the Green Belt** establishes that there is a presumption against inappropriate development (as defined in section 3 of PPG2: Green Belts) in the Cambridge Green Belt.
28. **Policy GB/2 - Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt** requires that any development that is considered appropriate must be located and designed so that it does not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt. If permitted landscaping conditions and maintenance of planting will be required to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated.
29. **Policy GB/3 - Mitigating the Impact of Development Adjoining the Green Belt** requires that any adverse impact on the Green Belt must be taken into account and that development on edges of settlements surrounded by Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality in order to protect the purposes of the Green Belt.
30. **Policy GB/4 - Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt** identifies designated major developed sites in the Green Belt. Milton Hall is not identified as a Major Developed Site on the Proposals Map. The policy establishes the parameters for limited infilling or re-development that may be permitted as:
- (a) Infilling is defined as the filling of small gaps between built development. Such infilling should have no greater impact upon the open nature of the Green Belt and should not lead to a major increase



in the developed proportion of the site. The cumulative impact of infilling proposals will be taken into account.

- (b) Redevelopment will be limited to that which would not result in:
- i. A greater floor area than the existing built form;
  - ii. A greater footprint unless there are significant environmental improvements;
  - iii. The existing height of the built development being exceeded;
  - iv. There being a greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt.

The supporting text states that 'Major Developed Sites, as identified on the Proposals Map, continue to be part of the Green Belt and remain subject to Green Belt policies. However, redevelopment where appropriate and infilling may be permitted within the defined confines of these sites subject to there being no adverse impact on the purposes of the Green Belt. The footprint of existing development within these sites excludes temporary buildings, open spaces with external access between wings of buildings, and areas of hard standing' (para. 3.10).

31. **Policy GB/5 - Recreation in the Green Belt** encourages proposals for the use of the Green Belt for increased or enhanced opportunities for access to the open countryside and which provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation, appropriate to it, where it would not harm the objectives of the Green Belt.
32. **Policy HG/1 - Housing Density** states that 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.
33. **Policy HG/2 - Housing Mix** states residential developments will contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, to meet local needs. A proportion of all new homes must be to Lifetime Mobility standards.
34. **Policy HG/3 - Affordable Housing** states proposals for housing developments will only be permitted if they provide an agreed mix of affordable housing. 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. 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). In order to ensure sustainable communities, affordable housing will be distributed through the development in small groups or clusters. In exceptional circumstance, on smaller sites, the Council may accept financial contributions towards an element of off-site provision. Para. 4.14 indicates: 'It will not be appropriate for major development to provide financial contributions in lieu of built provision, as on-site provision is a key part of creating a sustainable community'.

35. **Policy HG/5 - Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing** As an exception to the normal operation of the plan policies, planning permission may be granted for schemes of 100% affordable housing designed to meet identified local housing needs on small sites within or adjoining villages subject to a number of criteria and providing no alternative appropriate sites can be found of the scale and type and accords with policy regarding impact of new development on the local surroundings.

36. **Policy ET/6 - Loss of Rural Employment to Non-Employment Uses** states:

The conversion, change of use or re-development of existing employment sites to non-employment uses within village frameworks should be resisted unless one of the following criteria is met:

- (a) It is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand. Applications will need to be accompanied by documentary evidence that the site is not suitable or capable of being made suitable for continued employment use. Evidence would be required that the property has been adequately marketed for a period of not less than twelve months on terms that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises; or
- (b) The overall benefit to the community of the proposal outweighs any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises; or
- (c) The existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution, or unacceptable levels of traffic and any alternative employment use would continue to generate similar environmental problems.

NB. The application site is located outside the village framework for Milton.

37. **Policy ET/8 - Replacement Buildings in the Countryside** Proposals for replacement buildings in the countryside for employment use will be considered subject to strict control over any increase in floor area for the benefit of the design and to better integrate the building with its surroundings only.
38. **Policy SF/6 - Public Art and New Development** states in determining planning applications the District Council will encourage the provision or commissioning of publicly accessible art, craft and design works. The Policy will apply to residential developments comprising 10 or more dwellings.
39. **Policy SF/10 - Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments** states all residential developments will be required to contribute towards Outdoor Playing Space (including children's play space and formal outdoor sports facilities) and Informal Open Space to meet the additional need generated by the development in accordance with the standards in **Policy SF/11**. Sheltered dwellings and residential homes will not be required to provide Outdoor Play Space. Where appropriate provision should be on site.

40. **Policy SF/11 - Open Space Standards** states the minimum standard for outdoor play space and informal open space is 2.8ha per 1000 people, comprising:
- (a) Outdoor sport 1.6ha per 1000 people.
  - (b) Children's Playspace - 0.8ha per 1000 people.
  - (c) Informal Open Space - 0.4ha per 1000 people.
41. **Policy NE/1 - Energy Efficiency** states development will be required to demonstrate that it would achieve a high degree of measures to increase the energy efficiency of new buildings, for example through location, layout, orientation, aspect and external design.
42. **Policy NE/3 - Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development** states all development proposals greater than 10 dwellings will include technology for renewable energy to provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirement.
43. **Policy NE/4 - Landscape Character Areas** permits development only where it will respect and retain or enhance the local character and distinctiveness of the individual Landscape Character Area in which it is located.
44. **Policy NE/6 - Biodiversity** requires new developments to aim to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity. The District Council will refuse development that would have an adverse significant impact on the population or conservation status of protected species, priority species or habitat, unless the impact can be adequately mitigated by measures secured by planning conditions. Previously developed land will not be considered to be devoid of biodiversity. The re-use of such sites must be undertaken carefully with regard to existing features of biodiversity interest. Development proposals will be expected to include measures that maintain and enhance important features whilst incorporating them within any development of the site.
45. **Policy NE/8 - Groundwater** restricts development that will pose an unacceptable risk to the quality of the underlying groundwater from the chalk aquifer to the south and east of Cambridge.
46. **Policy NE/9 - Water and Drainage Infrastructure** restricts development where there exists inadequate water supply, sewerage or land drainage systems to meet the needs of the development.
47. **Policy NE/11 - Flood Risk** states that in relation to flood risk, applications for planning permission will be judged against national policy (currently in PPS25).
48. **Policy NE/12 - Water Conservation** requires that development must incorporate all practicable water conservation measures. All development proposals greater than 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> or 10 dwellings will be required to submit a Water Conservation Strategy prior to the commencement of the development to demonstrate how this is to be achieved.
49. **Policy CH/1 - Historic Landscapes** requires that planning permission not be granted for development which would adversely affect or lead to the loss of important areas and features of historic landscape whether or not they be statutorily protected.

50. **Policy CH/2 - Archaeological Sites** requires that archaeological sites will be protected in accordance with national policy (currently PPG16).
51. **Policy CH/4 - Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building** seeks to restrict development that would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building and requires that proposals must provide clear illustrative and technical material to allow that impact to be properly assessed.
52. **Policy CH/5 - Conservation Areas** requires planning applications for development proposals or affecting Conservation Areas will be determined in accordance with legislative provisions and national policy (currently in PPG15) and guidance contained in specific Conservation Area Appraisals (where they exist) and the District Design Guide.
53. **Policy TR/1 - Planning for More Sustainable Travel** states planning permission will not be granted for developments likely to give rise to a material increase in travel demands unless the site has a sufficient standard of accessibility to offer an appropriate choice of travel by public transport or other non-car travel modes. The amount of car parking provision in new developments should be minimised, compatible with their location. Developments should be designed from the outset with permeable layouts to facilitate and encourage short distance trips by cycle and walking. Safe and secure cycle parking shall be provided.
54. **Policy TR/2 - Car and Cycle Parking Standards** states car parking should be provided in accordance with the Council's maximum standards, to reduce over reliance on the car and to promote more sustainable forms of transport. Cycle parking provision should be provided in accordance with the minimum standards.
55. **Policy TR/3 - Mitigating Travel Impact** requires applications for major residential development to be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.
56. **Policy TR/4 - Non-motorised Modes** states the District Council will use its planning powers by ensuring that all new developments are designed at the outset to facilitate and encourage short distance trips between home, work, schools and for leisure.

### **Consultations**

57. **Milton Parish Council** – approves. Commenting:

*“Green Belt.* Council supports the principle of change of use from industrial units to retirement housing on the existing footprint. We note that the proposed development is encroaching on to the Green Belt land and beyond the footprint for industrial units but we believe that this proposed development will bring an overall benefit to the village. We welcome the renovation of North Lodge, a listed building, with appropriate materials after many years of neglect. [Milton Parish Council has been trying for years to have this building restored].

*Visual aspect.* Such a development will improve the visual aspect of this area. Properties with appropriate landscaping will be an improvement over industrial units.

*Woods and lake.* We welcome the improvements to the lake and wood and their opening up to the public.

*Section 106 Agreement.* It is imperative that Milton Parish Council is a party to a S106 Agreement which must address the following:

1. Considerable support for sports facilities for community use.
2. Due to increased foot traffic provision should be made for improved footpaths especially in Church Lane
3. Traffic calming features in Ely Road and highway improvements
4. New bus shelter in Ely Road

*Age Limit* - it is essential that restrictions are in place to ensure that the properties are sold to the over 55's only".

58. **Planning Policy Manager** comments:

"The application proposes the redevelopment of buildings and hardstandings formerly used as a depot, offices and for training. The application also proposes development on open land formerly used for training in the repair/erection of electricity poles.

The whole of the application site lies in the Cambridge Green Belt where exceptional circumstances are necessary to permit development which would otherwise be inappropriate in a green belt. The present use is inappropriate development. The planning application proposals are also inappropriate development.

As a precursor to this planning application, the applicant objected to the Council's Site Specific Policies Development Plan Document, arguing that the sites should be designated as a 'Major Developed Site' where national policy in PPG2 "Green Belts" would allow limited infilling or redevelopment provided that it would result in environmental improvements without adding to the impact of the site on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.

During the course of the subsequent examination, officers resisted the designation of the site as a 'Major Developed Site' because it failed the test for not being large enough but officers advised the inspector that taking a 'Major Developed Site' approach consistent with the advice in Annex C of PPG2 provided an appropriate policy framework for determining the future use or redevelopment of the built part of former helical site because of the present use of the buildings.

The starting point for that conclusion and for the Planning Policy comments on this planning application is that:

1. The present lawful use is inappropriate development.



2. The present employment buildings on the site have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt than domestic scale buildings.
3. There is no need to retain employment buildings on this site:
  - a. Policy ET/6 which seeks to retain employment in villages as a “scarce resource” needs to be applied on a case by case basis. Milton has a large amount of employment available in the village and the Parish including at Milton Hall, the Winship Industrial Estate, the Tesco Superstore and the Cambridge Science Park.
  - b. An Employment Land Review prepared for the Council has concluded that to meet the East of England Plan 2026 job forecasts that 412,000 – 462,000 sq.m of ‘B’ use class floorspace will be required in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire but that almost twice this amount of floorspace is currently available with planning permissions and land allocated in plans (844,750 sq.m). Much of this surplus is located in South Cambridgeshire.

The East of England Plan and the South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy both aim to increase the supply of houses in and close to Cambridge as a means of reducing commuting – losing employment sites such as this to residential development will have the same effect. A residential care development could therefore be considered as an inappropriate development for which there are exceptional circumstances if it can be demonstrated that:

1. The PPG2 tests of impact on the openness and other purposes of the green belt can be met - the Major Developed Sites tests are a useful planning tool for this purpose.
2. The proposed use of the development would have a lesser impact on the green belt than the present lawful uses for a depot, offices and training.

In all discussions with the prospective applicants, I have advised consistently that my interpretation of this policy framework is that to ensure that the development has no greater impact on the openness of the green belt than the current uses that development should be restricted to the existing built footprint of buildings and hardstandings”.

59. **Housing Development and Enabling Manager (Affordable Homes) –**  
comments:

“As I understand the proposed scheme is for a retirement village which will be age restricted and will provide a greater level of care than a typical retirement scheme as it has the benefit of an on site nurse and a regular doctors surgery.

Savills, the applicants agent for the affordable housing matters has suggested that affordable housing should not be provided on the site because of the social viability and the future service charge costs to residents, as such they have offered up and calculated their own commuted sum which as at the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008, they calculated at £2.4 million. We are not sure whether this sum

is acceptable, as we have not asked our own independent valuer to carry out a commuted sum valuation.

The site is not within the development framework and would probably be classified as an exceptions site. Policy HG/ 3 of the Local Development Framework stipulates that “in smaller developments, where individual units of affordable housing cannot reasonably be provided on the development site itself, it may be appropriate for a financial contribution towards off-site provision to be secured through the S016 agreements”. The proposed development is not considered small.

Policy HG/5 on “Exceptions sites for affordable housing” states that “as an exception to the normal operation of the policies of this plan, planning permission may be granted for schemes of 100% affordable housing designed to meet identified local housing needs on small sites within or adjoining villages”.

The proposed scheme does not address the fact that exception site development should be 100% affordable and should meet local needs. I do not consider the scheme to be affordable and I have not seen any evidence from the client that this scheme will only be meeting the local needs of Milton”.

60. **Environment Agency** – advises:

- (a) The site is at low risk of flooding. It recommends however conditions requiring the submission of a detailed surface water drainage scheme and its maintenance.
- (b) It recommends a condition requiring further detailed scheme to manage the risk of contamination of the site in order to minimise the risk of pollution to the water environment.
- (c) A condition preventing any infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground without prior permission to prevent risk of pollution to the water environment.
- (d) The principle of the surface water drainage scheme set out in the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is acceptable.
- (e) The proposal offers good opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Mitigation measures should be implemented to avoid, reduce and remedy significant adverse effects to habitats or species in the vicinity of the proposed development.
- (f) Existing features such as ponds or hedgerows should be retained to allow wildlife corridors and linked to newly created ponds or planted hedgerows and grasslands.
- (g) Recommendations in the Ecological Appraisal should be followed and agreed with Natural England. The bat boxes should be put in position before work on the buildings begins.
- (h) Further information is required to be submitted regarding groundwater and land contamination.

- (i) Queries why sampling was not carried out of an identified source in buildings 1, 2, 7 and 8, which have highlighted sources.
  - (j) The site overlies a secondary aquifer that leads to a susceptibility to pollution – no direct discharge to groundwater will be permitted; any infiltration structures (permeable pavements, soakaways) must be constructed to as shallow a depth as possible to simulate natural infiltration and at least 1-metre above the highest seasonal water-table.
  - (k) Roof water should not go to direct to the drainage system and there should be no open gratings e.g. use of water butts or back inlet gullies with sealing plates will be required.
  - (l) Roof water should discharge to separate filtration systems to those used for road and vehicle parking areas.
  - (m) Drainage systems must be constructed in line with CIRIA standards.
  - (n) Piling foundations on contaminated sites overlying aquifers is to be avoided. Rafts are preferred; however if piling is unavoidable a method should be selected that minimises the risks of ground water pollution or gas migration. Mitigation measures and or environmental monitoring may need to be incorporated into the design and presented in a “Foundation Works Risk Assessment Report” to be submitted for the approval of the LPA prior to development commencing.
61. **Anglian Water** – recommends a number of informatives.
62. **Drainage Manager** – comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.
63. **Internal Drainage Board** – no comment on drainage.
64. **English Nature** – comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.
65. **Ecology Officer** – comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.
66. **Landscape Design Officer** – does not object, however a number of detailed points relating to the landscaping of the site are raised which will need to be addressed in detailed landscaping proposals.
67. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – no objection to the initial proposals.
68. **Divisional Environmental Health Officer**– Recommends conditions requiring further investigation of land contamination on the site and mitigation proposals.
69. **English Heritage** – comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.

70. **Historic Buildings Officer** – comments:

- (a) The Conservation and Design team have serious concerns about the scale and scope of the development.
- (b) Pre-application comments seem not to have been taken into account.
- (c) The Church adjacent is a Grade II\*, and English Heritage should be consulted. In addition, the site contains two Grade II listed buildings in Milton Hall and North Lodge.
- (d) The relationship between the new build and the Lodge and Hall has not been well thought out.
- (e) The Lodge originally formed part of the main entrance to the Hall, and as such the land around it was always left open, with no development nearby. However, over time, this association has been lost. All that remains is North and West Lodge, which strengthens the argument to try and retain as much of this association to the Hall as possible. Providing new homes too close to the Lodge causes harm to the setting and character of the Lodge. The proximity of development towards North Lodge is too close and too dense. The building should retain the openness of space around it, as it currently has. A sufficient curtilage around the Lodge would be required prior to gaining any support from the Conservation and Design Team.
- (f) The proposals are detrimental as they change the character and setting of the Lodge from a rural backdrop to being closely surrounded by houses. The building should retain the openness of space around it as it currently has as curtilage of the listed building.
- (g) There are concerns that the scheme is contrary to planning policy in relation to the Green Belt and village framework.
- (h) The new development is felt to be too prominent in the landscape, which is quite special as it was a Repton Landscape. It does not relate well to the parkland setting.
- (i) There is insufficient information to properly determine the planning application within the existing application. Pre-application advice stated that if the application is an outline and there is insufficient detail to enable the assessment of the impact on the listed buildings, the application should be refused. A listed building application is yet to be submitted for works to North Lodge itself, therefore the outline application should stamp all drawings relating to North Lodge as 'not part of application' if required.
- (j) If the planning is likely to be supported, the decision notice should exclude all works to the listed building until they are included in a detailed listed building application.
- (k) It is understood that this application is an outline application, and that there is no immediate need for a listed building application, however, it will be required prior to any works taking place to the building itself. A listed building application has been awaited since early this year, as promised, to address the concerns of the team regarding the state of

the Lodge, which is on the Council's Buildings at Risk register and has been for some years. The building is wind and weather tight; however, the finer details are continuing to deteriorate, as well as the building being susceptible to vandalism. The building has already lost most of its original windows and glass on the outside, and internally there has been damage as well. The building is capable of being restored and brought back into use on a temporary basis regardless of the outcome of the redevelopment of the adjacent land.

- (l) North Lodge has its own access, which is currently hidden under years of ivy and growth. It was requested over a year ago that this growth and vegetation be removed from the listed wall and gate, as well as from around the building to emphasise the fact that the building is being looked after and that vandals are deterred from hanging around.
- (m) If prudent, North Lodge could be removed from the outline application, however, it would still form part of the assessment of the impact the proposed new development would have on the setting and character of the Lodge and the other two listed buildings adjacent. It is the responsibility of Officers to assess the harm any proposal may have on a listed building. It is also policy if an outline application does not have sufficient information to properly determine this impact, a refusal can be made. It is possible that any consent granted in regards to the outline application could have conditions excluding all works to the listed building.
- (n) Concern is expressed regarding the site line from the Hall and the new development. In addition, there has been little mention of the impact to the Grade II\* Church.
- (o) It is understood that the current planning application is an outline application, which is an initial submission and will not include the finer details required in a formal application. However, there are underlining principle to the review of the application in regards to the impact on the setting and character of the three listed buildings. Understanding the comments and concerns from other Officers, such as Trees, Biodiversity, Highways, etc. and from statutory amenity societies such as English Heritage are required to ensure a proper evaluation has taken place. A full understanding of the proposal and its potential harm is required regardless of the outline application status and must be tested against local and national policy.
- (p) The issues are not just about if the development can be physically seen from any of the listed buildings, but also the associated infrastructure, visual impact, all key criteria raised in PPG15. Reference is made to paragraphs 3.4 – 3.5 which require applications for Listed building consent to justify their proposals showing why works which would affect the character of a listed building are desirable or necessary, including full information, to enable the LPA to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and on its setting.



- (q) The issues that are generally relevant to the consideration of all listed building consent applications are:
- i. The importance of the building, its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and rarity, in both national and local terms ('historic interest' is further explained in paragraph 6.11);
  - ii. The particular physical features of the building (which may include its design, plan, materials or location) which justify its inclusion in the list: list descriptions may draw attention to features of particular interest or value, but they are not exhaustive and other features of importance (e.g. interiors) may come to light after the building's inclusion in the list;
  - iii. The building's setting and its contribution to the local scene, which may be very important, e.g. where it forms an element in a group, park, garden or other townscape or landscape, or where it shares particular architectural forms or details with other buildings nearby;
  - iv. The extent to which the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community, in particular by contributing to the economic regeneration of the area or the enhancement of its environment (including other listed buildings).
- (r) As a result, the team do not support this application in its current form as it negatively impacts the setting of North Lodge, Milton Hall and the adjacent Church. In addition, the proposal neither enhances nor preserves the character and setting of the conservation area. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policy CH/4 and CH/5, and PPG15.

71. **Cambridge Archaeology - CCC – comments:**

“...Records indicate that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential.

The proposed development area exists in an area known for its dense archaeological cropmarks (Historic Environment Record Numbers 08322, MCB17882), which where tested in other schemes, denote the remains of settlement dating from the Bronze Age to the Roman period. A Desk-based Assessment collating the known archaeological information has already been undertaken by CgMs (Gailey 2008), and has been followed by non-intrusive survey work (geophysical survey and aerial photograph assessment). The desk-based assessment and non-intrusive surveys have shown that significant archaeological remains are present on this site and that the known cropmarks continue into the development area. It is considered likely that these archaeological remains would be severely damaged or destroyed by the proposed development.

We strongly recommend that the site is subject to further **archaeological evaluation**, to be commissioned and undertaken at the expense of the developer, and carried out **prior** to the granting of planning permission. Further evaluation fieldwork is recommended in order to allow for the fuller consideration of the character and survival of archaeological remains within the development area. An informed judgement can then be made as to whether any

planning consent will need to include provisions for the recording and, more importantly, the preservation of important archaeological remains *in situ*".

72. **Local Highways Authority** – object commenting:

"Drawing Number 12 provided within this application is to a very poor scale and to make comments by the Highway Authority has been problematic please request the applicant to provide a drawing 1:500 showing the site as this would be preferable.

The Highway Authority believe that this application in its present form will have a negative impact on the living environment for the residents due to the two junior football pitches being feed off the only road within the development, therefore this could lead disturbance for the local residents.

The design of the site is loosely based around the 'Home Zone' principles which is a significant concern to the Highway Authority the use of such a design principle for accessing two sports facilities has potentially a high risk level. The Highway Authority believes that the scheme as it currently stands provides an unacceptable level of risk to the residents of the development and requests that the application in its present format be refused on the grounds of highway safety".

It requests of the applicant:

- (a) Drawing Number 12 shows 26 car parking spaces although it states that 40 spaces will be provided within the Traffic and Transportation Statement. Also no coach parking facilities for the football pitches have been shown. The Highway Authority request to see the total number of spaces for both the facilities.
- (b) A methodology for the match day parking as the Highway Authority recognise that the developer is passing the overseeing of the Junior football pitches to a third party, but a methodology of what is being proposed needs to be submitted prior to determination of the application.
- (c) Information on how the applicant proposes to service the community facilities i.e. car parking and bin storage. Please note that a bin collection point that South Cambridgeshire District Council refuse department approve is needed and should be located to the front of the proposed development.
- (d) More recent TRICS data in this area of Cambridgeshire, as the Highway Authority believes that there has been a 'demographic shift' and data recorded 10 years ago is no longer an accurate reflection of the traffic generation that a site like this would produce.

If the Planning Authority is minded to approve it recommends a number of the conditions/informatives: visibility splays, car parking spaces, manoeuvring areas, access width of access of 7.3 metres provided for a minimum distance of 20 metres from the highway boundary, a method statement relating to the process of demolition and any effects this may have on the adopted public highway, works within, or disturbance of, or interference with, the Public Highway, minimum internal measurements for single garages, a condition

survey in the vicinity before the works commence and the developer will be responsible for the repair of any damage to the adopted public highway that may be caused as a result of their operations, provision of a pedestrian access at the south western boundary between the hospice and the church, and provision of a turning head outside the gated entrance to the development to prevent vehicles reversing on the publicly maintainable highway.

The Highway Authority will seek contribution for traffic management measures on Ely Road in the vicinity of the site and footway improvement within the Church Lane Vicinity, under a Section 106 Agreement.

The Highway Authority will not adopt any gated development.

73. **Highway Agency** – comments that the proposed retirement village is likely to have a lower trip generation than the possible existing use of the site. The development is unlikely to have an adverse affect on the Trunk Road Network.
74. **Countryside Access Team – Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)** – comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.
75. **Sustainability Officer**– comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.
76. **Building Control** – comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.
77. **General Works Manager**– comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.
78. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue** – requires fire hydrants to be secured via condition or S106 at the expense of the developer and access and facilities for the fire service should be in accordance with Building Regulations.
79. **Police Architect Liaison Officer** – comments:
  - (a) Given the potentially vulnerable nature of a number of the proposed occupants that entry into the site is to be restricted to Ely Road is supported.
  - (b) There is concern about the mews layout and the associated vehicle parking. Vehicles parked to the rear of dwellings are likely to be more vulnerable to crime, while the lack of clear boundaries to rear garden space exposes the rear of the dwellings to crime, especially if rear patio doors are left insecure. As distraction burglary often involves one offender at the front door while another enters through the back door, the mews arrangement with open rear gardens should be reconsidered.
  - (c) The permeability through the site may give rise to difficulty at times when a large number of visitors are on the site, such as when the sports pitches are in use. Such permeability provides offenders with additional access and escape routes together with the anonymity they seek.

80. **Primary Care Trust**– comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.
81. **Cultural Services Manager**– comments awaited. A verbal update or addendum will be provided.

### **Representations**

82. A letter has been received on behalf of Milton Hall Estates Ltd who own Milton Hall, which is adjacent to the application site, to make a number of observations in relation to this application.

“Milton Hall Estates have no objection in principle to the proposal as it is generally seen as bringing about an environmental improvement to the local area particularly with the restoration of the parkland.

Generally the proposal is acceptable however Milton Hall Estates wish to object to the relationship of:-

1. The proposed three storey apartment block and
2. The three storey residential facilities building to the north and north east of Milton Hall.

### **Reasoning**

The north and northeast wings of Milton Hall are set close to its site boundaries and are glazed office/R&D buildings. The proposed three storey apartments and residential facilities buildings shown on the layout plan are close to the site boundaries given their bulk and scale and the position of the existing buildings on the adjacent site.

The separation distance between and relative heights of the buildings are considered unacceptable and could have a detrimental impact both on the established employment use at Milton Hall and on future residents of the new dwellings.

It is often the case that staff work late at Milton Hall and, particularly in the winter months and these wings and the people within them could be highly visible as a result of internal illumination.

This could give rise to complaints from future residents about overlooking or a perceived invasion of privacy to the detriment of residential amenity. Similarly residents could see into the offices.

The bulk and scale of these buildings, in close proximity to Milton Hall would also adversely impact upon the character and setting of the listed building. There would in effect be an unacceptable massing of buildings immediately adjacent to the listed building at this corner.

Set against this background and notwithstanding the fact that this is an outline application we would ask the Local Planning Authority through the application of conditions should:-

- a) Specifically condition that there will be no three storey buildings in these locations;
- b) Direct that the three storey elements are positioned elsewhere within the site or;
- c) Require their replacement with single storey development, which would be a more acceptable relationship with Milton Hall in visual terms, or
- d) Increase significantly the separation distances between the proposed and existing buildings.

These issues are material considerations and the concerns are justified in terms of the policies contained within the development plan relating to conservation areas and listed buildings, design and residential and visual amenity”.

83. 3 local residents of Milton have written in support commenting:

- (a) The scheme is “much needed for the older generation and younger generation alike”.
- (b) This is good use of land however lack of parking spaces for the people using the sports pitches.
- (c) It is nice to see that the site is to be sensitively developed.

84. Two further objections have been received raising:

- (a) Biased flyers sent to every residence in Milton seeking support for the application (see paragraph below).
- (b) The communal facilities building will be some 3 stories high. This will block sunlight into the east wing of Milton Hall due to the height of the building in close proximity.
- (c) The proposed development will encroach on Milton Hall and the current open grounds. Currently the site does not have any buildings south of the east wing of Milton Hall. The indicative plan shows that the development will come south and be aligned with the main part of Milton Hall. This will spoil both the views from Milton Hall but more importantly the views of Milton Hall from the surrounding area. The Council should restrict the development to the existing site which has already been built upon and leave the existing park land.
- (d) The application appears to include cottages, apartments and bungalows, although the description only refers to cottages and apartments. Bungalows are more suitable as homes for retired people.
- (e) The plan seems to be indicating that the development is gated and consists of retirement dwellings. It is a great mistake to have



recreational facilities and playing fields included as this will generate a lot of traffic (vehicular and pedestrian).

- (f) The scheme should be for retired people or playing fields, not both.
85. A leaflet outlining the scheme's advantages has been distributed to an unspecified number of residences in Milton inviting recipients to return the form indicating their support for the scheme. 54 have been returned. It should be noted that the form does not provide an option to object to the scheme or otherwise comment on the merits of the proposal and therefore carries limited weight, although feedback recorded from pre-application public consultation carried out by the developers appears to have generally been positive.
86. A revised scheme has been tabled at a meeting with officers held on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2008 for a reduced scheme of 100 units. This would be entirely within the existing built area of the depot and North Lodge, without incursion into the land to the south and east of the depot complex. The Planning Committee will receive an addendum to this report for consideration following submission of details by the applicants. Officers will then re-evaluate the issues to ascertain if there are very special circumstances to allow a reduced scheme. If this were found to be the case, the amended development proposals would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

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

87. The key issues in considering this outline application are:
- (a) Whether the development is inappropriate in the Green Belt;
  - (b) If the proposals do amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt, whether it would cause other harm in addition to that caused by inappropriateness (this includes, impact on the countryside, housing provision, loss of employment, historic buildings and Repton landscape, archaeology, landscape, environmental matters (e.g. drainage, contamination and water bodies), public art, public open space, access and the provision of reserved matters); and
  - (c) Whether there are very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm caused by the development, by way of inappropriateness and in any other respect.

#### ***Green Belt – Inappropriate Development***

88. The site is within the Cambridge Green Belt. In determining applications for development the first consideration is whether the development can be considered 'appropriate', as defined in 'PPG2: Green Belts'. In cases elsewhere for similar retirement village schemes, it has been found that due to the mix of care, housing and associated facilities, the use class for such developments is *sui generis*. Essentially, however, the scheme proposes housing. With the exception of the proposed sports pavilion and junior football pitches the proposals are by definition 'inappropriate development'. It is noted that the existing land use is also 'inappropriate development'.

89. PPG2 advises that "...inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why planning permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations." A balancing exercise is required to ascertain whether the material planning considerations put forward by the applicants amount to very special circumstances that outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm.

### ***Other harm***

### ***Openness of the Green Belt***

90. The applicant does not accept that the re-development of the site be considered on major developed site (MDS) principles, as it is not identified as such within the Local Development Framework.
91. This issue was considered by the Inspector at the Development Control Policies DPD Examination. The Council put forward, in response to a 'duly made representation' that the site should not be classified as a major developed site, on grounds that development outside of the footprint of the depot site would harm the vista from the Hall and the openness of the Green Belt. The smaller site (depot) was considered to be capable of re-development sensitively using MDS principles of PPG2 to increase the openness of the site and assist in meeting the Government's land use objectives for Green Belts. It went on to conclude that the applicant may be able to demonstrate that the re-development of the site could reduce the impact upon the Green Belt, and as such be permissible under paragraph 3.2 of PPG2. This approach was supported by the Inspector and is a useful approach in the consideration of these proposals as a consequence.
92. Although the indicative layout is not to be determined at this stage there is a concern that the proposed re-development would not accord with the principles of development on MDSs. It would have a greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt. This is due to the significant additional footprint of buildings that also will extend beyond the existing built area; and the proposed heights exceeding that of the existing development which, despite the former use of the site, are relatively low-key due to the buildings largely being limited to 1-1.5 storeys.
93. In the Examination proof it was also suggested that the pylons, power lines and other structures within the fields to the east and south of the depot site could be removed by planning condition or Section 215 Amenity Notice now that they are no longer required.

### ***Countryside***

94. Countryside policy (Policy DP/7) limits development outside frameworks to that which is needed to be located in the countryside. The aim of the policy is to protect the countryside from gradual encroachment, to guard against incremental growth in unsustainable locations. This site is however, a brownfield site, where some re-use of the existing buildings or limited re-development on a like-for-like basis could be supported (see Policies ET/7 Conversion of Rural Buildings for Employment and ET/8 Replacement Buildings in the Countryside). PPS7 "Sustainable Development in Rural

Areas” takes a similar approach by favouring the re-use or redevelopment of buildings in the countryside for employment use. Notwithstanding, that is not what this application seeks.

### ***Housing Provision***

95. Additional housing developments in South Cambridgeshire are currently required to meet a shortfall identified through the Regional Spatial Strategy. Any shortfall in housing provision within the current Local Development Framework process will however, be made up from allocated sites and windfall sites at more appropriate and sustainable locations, in accordance with policy ST/2.
96. Milton is a group village where residential development within the framework is limited to 8 dwellings or exceptionally about 15 where it would make best use of a brownfield site. The site, however is not within the framework.
97. It is noted that this scheme provides for a specific population group in providing homes of older people. In this respect it aims to meet the objectives of PPS3. There are however no reasons why such sites specifically tailored towards the older population shouldn't come forward on sites in sequentially preferable locations within villages, including existing allocations, as has been the case in examples in South Cambridgeshire's villages.
98. In terms of housing mix, the proposals are for 44 no. 2-bedroomed flats and 77 no. 2-bedroomed houses. These would be all owner-occupied. The mix does not reflect that set out in HG/2. It is attempted to justify this by way of the specialist nature of the development proposed, however these are commercial justifications based on lifestyle choices rather than need. Policy seeks to ensure that housing developments are socially inclusive and in failing to propose an adequate mix of house sizes, types and tenures this is not achieved. For example, evidence elsewhere indicates that a mix of unit sizes is desirable to allow older persons a choice regarding how they occupy their homes. In providing only 2-bedroomed units there is a lack of choice for people who may only require one-bedroom or who want family or carers to stay, therefore needing additional bedrooms. Similarly, in order to secure a balanced community provision of affordable housing is required on site as part of the development.
99. Any housing outside frameworks is usually limited, by way of an exception to normal policy, to that which is 100% affordable to meet the needs of the village to which it is related. The scheme does not propose exception housing. Although policy HG/5 establishes the principles against which exception sites will be assessed the applicants suggest that these proposals be treated as a departure to policy and that the principles of HG/3 only be applied i.e. that 40% affordable provision.
100. The comments of the Housing Development & Enabling Manager flag several potential areas of concern.
101. The historical development of Milton leaves limited scope within the Parish to provide exception housing on sites elsewhere within the Parish. The application proposes to provide 40% affordable housing, as per Policy HG/3 rather than following exception site principles. The starting point of HG/3 is however, to provide all affordable housing provision resulting from major

residential schemes on site. Financial contributions towards off-site are not supported.

102. It is suggested by the applicants that the practical issue arising from service charges their occupiers pay towards grounds maintenance and health and support facilities on site should preclude them from making provision on site. Instead of on-site provision they offer a £2.4 million contribution. This equates to a significant shortfall in the sum that would be usually required, although no financial assessment had been submitted by the applicants at the time of writing this report, it is likely that this shortfall could be as much as £1.4million. This would, of course, have to be the subject of independent financial assessment. Final figures may be affected by the current market, works required to bring this brownfield site forward and improvements to the historic built environment.
103. In any event, the starting point is to provide affordable housing on-site. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policy HG/3, as described above. The site fails to meet the basic requirements in relation to affordable provision.

### ***Employment***

104. As the site is a brownfield site outside of the village framework it does not fit neatly within the Council's employment policies. It is accepted that elements of the scheme will contribute towards employment; however the predominant use of the site would be as housing in one form or another. The most relevant policy is ET/6 (Loss of Rural Employment to Non-Employment Uses).
105. The loss of employment land is to be considered on a case by case basis. There is currently a major surplus of employment land in South Cambridgeshire. The Planning Policy Manager has provided a clear steer as to how to consider the loss of employment from the site. The oversupply of employment in and close to Cambridge is the justification for the current development strategy, which seeks to correct that imbalance by dramatically increasing the supply of housing in and on the edge of the City. The strategy has a second objective of reducing the growth in commuting. The loss of employment from this site would decrease employment opportunities within the village but like Cambridge as a whole, Milton Parish has a significant excess of jobs over the working population and losing this site will result in a decrease in overall commuting by the general population.

### ***Historic Buildings and Conservation Area***

106. While the detailed layout is not for consideration under this outline application it is reasonable and necessary to make an assessment of the impact of the development's scale and nature in relation to North Lodge, Milton
107. It is clear from the Historic Buildings Officer's comments that the Conservation and Design Team consider the setting of North Lodge to be harmed as a consequence of the scheme, due to the proximity and density of development in the vicinity. Historical linkages between Milton Hall and West Lodge and North Lodge have been weakened and subsequently, the importance of retaining the historic linkage with Milton Hall is greater. Although the Lodge is currently adjoined by an unattractive car park this development does retain an openness to its setting in comparison to the application proposals. The impact on the Lodge is detrimental and changes

the character and setting of the building from a rural backdrop to being closely surrounded by houses.

108. The Historic Buildings Officer comments that the Conservation and Design Team is also concerned about the impact of the proposed development on both the vista from Milton Hall and its parkland setting. The improvement of the vista from Milton Hall, by the removal of the many pylons, overhead lines and other structures and various landscape improvements, can be considered positively, particularly in the winter months when these will be more visible through trees. It is not clear at the time of writing, in judging these improvements, whether they will be balanced out by the encroachment of buildings proposed beyond the existing built area of the depot.
109. There is a lack of consideration relating to the setting All Saints' Church. As this is Grade II\* Listed the comments of English Heritage are awaited and an update will be provided.
110. The wooded southern area, frontage and area surrounding North Lodge is within the Conservation Area. The remainder of the site can be considered to be adjacent to it. In considering whether the proposals will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area it is concluded that the proposals will not achieve these objectives on balance. The development will improve the woodland within the Conservation Area and would be an enhancement. The removal of unsightly structures adjacent to the Conservation Area is also an enhancement, however this can be secured by other means, specifically a Section 215 Amenity Notice. The encroachment of development where there currently is a feeling of openness i.e. the vista from Milton Hall, of its parkland setting, and introduction of buildings surrounding North Lodge detracts from this rural backdrop to the village and listed buildings. Therefore, it is considered to neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

### ***Archaeology***

111. Further investigation is being undertaken by the applicant's archaeologists on site, as required by Cambridgeshire Archaeology. Any response to the findings of these will be reported by way of a verbal update or addendum to this report.

### ***Landscape***

112. No in principle objections have been received in terms of the wider landscape or landscaping of the site, although it is clear that detailed schemes will need to be the subject of further work at the reserved matters stage, having liaised with the Trees and Landscape and Landscape Design Officers'. Comments are awaited from English Heritage. Should these address the historic landscaped setting of the Hall an update will be provided.
113. It is noted that the draft S106 submitted at Appendix 6 of the Planning Statement accompanying the application includes terms relating to a Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy Plan.



### ***Environmental Matters***

114. The scheme is likely to bring about environmental improvements through de-contamination of the site, ecological enhancements and provision of measures to provide 10% of the site's energy requirements through renewable sources, as required by policies. Further comment is awaited from the Environment Agency and a verbal update or addendum to the report will be provided if necessary.
115. It appears likely that planning conditions can address all matters relating to environmental and human health concerns, including detailed schemes for surface water drainage, foul water drainage, foundations, land contamination, ecological enhancement and renewable energy schemes.

### ***Public Art***

116. There is no reference within the application relating to the provision of public art. The agent has subsequently confirmed that the applicant is willing to consider providing public art on the site. They consider that this should be dealt with at reserved matters stage and that there are opportunities within the proposed layout to provide for a piece of public art such as in the squares, within the open space and at the entrance into the site. As the scheme falls within the parameters of Policy SF/6 (Public Art) provision is to be encouraged. It can be provided by a planning condition.

### ***Public Open Space***

117. The scheme provides significant provision for open space to meet the needs of the development and the public generally. Without the precise breakdown of house types it is not possible to ascertain whether the provision being made accords with policy SF/10, although it is likely given the scale of provision being made. The scheme involves formal sports pitches and informal open space. Retirement schemes are not required to provide play space.
118. The publicly accessible areas are proposed on a limited access basis through a lease to the Parish Council and are intended to contribute to making up an acknowledged shortfall of sports pitches in the village. The draft proposed terms for public access are detailed in the S106 attached at Appendix 6 of the Planning Statement. The Consultation Draft Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance (2008) states that public open spaces that "...are available as a matter of policy and practice for public use on a regular and frequent basis" can be included within provision. Communal spaces to serve the development will not be included. On this basis the provision proposed is likely to be acceptable and it is noted that it is supported by the Parish Council subject to the details being agreed.
119. Although the provision of open space, including sports pitches is a positive element of the scheme. Notwithstanding, all new residential development is required to contribute towards the provision of open space to meet the needs of its occupiers. Provision over and above that which is directly required as a consequence of the development is of course welcomed. It is worth noting that there is an extant planning permission for sports pitches at Landbeach Road can provide alternative provision to that proposed.

### **Access**

120. The Highway Agency has not objected to the scheme in terms of traffic generation.
121. The comments of the Local Highway Authority express a number of concerns relating to the detailed layout of the site. In particular they raise concerns relating to the traffic assessment and the lack of up-to-date information. Without this it is difficult to ascertain whether there will be a negative traffic impact as a result of the proposals. The other issues relating to matters of detail could be addressed through the submission of reserved matters relating to the layout.

### **Reserved Matters**

122. Issues, such as landscaping, have been raised through consultation and representations that relate to the reserved matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale. If the application were supported these could be the subject of detailed discussion with the relevant officers and organisations to achieve an acceptable scheme.

### **Very special circumstances**

123. The material considerations put forward which the applicant considers amount to very special circumstances, in summary, are:
  - (a) The need to provide housing specifically designed to meet the needs of the elderly, which is in short supply. Such provision can help to address serious health and social issues faced by older people. This need is unlikely to be met elsewhere.
  - (b) Improvements to the landscape, including removal of pylons and associated equipment, restoration of the lake and its woodland setting.
  - (c) Provision of extensive recreational opportunities for local residents by way of sports pitches and informal access to woodland and grassland. Pitches to be made available on a managed basis.
  - (d) Restoration of North Lodge and rehabilitation of its setting – securing its long term future.
  - (e) Improvements to the setting of Milton Hall – screening of modern extensions to the Hall by way of 3-storey building adjacent and removal of pylons etc and creation of a parkland vista.
  - (f) Delivery of 48 affordable homes off-site which would otherwise not be forthcoming.
  - (g) Delivery of housing to meet the Regional Spatial Strategy target.

Cumulatively the applicants suggest these outweigh any harm by way of inappropriateness.

124. Officers agree that of these other considerations there is merit in several, including: landscape improvements, the restoration of the Repton landscape,

potential improvement to the setting of Milton Hall, though balanced against the comments in Para 107 above, and the replacement of an unsightly employment use with a well designed domestic scale development. However, given the various comments from the Conservation and Design Team and the objectives of national planning policy to improve the appearance of the Green Belt, it is my conclusion that this proposal seeks too much development and should be restricted to the footprint of the existing developed area.

125. The considerations do not amount to very special circumstances that are sufficient to clearly outweigh the harm by way of inappropriateness and the other identified harm in regard to affordable housing, principally impact upon the setting of the Listed Building at North Lodge and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### **Recommendation**

126. A. Subject to the receipt of awaited comments from Drainage Manager, Ecology Officer, English Heritage, English Nature, Countryside Access Team, Sustainability Officer, Building Control Manager, General Works Manager, Primary Care Trust and Cultural Services Manager and further comments of the Historic Buildings Officer, Environment Agency and Cambridgeshire Archaeology Unit:

#### **Refusal** on the following grounds:

1. The proposed development is within the Cambridge Green Belt. It is by definition inappropriate development, as defined by 'PPG2: Green Belts'. The proposals are therefore contrary to PPG2 and policy GB/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, Development Control Policies DPD adopted 2007.
2. The site currently includes open and landscaped areas that serve to physically separate the village from the countryside beyond. The proposals are considered, by way of their likely form, footprint and height, including extending the built area beyond that currently occupied by buildings, to significantly increase the extent of buildings in this location. As a consequence the proposals will be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt, having a greater impact upon it than the existing development. The application is contrary to Policies CSR3 of the East of England Plan adopted 2008 and ST/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, Core Strategy DPD adopted 2007 as it fails to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting.
3. The proposals fail to establish, due to insufficient detailing, that they will not be harmful to the setting of adjacent listed buildings, Milton Hall, North Lodge and All Saints' Church. In particular:
  - i. The further erosion of the main entrance to the Hall, formed by North Lodge, and loss of the open land that has always surrounded it. Providing new homes too close to the Lodge

and at such a high density will cause harm to the open, rural setting and character of the Lodge; and

- ii. Encroaching upon the vista from Milton Lodge through the extension of the built area, with subsequent harm to its parkland setting and outlook.

The application fails to accord with PPG15 and Policy CH/4 of the of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, adopted 2007, which require developments affecting the curtilage or setting of listed buildings to provide clear illustrative and technical material that allow that the impact to be properly assessed and protection of the building's setting and its contribution to the local scene

4. The encroachment of development where there currently is a feeling of openness i.e. the vista from Milton Hall, its parkland setting, and the introduction of buildings surrounding North Lodge, which provides a rural backdrop to the village and listed buildings, would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Milton Conservation Area and as such would be contrary to Policy CH/5 of the of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, adopted 2007, which requires development in Conservation Areas to be in accordance with legislation, national policy and the District Design Guide.
5. The proposals fail to make provision for an appropriate mix of housing including affordable housing on the site and as such contravene the requirements of Policies HG/2 and HG/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework, adopted 2007, which require housing developments to include a range of types, sizes and affordability, including provision on site to meet local need.
6. The applicant has failed to demonstrate that there are other material considerations which when taken either individually or collectively amount to very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm by way of inappropriateness in the Green Belt and the identified other harm.

- B. Require removal of redundant structures to the south and east of the depot by way of a Section 215 Amenity Notice, which currently harm the setting the adjacent Listed Buildings (Milton Hall, North Lodge and All Saints' Church), character and appearance of Milton Conservation Area and openness and visual amenity of the Cambridge Green Belt.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- East of England Plan 2008
- Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts
- Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

- Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- Open Space Consultation Draft SPD 2008
- Development Control Policies DPD Examination Statement ref. DCPR4 – SCDC
- Planning file refs. S/0935/08/O, S/0205/99/F, S/1727/98/F, S/1413/98/F, S/1742/91/F, S/2141/90/A, S/0165/05/F, S/1941/01/PNT, S/0078/01/PNT, S/2041/97/PNT, S/1138/96/F, S/1038/02/F, S/1039/02/LB and S/1325/94/LB.

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