

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

---

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

1<sup>st</sup> October 2008

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

---

### **S/1332/08/F - SAWSTON**

**Phase 1- Redevelopment of Sawston Business Park for a Mixed B1(c), B2, and B8 Scheme and Associated Infrastructure and Landscape Work; Sawston Business Park, Mill Lane for Wrenbridge (CPT) Ltd.**

**Recommendation: Delegated approval**

**Date for Determination: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2008**

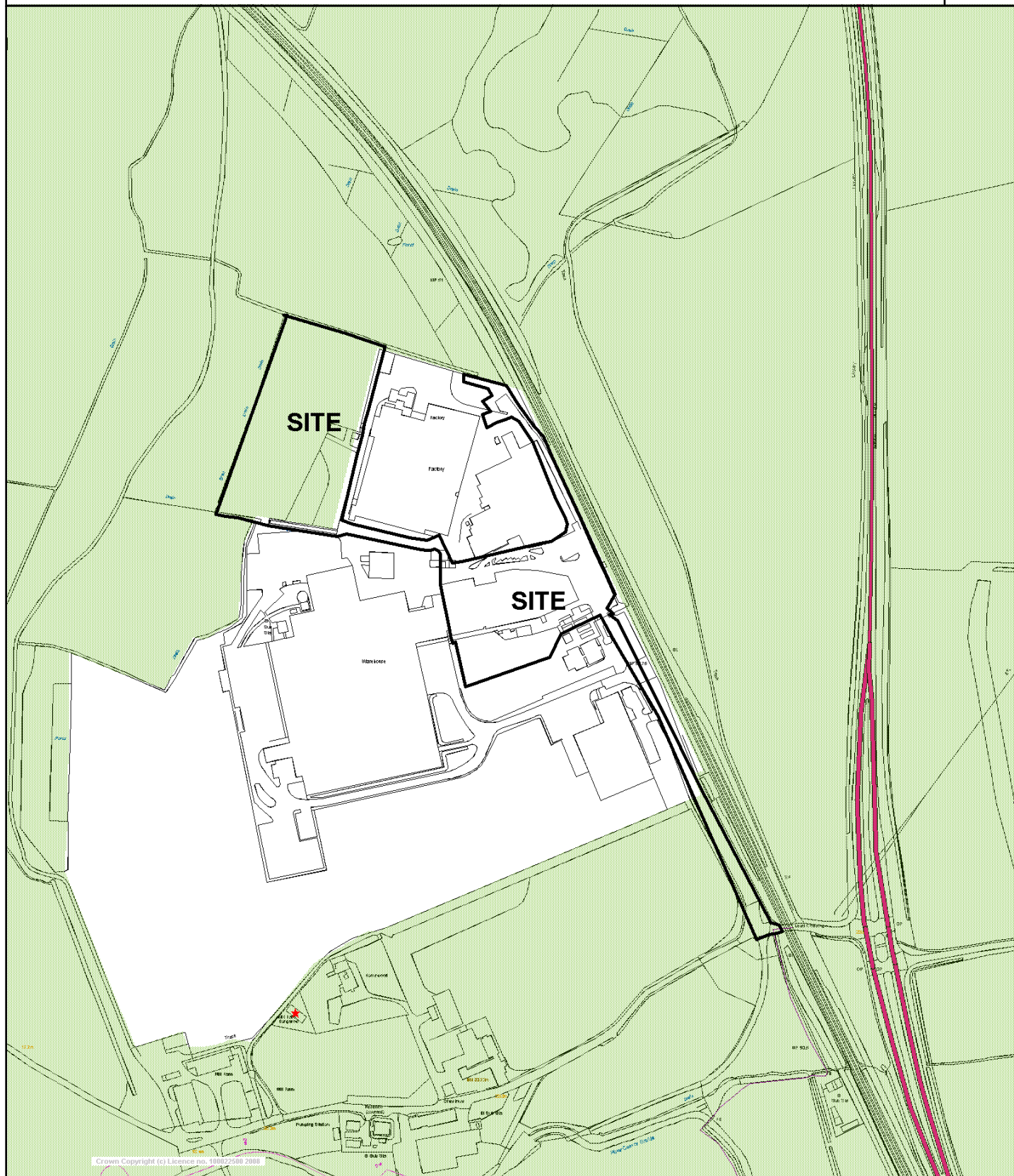
**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because Sawston Parish Council has recommended refusal of planning permission, contrary to Officer recommendation.**

#### **Major Application**

#### **Departure Application**

##### **Site and Proposal**

1. The 4.36 hectare site comprises a variety of vacant industrial and office buildings formerly occupied by John Dickinson Stationery as a paper factory, located in the countryside to the north west of Sawston, to the west of the A1301 London Road/ Sawston bypass and Cambridge-London Liverpool Street railway. Access to the site is via a level crossing. The buildings adjoin an adjacent distribution depot and headquarters occupied by Spicers Ltd. The development site area is approximately 1.5ha.
2. There are several constraints and designations on land around the site. To the west, Flood Zone 3 (high risk) encroaches onto a field included within the site for mounding. The built development falls within Flood Zone 1 (low risk). To the north, across the railway line, is located a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Dernford Fen, and to the north of that Dernford Farm grassland is a County wildlife site. To the south, some 150m from the site, Borough Hill is an Iron Age hill fort and a scheduled ancient monument. The industrial estate is surrounded by the Cambridge Green Belt. Footpath Sawston 15 emerges onto the access road where it meets the level railway crossing.
3. The full application, dated 18 July 2008, proposes the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of 11 units arranged in two blocks, A and B, for a mix of light industrial, general industrial and storage uses, Classes B1c, B2 and B8 totalling 5,252 sqm and associated infrastructure and landscaping works. The proposal includes 165 car parking spaces including 14 mobility spaces, and cycle parking (132 spaces).



Crown Copyright (c) Licence no. 100022548 2008



Reproduced from the 2008 Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's stationary office (c) Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.

Scale 1/5000 Date 17/9/2008

Centre = 547246 E 249845 N

October Planning Committee



4. The proposal includes the deposit of waste spoil from the development on adjacent agricultural land which has reverted to scrub to the north west, as part of a sustainable waste management strategy. The proposal is to build up the site in its north western quadrant with a mound to a height of 3.0m. This land, which lies within the Cambridge Green Belt, has an area of 1.8ha. It is this land which encroaches into Flood Zone 3. The landscaped south western part of this area is to be retained.
5. The industrial units are to be provided with profiled steel cladding coloured grey. Block A is to be 8.9m high, and Block B 11.2m in height.
6. Schemes for the landscaping of the site and the planting and profiling of the area for mounding have been submitted.
7. The application is supported by several reports: Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Transport Assessment, Travel Plan Framework, Waste Management Plan, Ecological Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, Remediation and Soil Re-use Strategy, and a Building Services Renewables Report.

### **Planning History**

8. **S/1172/91/O** - Outline planning permission was granted in 1993 on the whole estate (Spicers Ltd and John Dickinson Stationary sites combined) for new industrial and warehousing development and a new access road, bridge and altered junction onto the A1301 to replace the existing Sawston level crossing. This application was renewed in 1997 (**S/0800/97/F**) and in 1998 (**S/1147/98/F** and **S/1148/98/F**). Records for planning applications for industrial development on these sites extend back to 1959.
9. **S/2062/98/F**- extension to offices John Dickinson Stationary Ltd -Approved 5<sup>th</sup> February 1999.

### **Planning Policy**

10. **East of England Plan (2008):**  
**Policy SS1** (Achieving Sustainable Development)  
**Policy SS2** (Overall Spatial Strategy)  
**Policy E1** (Job Growth)  
**Policy E2** (Provision of Land for Employment)  
**Policy ENV7** (Quality in the Built Environment)  
**Policy CSR2** (Employment-Generating Development)  
**Policy CSR3** (Green Belt)
11. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**  
**P2/5** (Distribution, Warehousing and Manufacturing)
12. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy (2007):**  
**ST/8** (Employment Provision)

13. **South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007):**

**DP/1** (Sustainable Development)  
**DP/2** (Design of New Development)  
**DP/3** (Development Criteria)  
**DP/4** (Infrastructure and New Developments)  
**DP/6** (Construction Methods)  
**ET/1** (Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises in South Cambridgeshire)  
**ET/3** (Development in Established Employment Areas in the Countryside)  
**ET/5** (Development for the Expansion of Firms)  
**GB/1** (Development in the Green Belt)  
**GB/2** (Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt)  
**GB/3** (Mitigating the Impact of Development Adjoining the Green Belt)  
**SF/6** (Public Art and New Development)  
**NE/1** (Energy Efficiency)  
**NE/3** (Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development)  
**NE/4** (Landscape Character Areas)  
**NE/6** (Biodiversity)  
**NE/7** (Sites of Biodiversity or Geological Importance)  
**NE/11** (Flood Risk)  
**NE/12** (Water Conservation)  
**CH/2** (Archaeological Sites)  
**TR/1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)  
**TR/2** (Car and Cycle Parking Standards)  
**TR/3** (Mitigating Travel Impact)

14. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Adopted Proposals Map (2008):**

Inset Map No.87: The built development site is shown to be within the designated area under Policy ET/3 part K 'Spicers Ltd, Sawston'. This establishes the principle that appropriate employment development is acceptable. The land proposed for mounding is not within this allocation but is within the Green Belt.

**Consultations**

15. **Sawston Parish Council:** Recommendation of refusal unless the following conditions are addressed:

- a) Improvement to access (a principle was established in the early 1990's for a flyover in a planning application).
- b) Archaeological investigations need to take place at the Iron Age hill fort on the site.
- c) Cycle paths need to be in place as well as safe pedestrian access.
- d) An independent traffic survey is asked for based upon up to date information as there have been 6 recorded injury accidents in the last three years at this site.
- e) Consultations need to take place with the rail company as it is likely that the London Liverpool Street service is being upgraded in the near future meaning more trains on the line.

The Parish Council does however support the building work if these conditions can be met.

16. **Highways Agency** – No objection as there will be no material impact upon the operational capacity of the M11/A11. The applicant should be encouraged to prepare and implement a Travel Plan.
17. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** In respect of possible land contamination, no objection in principle, subject to a condition requiring the submission of a Remediation Method Statement.
18. **Cambridgeshire Archaeology**: No objection in principle. As the site may contain evidence of late prehistoric settlement a condition requiring a scheme of archaeological investigation is recommended.
19. **Sustrans Cambridge Area Manager** – Recommendation that the developer be required to make a financial contribution towards the provision of a new length of shared-use footway north and south from the site along the west side of the A1301, Sawston By-pass.
20. **English Heritage** has no objections and has no comments to make.
21. Consultation responses are awaited from the Local Highway Authority, Network Rail, Natural England, Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust, the Council's Environment Operations Manager, Arts Development Officer, Landscape Design Officer, Ecology Officer and Sustainability Officer.

#### **Representations**

22. None received.

#### **Planning Comments**

23. Members should note that the application has been treated as a departure from the development plan on account of the proposal to create a landscaped mound on land within the Green Belt. Such engineering works would constitute inappropriate development by virtue of it reducing the openness of the Green Belt.

#### **Scale**

24. The development of Phase 1 proposes the demolition of 5,900 sqm of floorspace and its replacement with 5,252 sqm, representing a net reduction of 648sqm, or 11%. The buildings have been arranged so as the higher buildings are located more centrally, to minimise any visual impact upon the adjoining countryside. The size of units varies from 142sqm in Block A to 1665sqm in Block B, which complies with Policy ET/1. I consider that the scale of development is appropriate. In order to retain control over floorspace changes, I recommend that a condition to prevent further mezzanine floorspace be attached. The proposal would also comply with the principles of Policy ET/3 of the Local Development Framework.

#### **Parking and Highway Impact**

25. The parking provision of 165 spaces equates to one space per 31.8 sqm. The maximum provision in the highest of the standards relating to B1 uses is one space per 30 sqm. Subject to the comments of the local highway authority, I consider that this level of provision will comply with Policy TR/2.

26. The application is supported by a Transport Assessment. This predicts that the existing facility and the proposed development will generate similar or slightly reduced volumes of traffic over the estate as a whole, including Spicers Ltd. The analysis considers the impact on the junction with London Road and the level crossing with queuing traffic, based on a traffic surveys conducted in 2001 and 2005, with traffic growth prediction factors. This concludes that even at peak times over the period to 2023 the slip road will be adequate to accommodate queuing traffic arising from the estate. The analysis takes into account the three-year accident data for the junction of Mill Lane with the A1301.
27. I await the comments of the local highway authority, however I consider that the proposal will not have a material impact upon the operational capacity of the A1301, and that the requirement for a new access that was envisaged in planning permission S/1172/91/O will not be necessary.

### ***Other issues***

28. A number of issues remain outstanding at the time of compiling this report, which are awaiting the response of consultees. These relate to drainage, landscaping, ecology and impact upon the Green Belt. I will provide an update to members at the meeting, with a view to seeking delegated powers to determine the application.
29. Infrastructure provision in respect of public art and ten per cent renewable energy will be required by condition and subsequent legal agreement, as will the implementation of the Travel Plan.

### ***Green Belt***

30. Although the applicant has not specifically identified very special circumstances to overcome the harm by reason of inappropriateness in the Green Belt, the accompanying documents attempt to explain the rationale for the engineering operations:
- (a) To deliver a sustainable waste management strategy;
  - (b) To reduce the necessity to remove excavated material from the site in line with current thinking on sustainability;
  - (c) To reduce the amount of demolition waste sent to landfill.
  - (d) To benefit nature conservation and long term enhancement ensuring overall the development proposal would be neutral to beneficial in terms of the effects to nature conservation interest. Further details are included in the Ecological Assessment.
  - (e) To comply with Policy DP/6 of the Local Development Framework , which requires development to recycle construction waste.
  - (f) To reduce the impact upon local roads and environment during construction.
31. Subject to outstanding consultee responses, I consider these factors to have positive environmental, ecological and waste management impacts, which cumulatively would outweigh harm by reason of inappropriateness.

32. I have also had regard to Circular 11/2005, The Town and Country Planning (Green Belt) Direction 2005, specifically paragraphs 10-17 inclusive. I do not consider that the circumstances in this case would generate such an impact upon the Green Belt as envisaged in this Circular to warrant the application being referred to the Secretary of State.

### **Recommendation**

33. Delegated approval of the application dated 18<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

### **Conditions**

1. Standard Condition 1 (Reason)
2. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that order with or without modification) - for a period of ten years from the date of first occupation of each of the hereby permitted buildings, they shall only be used and occupied as follows:
  - (a) Offices
    - (i) Normally to the provision of a local or sub-regional service or administrative facility principally for persons resident or organisations situated in the Cambridge area excluding national or regional headquarters offices; or
    - (ii) To a maximum floorspace of normally 300 square metres; and/or
  - (b) Research and Development
    - (i) To the provision for high technology research and development firms, or organisations, which can show a special need to be closely related to the universities, or other established facilities or associated services in the Cambridge area; and/or
  - (c) Light industry, General Industry and Storage Distribution to a maximum planning unit size of 1,850 square metres of floorspace.  
(Reason - To comply with Policy ET/1 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007, which limits employment development in the Cambridge area to uses that need to be located close to Cambridge.)
3. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.  
(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

4. No further mezzanine floors other than those approved by virtue of this planning permission shall be inserted in any of the units hereby approved unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf.  
(Reason: In order to limit the demand for additional vehicular parking provision within the site)
5. No development shall take place on the application site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of the remains in accordance with Policy CH/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
6. No materials or equipment shall be stored on the site outside the buildings save that waste materials may be kept in bins for removal periodically.  
(Reason - In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
7. No development shall commence until details of schemes for the provision of:  
(a) public art, (b) renewable energy infrastructure, and (c) the implementation of the Travel Plan to meet the needs of the development in accordance with South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007) SF/6 (Public Art and New Development) NE/3 (Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development) and TR/3 (Mitigating Travel Impact) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The schemes shall include a timetable for the provision to be made and shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason- To ensure the development complies with Policies SF/6, NE/3 and TR/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2007.)
8. Necessary conditions as required by consultees.

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

- ODPM Circular 11/2005 The Town and Country Planning (Green Belt) Direction 2005.
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- East of England Plan 2008
- Planning File ref S/1332/08/F, S/1148/98/F, S/1147/98/F, S/0800/97/F and S/1172/91/O.

**Contact Officer:** Ray McMurray – Principal Planning Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713259