

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

1st October 2008

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

S/1302/08/O - SAWSTON

Phase 2- 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

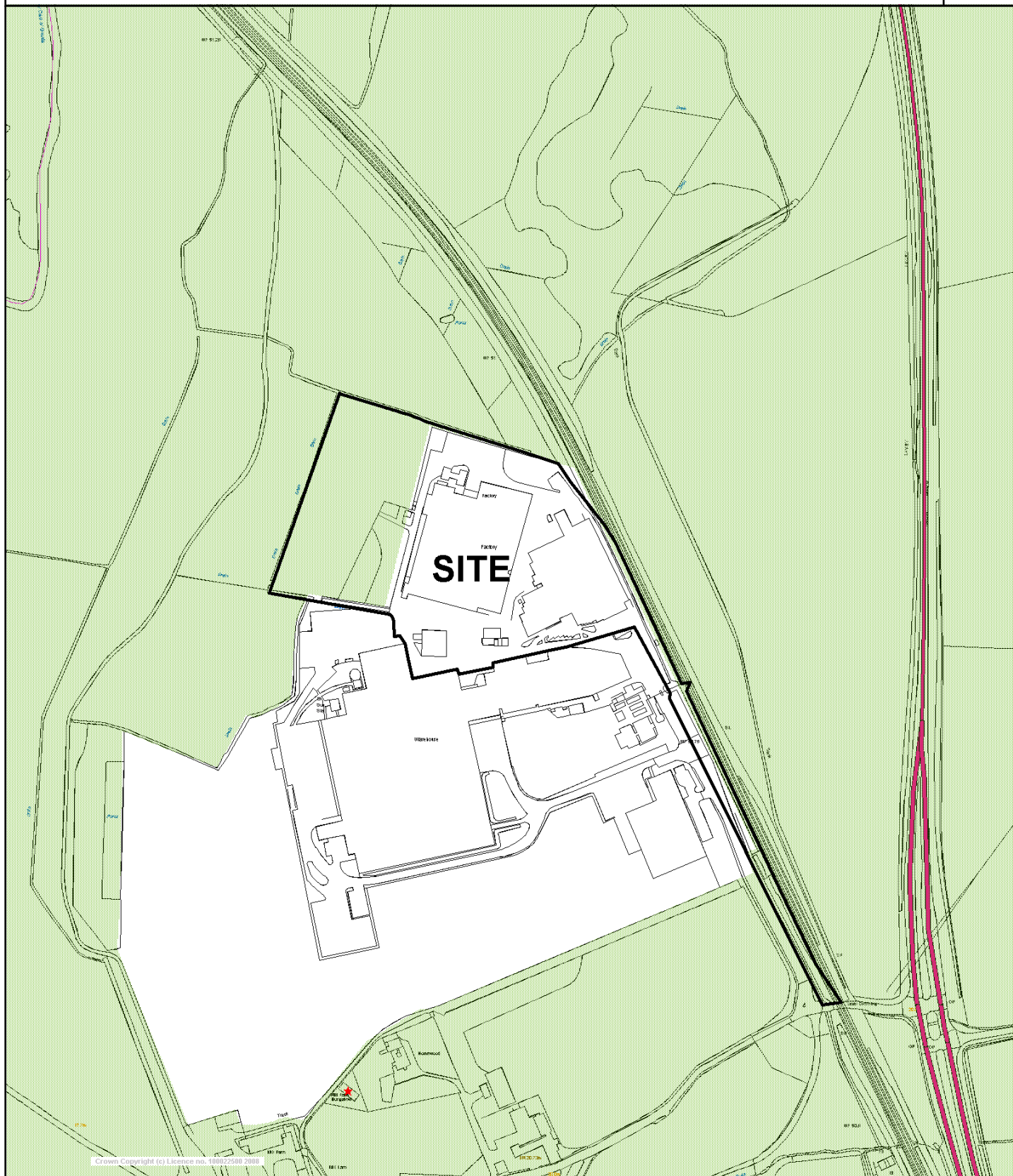
Date for Determination: 24 October 2008

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

Major Application

Departure Application

1. The 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 main 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 (excluding access road) is approximately 6.05ha.
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 outline application, dated 18 July 2008, proposes the demolition of existing buildings comprising 19,179 sq m and the erection of new buildings having a mix of light industrial, general industrial and storage uses, Classes B1c, B2 and B8, and associated infrastructure and landscaping works. All detailed matters except for access have been reserved for subsequent approval.
4. An indicative layout plan has been submitted. This shows replacement buildings comprising 14 units arranged in five blocks, (C to G). These have a combined floor area of 16,043 sqm, which represents a reduction in floor area of 3,136 sqm or 16.3 per cent below existing. The precise details of scale and layout have been reserved for



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Scale 1/5000 Date 17/9/2008

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subsequent approval in order to respond to occupier interest, but ridge heights of between 10.8m and 15.0m are indicated. Indicative unit sizes range from 552 sqm to 2,338sqm. The larger units have been located to the rear of the plot with large service areas shielded from view. Some of the units are to be provided with first floor ancillary offices. The indicative plan shows a total of 364 car spaces, which represents a ratio of one space per 44 sqm floorspace. Surface water will be discharged to the surrounding network of drains.

5. 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, which is to be extended from the mound proposed under Phase 1. 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.
6. 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

7. **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.
8. **S/2062/98/F**- extension to offices John Dickinson Stationary Ltd -Approved 5 February 1999.

Planning Policy

9. **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)
10. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003**
P2/5 (Distribution, Warehousing and Manufacturing)
11. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy (2007)**
ST/8 (Employment Provision)
12. **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)

13. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Adopted Proposals Map (2008)**

Inset Map No.87: The built development site is shown to be partly 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

14. **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.

15. **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.
16. **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.
17. **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.
18. **English Heritage**: No objection and no comments to make.
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.
20. 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

21. None received.

Planning Comments

22. 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

23. The scale of development is a matter to be determined in a subsequent reserved matters application. The scale parameters indicate buildings that will be appropriate to the scale of existing buildings at Spicers Ltd. The indicative layout plan and supporting statements show two buildings comprising Block E to exceed the maximum unit size of 1850 sqm for any single occupier provided in policy ET/1. The development as a whole represents the breaking up of a large single user into 14 smaller units, and in this context I consider that the breaching of the policy limitation on size to be acceptable in respect of two units. I recommend that a condition be attached to limit the floorspace provided in the development and the maximum size of units and a condition to prevent further mezzanine floorspace.

Parking and Highway Impact

24. The indicative parking provision of 364 spaces, equating to one space per 44 sqm, falls short of the maximum provision in the highest of the standards relating to B1 uses (one space per 30 sqm) but above the maximum standard for the next highest standard of Class B2 (one space per 50sqm). As the detailed layout of the scheme is not determined at this stage, I do not consider this to be a ground for concern, subject

to the comments of the local highway authority, and to the mitigation put forward in the submitted Travel Plan.

25. 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.
26. I await the comments of the local highway authority, however I note that the proposal represents a reduction in floorspace on the site. 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

27. 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.
28. 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.
29. 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 although 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 term of the effects to nature conservation interest. Further details are included in the Ecological Assessment.
 - e) To comply with Policy DP/6 of the LDF, which requires development to recycle construction waste.
 - f) To reduce the impact upon local roads and environment during construction.
30. 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.

31. 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

32. Delegated approval of the application dated 18 July 2008

Conditions

1. Approval of the details of the layout of the site, the scale and appearance of buildings, and landscaping (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced. (Reason- The application is in outline only.)
2. Application for the approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. (Reason- The application is in outline only.)
3. The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.
(Reason- The application is in outline only.)
4. 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 and Distribution to a maximum planning unit size in respect of not more than two industrial units not to exceed 2,500 square metres of floorspace and in the case of remaining units not to exceed 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.)

5. The maximum amount of gross external floorspace of business/ industrial/ storage and distribution units excluding ancillary buildings and plant on the site shall not exceed 16,050 square metres. (Reason- To ensure that development is of a scale appropriate to the rural location and setting and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies ET/3, DP/1 and DP/3)
6. 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)
7. No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development. The details shall also include specification of all proposed trees, hedges and shrub planting, which shall include details of species, density and size of stock.
(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.)
8. 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.)
9. 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.)
10. 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.)

11. 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) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The scheme 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.)
12. Necessary conditions as required by consultees.

Informatives

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/1302/08/O, S/1148/98/F, S/1147/98/F, S/0800/97/F & S/1172/91/O.

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