

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

14th January 2009

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

S/1601/08/O - MILTON

**Demolition of Existing Buildings, Removal of Existing Pylons/Mast etc from Training Grounds and Construction of 101 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: Delegated minded to approve

Date for Determination: 12th January 2009 (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.

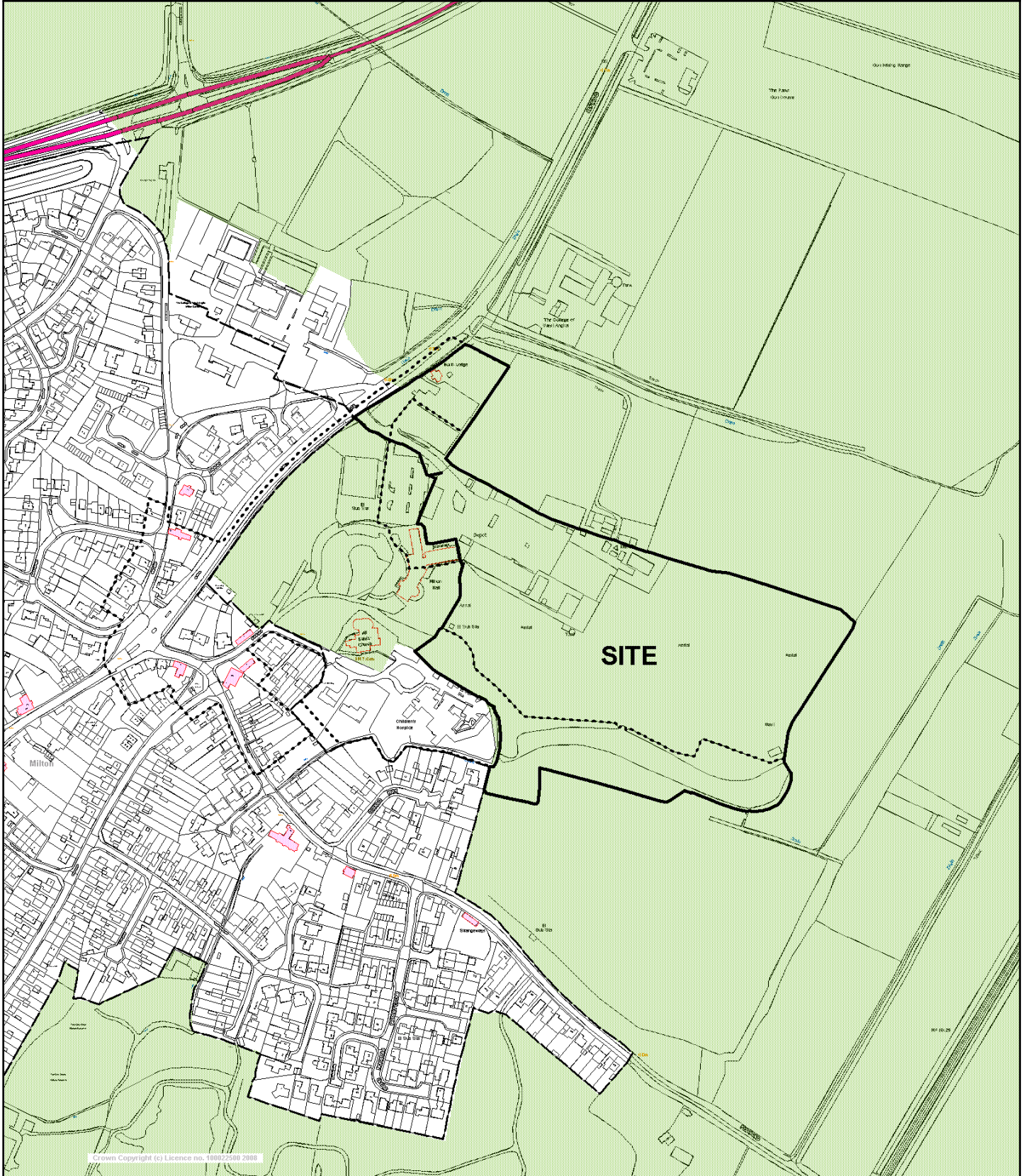
Members will visit this site on 14th January 2009

Part within Conservation Area

Departure

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, 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 3,450m². This area measures approximately 1.64ha. Within this area is a pair of trees grouped at the western end of the parking / yard area



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Scale 1/2500 Date 15/12/2008

Centre = 548156 E 262933 N

January Planning Committee

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, sub-stations 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 3rd September 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 101 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 102 spaces for the occupiers, 15 for visitors and staff, and 40 for the football pitches, totalling 157 spaces across the site. This number includes spaces for disabled users.

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 was amended on 1st December 2008 following a meeting with officers. The indicative site layout, building scale parameters plan, pedestrian and cycle access plan, vehicular access plan, land use concept plan have been altered to reduce the built footprint in the area around North Lodge. These revised plans were supported by a statement titled 'Response to Meeting 28 October 2008'.
- 6. The application is accompanied by other 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 works to North Lodge, the building scale parameters, amount of development and site layout are included, although the latter, is now out-of-date a revised version has been sought, although it is indicative and a version is contained in the 'Response to Meeting 28 October 2008' report.

Planning History

- 7. This proposal follows a recent application (ref. **S/0935/08/O** on the same site). This scheme was initially for 121 retirement units, however it was amended at a late stage in the application to the 101 units now being considered. It was due to be considered at Planning Committee on 6th August 2008. The application was withdrawn by the applicant prior to the meeting to allow sufficient time for further work addressing concerns raised and so it was not discussed, although an addendum to the report detailed the planning considerations and responses to consultation in relation to the reduced scheme. The remaining concerns related to affordable housing, ecological enhancements, landscaping, trees, Listed Buildings and conservation area impacts, and whether very special circumstances existed to outweigh the various harms including to the Green Belt, due to the development being 'inappropriate'.
- 8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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).

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

Planning Policy

12. **Natural Policy Guidance**

- **PPG2** "Greenbelts",
- **PPS3** "Housing"
- **PPS5** "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas"
- **PPG15** "Planning and the Historic Environment"

13. ***East of England Plan 2008***

- Policy **H1**: Regional Housing Provision 2001 to 2021
- Policy **ENV7**: Quality of Built Environment
- Policy **CSR3**: Green Belt

14. ***Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003***

- Policy **P6/1** – Development Related Provision

15. ***South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007***

Core Strategy

- Policy **ST/1** - Green Belt
- Policy **ST/2** - Housing Provision
- Policy **ST/3** - Re-Using Previously Developed Land and Buildings
- Policy **ST/6** - Group Villages
- Policy **ST/8** - Employment Provision

Development Control Policies

- Policy **DP/1** - Sustainable Development
- Policy **DP/2** - Design of New Development
- Policy **DP/3** - Development Criteria
- Policy **DP/4** - Infrastructure and New Developments
- Policy **DP/6** - Construction Methods
- Policy **DP/7** - Development Frameworks
- Policy **GB/1** - Development in the Green Belt
- Policy **GB/2** - Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt
- Policy **GB/3** - Mitigating the Impact of Development Adjoining the Green Belt
- Policy **GB/4** - Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt
- Policy **GB/5** - Recreation in the Green Belt
- Policy **HG/1** - Housing Density
- Policy **HG/2** - Housing Mix
- Policy **HG/3** - Affordable Housing
- Policy **HG/5** - Exceptions Sites for Affordable Housing
- Policy **ET/6** - Loss of Rural Employment to Non-Employment Uses
- Policy **ET/8** - Replacement Buildings in the Countryside
- Policy **SF/6** - Public Art and New Development
- Policy **SF/10** - Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space and New Developments
- Policy **SF/11** - Open Space Standards
- Policy **NE/1** - Energy Efficiency
- Policy **NE/3** - Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development
- Policy **NE/4** - Landscape Character Areas
- Policy **NE/6** - Biodiversity
- Policy **NE/8** - Groundwater
- Policy **NE/9** - Water and Drainage Infrastructure
- Policy **NE/11** - Flood Risk
- Policy **NE/12** - Water Conservation
- Policy **CH/1** - Historic Landscapes
- Policy **CH/2** - Archaeological Sites
- Policy **CH/4** - Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building
- Policy **CH/5** - Conservation Areas
- Policy **TR/1** - Planning for More Sustainable Travel
- Policy **TR/2** - Car and Cycle Parking Standards
- Policy **TR/3** - Mitigating Travel Impact
- Policy **TR/4** - Non-motorised Modes

Consultations

16. **Milton Parish Council** – on the initial submission recommended approval.
Commenting:

- (a) *“Green Belt.* Council supports the principle of change of use from industrial units to retirement housing on the existing footprint. 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].
 - (b) *Visual aspect.* Such a development will improve the visual aspect of this area. Properties with appropriate landscaping will be an improvement over industrial units.
 - (c) *Woods and lake.* We welcome the improvements to the lake and wood and their opening up to the public.
 - (d) *Section 106 Agreement.* It is **imperative** that Milton Parish Council is a party to a S106 Agreement which must address the following:

Considerable support for sports facilities for community use, a minimum requirement being three junior football pitches with appropriate pavilion.
 - (e) *Age Limit* - it is essential that restrictions are in place to ensure that the properties are sold to the over 55's only”.
17. It recommends approval of the amended scheme.
 18. **Planning Policy Manager** comments:
 19. “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.
 20. 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.
 21. 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.
 22. 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 advise 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.

23. 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:
 1. 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.
 2. An Employment Land Review prepared for the Council has concluded that, to meet the East of England Plan 2026 job forecasts, 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.
24. 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:
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. 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”.
28. **Housing Development and Enabling Manager (Affordable Homes) –**
comments:
28. “The proposed development for retirement accommodation on this site means that it is very difficult to achieve and sustain an on site affordable housing contribution here.
29. This type of accommodation would require money from the Supporting People budget, and there is no money planned or available for this scheme.

Also this type of accommodation would require a service charge levy on each household. This service charge would not be covered by Housing benefit and it is therefore doubtful if this type of accommodation could therefore be considered as affordable.

30. In full consultation with the agent, the development team has commissioned an independent valuation by Messrs Pocock and Shaw. They have valued the site on a commuted sum basis in lieu of on site provision. The valuation has been calculated at £1.6 million. This money would be used to provide affordable housing within the district of South Cambridgeshire.
31. The agent on behalf of the developer has agreed to a without prejudice acceptance of this sum”.
32. **Environment Agency – Comments:**
 - (a) In initial correspondence it confirmed that, although it agreed that remediation will be required, it was requiring clarification and new information in relation to the methodology for human health and controlled waters. It subsequently commented:
 - (b) The proposed development is acceptable in principle to the Agency, however in view of the site, scale and nature of the development; it is recommended that the following conditions be appended to any planning approval:
 1. A scheme for the provision of surface water drainage works to prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal.
 2. A scheme for the ownership and maintenance of the surface water system to ensure the satisfactory long-term operation to prevent the increased risk of flooding.
 3. A scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site to prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment.
 4. No infiltration of surface water drainage into the ground is permitted for those parts of the site where it has been demonstrated that there is no resultant unacceptable risk to controlled waters in order to prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment.
 - (c) *Surface Water Drainage/Flood Defence*
Based on the information submitted the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA ref 44550668 Issue No 4 dated May 2008) for the proposed development is acceptable to us. It satisfactorily demonstrates that the site is situated within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) and that surface water drainage will be managed in a way so as not to adversely affect third parties.
 - (d) It has been stated in the FRA that surface water from the existing site discharges to the southern pond and that the preferred option for managing surface water from the proposed development will be a similar arrangement. Further capacity will be created in the southern pond by undertaking dredging. It has also been stated that the new development will result in a decrease in the amount of impermeable area compared with existing. For

these reasons we find the principle of the surface water drainage proposals acceptable.

- (e) (Please be aware that any works affecting the flow of an ordinary watercourse requires the prior written Consent of the Environment Agency under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991).

Conservation Issues

- (f) Enhancement of biodiversity - As stated in the Government's Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9): Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, development should have minimal impacts on biodiversity and enhance it wherever possible. The proposed development offers a good opportunity to enhance the biodiversity of the site if measures to enhance habitats and increase habitat variability are incorporated at the design stage. Mitigation measures should be implemented to avoid, reduce and remedy any significant adverse effects to habitats or species in the vicinity of the proposed development. The applicant should refer to the 'Biodiversity checklist for Land Use Planners in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough' for guidance regarding habitat creation and enhancement.
 - (g) Wildlife corridors - Existing features such as ponds or hedgerows should be retained within the development plans for the site to retain wildlife corridors. These features should be linked with any newly created ponds or newly planted hedges and grasslands. Wildlife corridors are key features in an increasingly fragmented countryside. It is therefore important to retain as many of the existing features as possible. These habitats provide corridors for wildlife, connect vital habitats such as grassland, watercourses and woodland, provide foraging areas for many species such as bats and birds, and over wintering sites for small mammals, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. Habitat loss and fragmentation are one of the main threats to biodiversity, so enhancing ecological connectivity has the potential to increase the long-term viability of many species.
 - (h) Bats - The recommendations made in the Ecological Appraisal report should be followed and agreed with Natural England. The bat boxes should be put in position before work on the buildings begins.
- Groundwater & Contaminated Land Issues*
- (i) The Agency is currently assessing additional supporting documentation.
 - (j) No discharge direct to groundwater will be permitted.
 - (k) All infiltration structures (permeable pavements, infiltration trenches, soakaways, etc.) to be constructed as shallow a depth as possible to simulate natural infiltration.
 - (l) Base of infiltration structures is to be at least 1 metre above the highest seasonal water-table.
 - (m) Roof water downpipes should be connected to the drainage system directly, via a reuse device such as a water butt or by means of back inlet gullies provided with sealing plates. There should be no open gratings
 - (n) Roof water should discharge to separate infiltration systems to those used for road and vehicle parking areas.

- (o) Drainage systems are to be constructed in line with guidance provided in CIRIA C697 as well as referring to the details given in C609 referred to above. C522 replacement (prior to publication, 2006, refer to CIRIA Report 609)

Foundation Proposals

- (p) No information is provided with regards to foundations for the site and whether piling is an option. Therefore we recommend that piling on contaminated sites underlain by aquifers is avoided where possible, and that non-invasive methods, such as rafts, should be used instead. Where there is no alternative to piling, a method should be selected that minimises the risks of groundwater pollution or gas migration. Mitigation measures and/or environmental monitoring may need to be incorporated into the design. The method selected should be presented in a "Foundation Works Risk Assessment Report" which should be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

34. **Anglian Water** – recommends a number of informatives.

35. **Drainage Manager** – no comment received.

36. **Internal Drainage Board** – no comment on drainage.

37. **Ecology Officer** – Comments:

- (a) The statement of design intent and restoration of the Repton lake gives a degree of reassurance that the protection and restoration of the habitats that it contains could be achieved. The statement is still slightly non-committal on actual de-silting (clearing) of the lake. It is appreciated that the applicant may not wish to enter into the unknown on the matter, but it is considered reasonable and proportionate to the development to secure such works, as a reserved matters application.
- (b) On the matter of tree works, the Trees and Landscape and Landscape Design Officers should lead on this, however, he is happy that bat surveys can be undertaken once the proposed trees for removal are considered as, if an important roost was identified; the tree retention would be expected.
- (c) Letting in light to the lake will assist its recovery, as far as vegetation goes, but if it is not de-silted it will become a marsh in a relatively short period of time.
- (d) The provision of permissive paths and wet meadows is welcomed.

38. He later commented that he supports the Landscape Design Officer's response (see paragraph 39, below) in particular, in relation to the restoration of the lake and the concern that there are 'too many unknowns' remaining which could have an important bearing on future decisions. A more firm commitment toward the lake's actual restoration is required. The lake is the most important landscape and biodiversity feature of this site and a better understanding of how it will be restored (i.e. the actual approach, depth, profiles and spoil disposal options) would appear to be a requirement in his view.

39. **Landscape Design Officer** – Several of his earlier comments have been addressed, i.e.
- (a) There will be public access to the meadow and lake area;
 - (b) Vistas will be opened to the lake to include the wider landscape and connections to the hall;
 - (c) The lake will be restored;
 - (d) Woodland and meadow habitats will be enhanced; and
 - (e) Possible impacts of adjacent developments (eg the Sports Lake bund and planting) will be considered.
40. There is no objection in relation to the 'Statement of Design Intent' – however it could be stronger in some respects:
- (a) Paragraph 4.6 – Would rather see the phrase (for example) 'in some areas to the south of the lake the woodland will be managed and public access restricted to enhance wildlife habitats' - Leaving areas 'Undisturbed' will not increase the low ecological value noted in point 4.1 - It will all need managing/planting to some extent, probably a phased approach.
 - (b) Paragraph 5.5 – Tree removal - retain (or plant) some younger trees along with the retention of mature specimens to achieve a healthy age structure to the woodland.
 - (c) Paragraph 6.3 Amenity - while not providing a primary route to the southern edge of the lake there should still be safe, perhaps low-key access provided - people will use this area.
 - (d) Paragraph 7.3 – While agreeing the retention of the woodland, tree removal will probably have to be more extensive than 'selective' to achieve the vistas and improvements to the lake and woodland habitats - i.e. a lake with trees around it and a woodland backdrop, rather than a woodland with occasional views of the lake.
 - (e) 7.7, 7.8 Lake restoration – Acknowledging that this application is outline, and that details of methods can be discussed later, the applicants should have a good idea of how the lake will be restored (or the alternatives) at this stage, and how much this may cost - e.g. why not test the silt now to find out whether or not it can be spread on site or must be taken away - the difference may be several £100K. Getting the lake back into good condition is the cornerstone of the landscape restoration and I think we need to know that the applicants are confident that a) they can achieve the restoration and b) they can afford it. The proposed approach still seems to be to thin the trees to improve access and then go and have a look.

Further comments on the amended scheme are awaited.

41. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – Comments that the 'Statement of Design Intent' describes a way forward to re-instate the lake. While it is accepted that trees need to be felled to bring the ecology back to the lake, she would like to

see the trees identified for removal marked on site and agreed with her and the Landscape Design Officer prior to any felling.

42. **Divisional Environmental Health Officer** – Comments that the Site Investigation, Risk Assessment & Development of Remediation Strategy by URS dated 12 August 2008 highlights several areas of contamination that have been assessed as posing a risk to the proposed land use. A condition is recommended requiring:
- (a) A further scheme for the investigation and recording of contamination in the footprint of buildings that previously prevented investigation and in the area of the identified underground storage tanks following their removal.
 - (b) Detailed proposals for the removal, containment or otherwise rendering harmless any contamination (the Remediation Method Statement) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works specified in the remediation method statement have been completed, and a validation report submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with the approved scheme.
 - (c) If, during remediation works, any contamination is identified that has not been considered in the remediation method statement, then remediation proposals for this material should be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

In addition conditions to minimise the impact upon nearby residents or occupiers are also suggested including details of plant or equipment, restricted hours of demolition and construction, and pile driven foundations. Informatives are suggested in relation to bonfires during construction and demolition.

43. **English Heritage** – comments on the initial scheme:
1. 'The principle change from the original application is the number of units and the area on which they are to be sited. This is stated to be contained within the land currently occupied by industrial buildings, although it is noted that currently there are no structures in and around the North Lodge, and in particular there are no structures to the north of North Lodge, this is currently open countryside. Our revised advice in response to this is as follows:

Setting of All Saints Church (Listed Grade II).*
 2. There is a substantial and mature tree screen between the church and the existing industrial buildings on the north side of the former park. Historically it is likely that the church would have enjoyed a more open aspect, with views into the park, but these trees now provide a key role in protecting the setting of this important listed building. Therefore, while it is noted that the applicants intend to restore the surviving parts of this park including re-opening views from Milton Hall to the lake, English Heritage would expect to see the existing tree belt adjacent to the church retained and reinforced where necessary.

Impact on the Conservation Area

3. The Milton Conservation Area overlaps the site at the south end, where the lake is within the Conservation Area, and again in the area around North Lodge. The existing industrial buildings are outside of the Conservation Area, but their removal would represent an enhancement to its setting. However, as previously stated in respect of the replacement to these structures, since the application is at outline only (and the layout provided is therefore only indicative), it remains difficult to fully determine the impact that they will have on the Historic Environment. It is noted that more information has been supplied on the height and extent of the new structures, but it remains our view that in order to fully comply with the recommendations contained in PPG15 this application should have been submitted in full and not in outline. In the event that it is to be determined at outline, we would expect to see further information include on the eaves level of these proposed new structures.

Impact on Grade II Listed Buildings

4. While it is not within English Heritage's core remit to comment on the setting of Grade II Listed Buildings, we note that the layout still includes new structures in relatively close proximity to North Lodge, on land previously used for car parking only, and to the north of North Lodge, where there is currently no development. We note that Milton Hall's West Lodge has already had its setting heavily compromised by 20th century expansion of the village and it would be unfortunate for North Lodge to suffer a similar fate. It is unfortunate that the relationship between the North Lodge and Milton Hall has been eroded through C20 developments and that North Lodge will not appear as the 'gate lodge' to this new development. The latest site layout includes some improvements to the setting of North Lodge, with better links to the open countryside, but the rationale for new development to the north of North Lodge must be questioned.

Recommendation

5. English Heritage remains satisfied that, so long as the tree screen between the church and the park is maintained and reinforced as necessary, then the proposed development will have a neutral impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed church. In respect of the impact on the Conservation Area, we broadly welcome the reduction in area of land to be developed, but remained concerned that there is still not sufficient detail contained in this outline application on eaves heights of the new buildings to fully assess and control the impact on the Historic Environment'.

44. Further comments on the amended scheme state:

Setting of All Saints Church (Listed Grade II)*

45. "As set out in our previous correspondence, there is a substantial and mature tree screen between the church and the existing industrial buildings on the north side of the former park. Historically it is likely that the church would have enjoyed a more open aspect, with views into the park, but these trees now provide a key role in protecting the setting of this important listed building. Therefore, while it is noted that the applicants intend to restore the surviving parts of this park including re-opening views from Milton Hall to the lake, English Heritage would expect to see the existing tree belt adjacent to the church retained and reinforced where necessary.

Impact on the Conservation Area

46. The Milton Conservation Area overlaps the site at the south end, where the lake is within the Conservation Area, and again in the area around North Lodge. The existing industrial buildings are outside of the Conservation Area, but their removal would represent an enhancement to its setting. However, as previously stated in respect of the replacement of these structures, since the application is at outline only (and the layout provided is therefore only indicative), it remains difficult to fully determine the impact that they will have on the Historic Environment. It is noted that more information has been supplied on the height and extent of the new structures, but it remains our view that in order to fully comply with the recommendations contained in PPG15 this application should have been submitted in full and not in outline.

Impact on Grade II Listed Buildings

47. While it is not within English Heritage's core remit to comment on the setting of Grade II Listed Buildings, we have previously raised concerns over the aspects of the new development in the vicinity of the North Lodge. We now note that the layout has been further revised to omit the new-build structures to the north of North Lodge and that the new development in close proximity to North Lodge will now be limited to land previously used for car parking on the south side of the Lodge. This change is to be welcomed and English Heritage is content for the SCDC to determine the impact of these revised proposals on the setting of the Gate Lodge and Hall in accordance with national and local planning policies.

Recommendation

48. English Heritage remains satisfied that, so long as the tree screen between the church and the park is maintained and reinforced as necessary, then the proposed development will have a neutral impact on the setting of the Grade II* listed church. In respect of the impact on the Conservation Area, we broadly welcome the reduction in area of land to be developed, but remained concerned that, in order to be able to fully assess the impact on the Historic Environment as required by PPG 15, the application should have been in full and not outline”.

49. **Principal Conservation Officer** – commented on the initial submission:
- (a) The proposals affect North Lodge, a grade II listed building, and the settings of Milton Hall (grade II listed building), the Parish Church (grade II* listed building) and the Hospice (grade II listed building). They also affect the Milton Conservation Area which incorporates the land around North Lodge and the woodland area around the lake. The site is all within the Green Belt.
 - (b) In principle we would agree the redevelopment of the previously developed area of the EDF Depot, subject to scale and massing which should be no worse than the current situation and the design which should be suitable for this locality and setting. However the area around North Lodge was not previously developed and any proposal should maintain or enhance this openness, which is very prominent in the Conservation Area and setting of the Listed building.
 - (c) The outline approach is of concern as it does not contain sufficient information to identify all the elements of impact on the Conservation Area and Listed buildings. It remains the view of the Conservation

Section, in line with PPG 15, that full details are required to assess the full implications of this extensive development on the Historic Environment. It is also of concern that smaller, but intrinsic elements such as those described in the Design and Access Statement for solar panels, garaging and refuse structures will have a significant impact on their surroundings, but because they are insufficiently described, they could ultimately result in a proposal that is damaging in principle to the Listed buildings and Conservation Area'.

She goes on to list a number of items for which they considered insufficient details had been provided.

50. Further principle concerns about the current submission are then listed as having included:
- (a) The character of the aspect along Ely Road and around North Lodge would be changed from a rural aspect to that surrounded by houses.
 - (b) There would be the removal of trees which would further lessen the rural character around North Lodge.
 - (c) The Lodge would lose further links with Milton Hall. The proposal plans conflict, but the Masterplan shows the path from the Lodge terminated so that the Listed building would lose all purpose as a Lodge. There are rows of proposed houses blocking the relationship between the Lodge and its main house.
 - (d) The proposed heights of buildings around Milton Hall would be higher than the Listed building and therefore, in combination with their greater depth, would dominate the Listed building.
 - (e) The central facilities building is intended to be 'of a scale which denotes its central importance and conveys the status of a country house in its impact.' However this would compete with the actual historic country house, the Listed Milton Hall which is next to the proposed central facilities building and would therefore be harmed by the competition.
 - (f) The spans of the proposed buildings are significantly deeper than the existing buildings and contrary to the character of the Conservation Area where buildings have very modest spans. The listed buildings also have comparatively modest spans and would be harmed by the wider spans of proposed adjacent buildings.
 - (g) The proposed design has no local design basis, despite assessing some of the local character in the Design and Access Statement. The drawings accompanying the application have similarities with the design of the applicants' previous developments in Liphook and Rugby, rather than the character of the historic settlement in Milton.
 - (h) The design contains unattractive elements based on the too-deep spans which include a flat roof on top of the pitched roof of the central facilities block, one of the nearest buildings to Milton Hall and visible in the views of the Listed building from the Repton landscape.

- (i) The landscaping along the edge of the development site within the views of the Repton landscape and within the views from the Listed church. There is some screening along the edge of the proposed buildings but it is very thin and would screen less in winter, so any proposed development needs to relate better to the landscape.
- (j) The sports provision area is of concern for various reasons including the structures and traffic in the countryside, Green Belt and historic landscape. This could be improved by rotating the fields so that they are along the northern boundary with car parking and the pavilion also hidden in views behind the proposed houses, but the compatibility of this noisy use with the rural setting and retirement homes is questionable.
- (k) The proposed works to the Listed North Lodge are not entirely sympathetic. On the basis of the submission (which is incomplete) the proposed doors and windows are of most concern as they do not reflect the design of the original and propose replacement of historic features rather than repair.

Recommendation

- 51. That the application is refused due to the detrimental impact of the position, bulk, massing and design of the proposed works on the character and rural setting of the Listed buildings and the Conservation Area. Also for the likely removal of historic features and harm to the fabric of the Listed building'. She suggested that negotiation can take place on a number of matters.
- 52. Following a meeting between the agents and officers on the 28th October a revised scheme has been submitted. In response to this updated comments have been received.
- 53. The submitted amendments follow a meeting held on 28 October 2008 and quote the draft minutes issued following that meeting. However they do not include the amendments we made to those draft minutes on 3 November. Specific omissions of concern include:
 - (a) The proviso that any development around North Lodge should take into account that no current development is above ground level and the note that the dumped hardcore was not an area of previous development.
 - (b) That a study of the number of units would take place to confirm what the minimum number is to make the project viable and to ascertain if the indicative layout could be reworked in order to minimise the impact on North Lodge. In addition, it was discussed that it may be possible to extend the development closer towards the football pitches if it reduces the number of units around the Lodge. (That the agent should provide information to identify and justify the viability and economic basis of the extent of development).
 - (c) That the discussion about the football pitches did not include agreement over white markings. White markings would be visible in the landscape and therefore it would be preferable to re-orientate the pitches to avoid this protruding into the vista.

- (d) That there should be sufficient information supplied for the proper consideration necessary to determine the impact of the proposals on the setting and interest of the Listed buildings and Conservation Area.
54. The submission does not allay our concerns about the impact of the development upon the Listed buildings, especially North Lodge and Milton Hall, nor the Conservation Area:
- (a) As indicated by the (overly small scale) Ground Study A, the spans and density of the proposed development significantly exceed that of the existing village.
 - (b) The section through the site (drawing SK02 A3) is inaccurate. It shows Milton Hall at a height of approximately 14 metres to eaves level, whereas 11 metres is likely to be closer. It shows the new Communal building at only 11.8 metres high whereas the notes elsewhere state it is to be a maximum of 14.2 metres. Contrary to the note 14.2, this would be higher than the extensions to Milton Hall. The dimensions should therefore be clarified and the section revised as appropriate. We therefore remain concerned that the new Communal building would be approximately the same height as Milton Hall (or taller) and would therefore compete with it.
 - (c) Whilst building to the north of North Lodge has been removed, the extent of proposed development still dominates and cramps the Listed building. As noted at the meeting, the extent of proposed development around North Lodge and within the Green Belt should be no more than the extent of current hardstanding in principle, and it should be borne in mind that any building is higher and therefore more prominent than the existing development in that setting. Any proposed buildings, if acceptable, should therefore be subservient and sympathetic and avoid damaging the context of the Listed building. The proposal however exceeds the area of hardstanding shown on the aerial photo; provides a cramped development with considerably larger spans than the Listed building; involves the removal of existing trees between the Lodge and the proposed development and at the entrance to the site; builds over the green space between the hardstanding and the entrance road; provides little green space or amenity space around the development on the entrance giving an urban appearance to the entrance of this rural site; obscures the views of the Lodge and isolates it further from its context.
 - (d) The aerial photo shows that the southern boundary of the existing industrial buildings is perpendicular to the rear of Milton Hall. The proposed site plans show the boundary moved out into the parkland on the south-eastern end to develop into previously undeveloped land in the Green Belt and further into the vista of the listed building. Ideally any development should be further away from the vista than the existing, even if this means development along the north boundary eastward of the existing industrial buildings (subject to Green Belt issues); rather than into the vista.
55. The response includes proposals to increase the screening between the church and the site, contribute towards the bus shelter, install a central satellite facility

and provide some sort of entrance feature although there is no detail. In principle these are acceptable, subject to more information and drawings.

56. **Cambridge Archaeology – Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) –**
Comments that:

- (a) An archaeological evaluation has been conducted at this site, for which it is in receipt of an approved report of results. This work demonstrated the presence of archaeology throughout the application area pertaining to various periods of settlement and landscaping in the past. No remains were present that could be considered to be of national significance and, therefore, it does not object to this development proceeding.
- (b) However, in order to safeguard the archaeological remains, both by record (excavation and reporting) and in situ (avoidance strategies and long-term management of the area), it recommends that any planning permission should include a suitable archaeological condition to enable the above protection of ancient remains to occur. Such a condition may be worded as follows:
- (c) No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority.
- (d) This written scheme will include the following components, completion of each of which will trigger the phased discharging of the condition:
 - i) Submission of an approved strategy and management plan to enable the preservation in situ of archaeological remains in areas of the development area that will not be affected by ground works (all types);
 - ii) Fieldwork in accordance with an agreed written scheme of investigation;
 - iii) Post-excavation assessment (to be submitted within six months of the completion of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority); and
 - iv) Completion of post-excavation analysis, preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Planning Authority).
- (e) Given the discovery of landscape features, possibly relating to Humphrey Repton's original park and garden design for Milton Hall, the development team may like to consider the reinstatement of some of these features within the overall design of the parkland. The dredging/restoration of the lake will certainly prompt greater long-term use of this feature and is an obvious location of small information boards that link the historic features present in this landscape to Milton Hall and the earliest use of the landscape.

- (f) A brief for the archaeological requirements should be obtained from their office.

57. **Local Highways Authority – CCC** – Comments:

- (a) Requests that the applicant provide a drawing to a scale of 1:500 showing the site, as Drawing Number SK7 A3 is to a scale that has made it problematic for it to comment.
- (b) It requires more detail in the form of a detailed plan of the proposed layout and access, with visibility splays. This should form part of the approved plans and not be for submission as part of the reserved matters.
- (c) It considers that the layout for the development and the highway dimensions need to be shown on a submitted drawing, as this information is critical to the success of the development.
- (d) It notes that WSP (the highway consultant employed by the applicants) will design in the detailed layout in accordance with the advice set out in Manual for Streets with a carriageway width of 5.5m with 2.0m footways on each side and that it will not be intended as a Home Zone. The Highway Authority is now satisfied that this is acceptable.
- (e) It requires footway improvements within the vicinity of Church Lane to be secured via a S106 agreement.
- (f) If the Planning Authority is minded to approve the application it has recommended conditions and informatives to be added to the decision.

58. Further comments are awaited following receipt of responses to the above concerns from the applicants. A verbal update will be given.

59. **New Communities (CCC)** – initially commented in relation to traffic generation resulting from the proposals:

- (a) 'It is imperative that we are made aware of how long the site has been left vacant. The TA makes clear that the proposed site will generate less trips than the former use of the site but if the site has been vacant for a long period then this information will be negligible and we will have to look at the new site in isolation from the former use.
- (b) Ideally we would want trip generation information on the football pitches in order to establish what the worst case scenario will be. It is intimated that they will be used once a week, what day of the week is proposed?

Description of Existing Networks

- (c) There has not been any identification of critical junctions that may be affected by traffic generated by this proposed development. If the former EDF site has not been recently occupied then junction modelling will have to be undertaken. I would also suggest the Highways Agency are informed too. Are there any junctions which you would suggest are modelled? Please can you specify?

- (d) Junction modelling should consider the following scenarios:
- Base (opening year)
 - Base + Committed Development (opening year)
 - Base + Committed Development + Development (opening year)
 - Base (5 years after opening year)
 - Base + Committed Development (5 years after opening year)
 - Base + Committed Development + Development (5 years after opening year).
- Appropriate growth factors should be applied to the future year scenario.

Trip Generation

- (e) The TRICS (2008b) figures used for the trip rates for the office use and industrial buildings are representative as are the traffic generation figures.
- (f) The first hand survey work of similar sites is always more favoured. However, the survey work included in the TA is 10 years old. I would like to see more up-to-date survey information provided.

Trip Generation

- (g) The traffic generation calculations appear to be for vehicular trips. It is expected that a TA includes the number of person trips generated by all modes and also the number of vehicular trips.

Measures to Mitigate

- (h) It will be essential for a travel plan to be secured as part of the Section 106 agreement.
- (i) If the site has been vacant for longer than 2 years we would need to address the new impact of the development and reflect the mitigation measures and contribution accordingly.

Recommendation

- (j) We will need the client to confirm how long the site has been vacant. Once this has been established, then we will be able to confirm the levels of mitigation measures required'.

60. Having received responses from the applicants in relation to the above items it has now commented that:

"The TA failed to address critical information that is required as part of any submitted TA in line with County Council guidance and DfT guidance. The proposed site will generate fewer trips than the existing site, and therefore, the original issues raised are now resolved".

61. An approved Residential Travel Plan is still required as part of a S106 agreement.
62. **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.
63. **Countryside Access Team (CCC)** – no comments received, although it has commented on the draft S106 in relation to wording on permissive footpaths.

64. **Sustainability Officer** – no comments received.
65. **Building Control** – no comments received.
66. **General Works Manager**– no comments received.
67. **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.
68. **Police Architect Liaison Officer** – No comments received (the Officer is no longer in post), however previously comments received stated:
- (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.
69. **Primary Care Trust** – No comments received, although previously it had stated:

“The development of 121 retirement units in Milton will increase the demand on general medical services in Milton particularly as the residents will all be elderly and some may also be frail. Whilst the local practice will be prepared to accept these patients on to their list this needs to be borne in mind when considering the application. I would also request that South Cambridgeshire District Council ensure that, if the application is approved, these properties are built to Lifetime Homes Standard as they will have a life expectancy of more than four years and because their targeted customers are the elderly.”

70. **Cultural Services Manager** – no comments received.

Representations

71. A letter from an employee at Milton Hall and resident of Milton commenting:
- (a) *Size of apartment blocks/central facilities building*
The plans show several apartments and a central facilities building close to the current north and east wings of Milton Hall (these are the 1960s extensions). My concern that the height of these buildings (12 metres for apartments, 14.2 metres for facilities building) will significantly impact on the amount of daylight into both wings, and the

east wing in particular as this will be surrounded on two sides by the new buildings which will be higher than this existing part of Milton Hall. The planning application states that the three storey facility building will "screen unattractive modern additions to this otherwise attractive Listed Building." but the employees inside the two wings of Milton Hall would appreciate not losing their daylight to work in.

(b) *Extent of building southwards*

The plans show that the retirement units will not encroach southwards to spoil the views of Milton Hall. However, I disagree. Currently the EDF depot buildings are level with the east wing of Milton Hall. There are no buildings southward of this point, just open land. The plans for the retirement units will be significantly southwards of the current buildings which therefore will restrict the views from and to Milton Hall. I therefore urge the council to restrict the development to the existing site which has already been built upon and leave the existing park land.

(c) *Use of Land*

Milton Hall is used largely for office based activities. However, the scope of use for Milton Hall is for light industrial use. The company (Pi Shurlok) which resides at Milton Hall provides services for the Automotive Industry. As such there is occasional noise as part of the work undertaken, mainly related to vehicle movements and operating of vehicle engines. No issues have been raised by the current neighbours of Milton Hall relating to the work undertaken. However, the addition of 101 retirement units, some of them in very close proximity to Milton Hall may result in some disturbance of the residents of these units. The Council should consider that in permitting housing so close to buildings used for industrial use there may be future issues relating to noise.

(d) *Security of Milton Hall*

The plans detail that views of Milton Hall will be restored along with parkland. I have concern that the views of Milton Hall may be compromised for security reasons. The EDF depot neighbouring Milton Hall has always been a secure site with gated access. As such this has provided security to Milton Hall as it is difficult for the public to get close to the buildings (i.e. they can not go through the EDF site). If the retirement units are built then there will be access by the public both to the units themselves and the parkland. As such to retain the level of security at Milton Hall other measures such as increased fencing may be required. This will reduce the views of Milton Hall, not improve them. Whilst this issue may not be within the scope of consideration for this application it should be realised that the owners of Milton Hall have a need to ensure the site is secure against public access. The proposed development will increase the ability for the public to get onto the grounds of Milton Hall unless increased security measures are taken.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

72. 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 and openness of the Green Belt, 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

- 73. 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 overall 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'.
- 74. 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

- 75. 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.
- 76. 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.

77. Although the indicative layout and scale of development are not to be determined at this stage, this application has sought to address concerns with the earlier scheme that the proposed re-development would not accord with the principles of development on MDSs. It would have had a greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt. This was due to the significant additional footprint of buildings proposed extending 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.
78. This application seeks to overcome these concerns. The indicative site layout plan shows all built development is confined to the existing built area, although some encroachment of ancillary landscaped areas and pedestrian routes. The scale of buildings remains unchanged. In terms of assessing the impact on the Green Belt, the higher buildings are sited closer to the village and existing two storey buildings at Milton Hall.
79. 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. This issue was re-visited during the previous application and it was concluded that the latter is not an option in these circumstances. If approved, their removal can be secured which would significantly enhance the openness of the Green Belt.
80. The proposals do not accord with MDS principles, which officers advised should be the starting point for re-development of the site, as the building footprint and heights will be exceeded. Contrary to MDS re-development principles, officers have accepted that, as the areas of hardstanding are so extensive on this site, some increase in footprint can be justified. The development does not exceed the existing built area of the site. Having regard to the loss of many Pylons, the extensive network of power lines and other structures and the redevelopment of the brownfield site, I consider that openness is improved.

Countryside

81. Countryside policy (Policy DP/7) limits development outside frameworks to that which is essential 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

82. 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.

83. 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.
84. It is noted that this scheme provides for a specific population group in providing homes for retired 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. Officers have accepted however that the likelihood of this is small.
85. In terms of housing mix, the proposals are for 45 no. 2-bedroomed flats and 56 no. 2-bedroomed houses. These would be all owner-occupied. Although the mix does not reflect that set out in HG/2, the applicant has suggested that one-bedroomed units are difficult to sell, as they are too inflexible i.e. they make it difficult for residents to have separate bedrooms, or guests and carers to stay. Although two-bedrooms may also have ground floor studies that are large enough to allow use as a bedroom if required.
86. In order to secure a balanced community provision of affordable housing is required on site as part of the development.
87. 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. A contribution of £1.6 million is to be offered in lieu of on-site provision. This has been supported through a financial viability assessment and is accepted by the Housing Development & Enabling Manager.

Employment

88. 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).
89. 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.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Area

90. 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 the historic environment, including Listed buildings, conservation area and Repton's parkland setting to Milton Hall. The main concerns arising out of the consultation responses relate to (a) the impact of building heights and spans; (b) difficulties gauging impact as the application is outline; (c) development in the area of North Lodge; (d) opening up the vista from Milton Hall across its parkland setting; and (e) matters relating to the details such as building designs, layout of sports pitches, and landscaping, accuracy of indicative plans.
91. The agent has provided details of building spans (depth) in the area. This remains a concern to the Conservation Team in relation to these. Reducing these would require the applicant to almost entirely reconfigure the scheme. The main areas in which this is important relate to are on areas within the Conservation Area adjacent to Milton Hall and North Lodge. The height of the buildings is dictated by the spans, therefore reducing spans would result in a drop in overall building heights.
92. The agent is reviewing the submitted plans and has clarified that in relation to the communal facilities building, which is the highest building proposed, its overall ridge height can be restricted to 12 metres. They would accept a condition to this effect. The parameters plan shows a building to 14.2 metres, however this is due to the clock tower. The agent confirmed that this can be omitted from the detailed design. This will ensure that the largest of the buildings have a subservient relationship to Milton Hall. The parameters plan will be amended accordingly.
93. As this is an outline application addressing the principle of development and access only, there is not fully worked up designs for the site. This has caused some concern for English Heritage and the Conservation and Design Team. The designs provided are indicative only. The agents are aware that reserved matters details will be required to reflect the local vernacular and materials and not simply replicate designs used elsewhere in the country.
94. The amended plans attempt to address the concern in relation the setting of North Lodge. Works to North Lodge building, as described in the Design and Access Statement, do not fall under this planning application for consideration, as they require a separate Listed Building Consent.
95. This revised scheme, as amended on 1st December 2008, goes some way to addressing the concerns of English Heritage and the Principal Conservation Officer. It is considered that the setting of North Lodge will still be harmed to some degree as a consequence of the amended scheme, due to the proximity of development in this area to the frontage trees and North Lodge.
96. 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 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, albeit that it is accepted that the existing rural backdrop to the north of the lodge will now be retained. This matter has been put to the agent and a response is awaited.

97. A compromise has been suggested, of allowing a small number of dwellings to be sited outside the existing built area at the eastern end of the site, as this is considered preferable to allowing building closer to North Lodge and will not project into the vista from Milton Hall. This also frees up the area around North Lodge to allow the dwellings around it to be moved away from the access road, trees and hedges and away from the Lodge. This also ensures the developer is still able to provide the number of units it requires to make the scheme viable. A verbal update will be given, as this will require amending the scheme, however initial feedback from the applicant has been positive.
98. The pedestrian linkage between Milton Hall and North Lodge has now been re-created as closely as possible to a former footpath between the two, overcoming an earlier concern.
99. The scheme now proposed has been kept within the existing built area and addresses concerns about 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. Subject to the agent clarifying the boundaries of development in relation to site boundaries, this concern seems to have been overcome.
100. Subject to the detailed landscaping in the area adjacent to setting All Saints' Church, the relationship between it and the church is acceptable.
101. 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, on balance and subject to addressing the building in the North Lodge area the proposals will be able to achieve these objectives. The development will improve the woodland within the Conservation Area and would be an enhancement. The removal of unsightly structures and restoration of the parkland adjacent to the Conservation Area is also an enhancement.
102. Other concerns raised through the consultation process can be addressed at the reserved matters stage i.e. design, layout, and landscaping.

Archaeology

103. Archaeological assessment has been carried out and subject to the condition recommended by the County Archaeology unit, has been addressed satisfactorily through pre-application assessment of the site.

Landscape

104. 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. English Heritage's comments in relation to the landscaped edge between the church and site can be addressed through a detailed landscape scheme.
105. It is noted that the draft S106 submitted with the application includes terms relating to a Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy Plan.
106. The key issue raised is in relation to the restoration of the lake and de-silting. The applicant is aware of the concern but does not wish to address this at this stage. While the concern is noted, it is not a matter of principle and therefore can be dealt with through reserved matters.

Environmental Matters

107. 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.
108. 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

109. The agent has confirmed that the applicant is willing to provide public art on the site. They consider that this should be dealt with at reserved matters stage and note 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

110. The scheme provides significant provision for open space to meet the needs of the development and the public generally. The provision being made accords with policy SF/10, and in fact exceeds what is required to serve the development itself. The scheme provides formal sports pitches and informal open space. Retirement schemes are not required to provide play space.
111. 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

acceptable and it is noted that is supported by the Parish Council, subject to the details being agreed.

112. 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. Following discussions with the agent and Parish Council it is noted, without prejudice, that an extant planning permission for sports pitches at Landbeach Road, which can provide alternative provision to that proposed, is unlikely to be implemented due to concerns about accessing it from across the A10.

Access

113. The Highway Agency has not objected to the scheme in terms of traffic generation and impact upon the Trunk Road network.
114. The Local Highway Authority expresses a number of concerns relating to the access. A plan of the visibility splays has since been provided. The agent has responded to the points raised by the LHA. Most of the points it raises can be dealt with at reserved matters stage or through planning conditions and informatives. Several are not material planning conditions. A response is awaited from the Local Highway Authority, however it is Officer opinion that the application now addresses adequately all matters relating to the access, subject to safeguarding conditions.
115. The request for improvements to pedestrian facilities in Church Lane will be explored, as currently there is no definite plan to provide such a link. Officers are concerned that the LHA may be seeking improvements not directly required to meet the increased use arising from the development itself, contrary to the advice in circulars 11/95 and 05/05. The inclusion of such a requirement may act as a disincentive to them seeking the pedestrian link from the site to the private access road serving the hospice and church.
116. The traffic assessment is now accepted, subject to securing a Residential Travel Plan.

Impact on use of Milton Hall

117. Concern has been raised at the proximity and height of the apartments and facilities block, which are sited adjacent to Milton hall, as these are considered to be potentially detrimental in terms of loss of light. This is a matter for the detailed stage. However from the indicative drawings, the apartment block is to the north of Milton Hall, and likely to have a 10-metre separation. This is sufficient to ensure natural daylight is not lost. It is also noted that there is a single storey building not more than 5 metres to the east from the Hall presently.
118. Security concerns have also been raised as the boundary between the two sites will be more open. At present there is a 3m metre high metal fence. Boundary treatments in the setting of a listed building require planning permission and can be dealt with by way of condition or separate planning applications.

Reserved Matters

119. 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 is supported these could be the subject of detailed discussion with the relevant officers and organisations to achieve an acceptable scheme.

Very special circumstances

120. The material considerations put forward which the applicant considers amount to very special circumstances, in summary, are:
- (a) The provision of housing specifically designed to meet the needs of the elderly, which is otherwise unlikely to be met.
 - (b) Improvements to the landscape, including removal of pylons and associated equipment (which impact on the openness of the Green Belt), restoration of the lake and its woodland setting.
 - (c) Provision of extensive recreational opportunities for local residents by way of sports pitches and managed access to woodland and parkland. Pitches to be made available on a managed basis to meet a specific local need.
 - (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) Restoration of the parkland designed by Humphrey Repton, including lake and woodland which forms part of the setting of the Church, Milton Hall and North Lodge.
 - (g) Delivery of around 40 affordable homes off-site which would otherwise not be forthcoming.
 - (h) Delivery of housing to meet the Regional Spatial Strategy target.

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

121. Officers agree that there is merit in these other considerations. These cumulatively do 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 housing in the countryside, loss of employment and setting of North Lodge as a Listed Building.

Departure

122. The application proposals amount to a departure to the development plan. They do not accord with Green Belt, countryside, housing, employment, and conservation policies. Under the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) (Departures) Directions 1999, development which, by reason of its scale or nature or the location of the land, would significantly prejudice the implementation of the development plan's policies and proposals must be referred. In this case, the proposals are considered to be of a nature and scale that the implementation of the development plan could be significantly prejudiced due to the loss of employment land in favour of housing development.
123. In addition, on the basis that very special circumstances have been provided that outweigh the harm it will cause, officers are minded to support the application. Notwithstanding, the application must be referred to the Secretary of State under the Green Belt Direction 2005 referred as the proposals are for inappropriate development of more than 1000m².

Recommendation

124. Subject to:
- (a) Receiving amended proposals addressing concerns in relation to development in the North Lodge Area and parameters of development;
 - (b) Further comments from English Heritage, Principal Conservation Officer and the Local Highway Authority; and
 - (c) Referral to the Secretary of State under the departures and green belt directives and to the application not being called in for her decision, the application be approved subject to safeguarding conditions and the completing of a Section 106 Agreement.

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
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- 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
- Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment
- Open Space Consultation Draft SPD 2008
- Development Control Policies DPD Examination Statement ref. DCPR4 – SCDC
- Planning file refs. S/1601/08/O, 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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