

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

14<sup>th</sup> January 2009

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

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### **S/0805/08/O - WIMPOLE**

**3 Affordable Houses, 72A The Cottages, Wimpole Woodyard, Cambridge Road for Mr R Foster**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008**

#### **Notes:**

**This Application has been reported back to Planning Committee following the receipt of amended plans requested at the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2008 meeting for determination as it relates to an exception site for affordable housing.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. Members considered this application at the August 2008 meeting (Item 6) following a site visit. Members granted officers delegated powers to approve the application subject to the receipt of revised drawings showing the provision of additional garden land to the proposed dwellings and details of proposed levels within the site. Amended drawings have been received, incorporating these changes.
2. As amended this outline application proposes the erection of a terrace of three 3-bedroom affordable dwellings, one for rent and two for shared ownership, on a 0.08ha area of land associated with the former woodyard site in Cambridge Road (A603). The site sits below the level of Cambridge Road
3. A new single vehicular access, 5.5m wide, is to be formed to Cambridge Road serving all three new dwellings, with parking provided for 7 vehicles and a shared turning area. The proposed dwellings are shown sited 14m back from the road and will have a ridge height of between 7.5 and 8.25m.
4. As amended the application includes a site cross section which shows the area of ground to be made up by up to 1m, although the land will be still be 0.8m below the level of Cambridge Road. The site area has been increased to provide rear gardens that are now 10m deep.
5. The application seeks approval of all matters apart from external appearance.
6. Two new market dwellings (see History below) to the south west of the application site, within the area of the old woodyard are currently in the course of construction.
7. To the north east of the site is a pair of semi-detached houses. A 4m wide strip of land has been left between the application site and the boundary with these adjacent properties. Opposite the site are residential dwellings.

S-0805-08-0



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8. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.
9. The density of the scheme is 15 dph.
10. The site is outside but adjoining the village framework.

### **Planning History**

11. Planning consent was granted in 2006 for the erection of two dwellings on the former woodyard site as a departure from the Development Plan (Ref: **S/0031/06/F**). That application indicated that the applicant would be prepared to provide an area at the north east end of the site for the construction of two affordable dwellings. A Section 106 Agreement was entered into requiring either the provision of two affordable dwellings (subject to obtaining the appropriate planning consent) or the payment of a commuted sum in lieu of such provision.
12. A revised planning application for the two market dwellings on the site was approved in 2007 (**Ref: S/1407/07/F**).

### **Planning Policy**

Relevant policies are listed below. Please refer to Appendix 1 to this Committee agenda for further details.

*South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007:*

**Policy HG/1** - Housing Density  
**Policy HG/2** - Housing Mix  
**Policy HG/3** - Affordable Housing  
**Policy HG/5** – Exception Sites for Affordable Housing  
**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 NE/1** - Energy Efficiency  
**Policy NE/6** - Biodiversity  
**Policy NE/9** - Water and Drainage Infrastructure  
**Policy NE/12** – Water  
**Policy TR/1** - Planning for More Sustainable Travel  
**Policy TR/2** - Car and Cycle Parking Standards  
**Policy TR/4** - Non-motorised Modes

### **Consultation**

13. The comments of **Wimpole Parish Council** on the revised drawings will be reported at the meeting.

In respect of the original submission it recommended refusal commenting:

14. “The Council understood that only 2 houses would be built. Parking allocated is inadequate. Some flooding has occurred in recent years. It is essential that the adequacy of the electrical and sewage systems are checked in view of the new

building on both sides of the road. A significant number of residents attended the PC meeting to express opposition.”

15. The **Housing Development and Enabling Manager** - supports the application.
16. The **Affordable Housing Panel** - supports the application. The last Housing Needs Survey carried out in the village in 2003 indicated 7 people in housing need. Since then one shared ownership dwelling has been secured in the village framework.
17. The **Trees and Landscapes Officer** - has no objection.
18. The **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** - requests that a condition is attached to any consent requiring the submission of a scheme for the investigation and recording of any contamination of the site, along with remediation objectives.
19. The comments of the **Local Highway Authority** - on the amended drawings will be reported at the meeting.
20. In respect of the original submission it requested the provision of visibility splays and that the drawing show the dimensions of parking spaces and reversing space. Conditions should be attached to any consent securing the splays and the maintenance of the manoeuvring area. Provision should be shown for cycle parking. The access should be widened to a minimum of 4.8m, although 5.5m would be preferable. The applicants should be asked to consider accessing the development through the existing main entrance to the site. The Highway Authority states that it will seek the upgrading of the existing footpath to a minimum width of 1.5m along the frontage of the development under a Section 106 Agreement.
21. The **Environment Agency** comments that it assumes that drainage will be as the previous scheme for the main site and has commented accordingly. It points out that the issue of ground contamination remains unresolved.
22. **Anglian Water** comments that there are no current issues with the sewers in that area regarding flooding and the Pumping Station. Based on the anticipated foul flows from the proposed 3 dwellings this will not adversely affect the sewers/pumping station. The developer will need to apply for a connection to the public foul sewer. Anglian Water states that it will not permit the discharge of surface water to the foul sewer from any new development.
23. The comments of the **Ecology Officer** on the amended plans will be reported at the meeting.
24. In respect of the original submission he commented that he was aware of the proposed tree removal and feels that this is compensated for by the management of the front hedgerow. He states that he is aware of the orchid translocation and supports it in this case. The nearby pond has recently been reshaped under guidance and is not particularly ecologically sensitive, although he will advise the applicant to erect temporary fencing during the course of development if it is felt necessary
25. The comments of the **EDF Energy** will be reported at the meeting.

## **Representations**

Comments of the amended drawings will be reported at the meeting.

26. In respect of the original submission the occupier of No 70 Cambridge Road, the property immediately to the north east of the site, made the following comments.
27. The application states that the site is not recorded on the Environment Agency maps within any flood zones and is therefore not at risk of flooding, however the site was flooded recently (in April or May) and this was not the first time. The waters of the main lake and the pond shown adjacent to the proposed cottages "joined-up", and the combined waters came to within 4m of the boundary with No70 and certainly covered part of the designated area for the proposed cottages.
28. The proposed car parking provision appears inadequate when looking at the experience of other new developments in the area and given that it is not possible to park on the road outside the houses. When a planning application was submitted for an extension to No 70 the owner was advised that two additional parking spaces should be provided.
29. There is concern about the extra loading on village utilities. The electricity for the village is fed by 2 transformers and previous conversations with electricity field engineers have indicated that both units are pretty much overloaded. Recently there have been a number of occasions when dimmed lights have occurred and low voltage warnings issued by power supplies in the house.
30. Have any checks been made on the capacity of the electricity supply, sewage and water supply?
31. All the existing houses on this side of the road are semi-detached. As the original proposal was for 2 houses why is a terrace of 3 now being considered.
32. The occupiers of 55 Cambridge Road, opposite the site strongly objected for the following reasons.
  - (a) Not enough services in the village and neighbouring villages for education to accommodate more dwellings.
  - (b) All new development within the village has been on brownfield sites, this is a Greenfield site.
  - (c) The location of the site is where common spotted and bee orchids have been found which now have to be relocated.
  - (d) In winter months when there is heavy rain the site is flooded
  - (e) Access to Cambridge Road will cause traffic problems
  - (f) Additional strain on drainage system which is already at capacity
  - (g) Inadequate parking provision which will lead to parking on the grass verge causing visibility obstructions.
  - (h) Trees will need to be removed to form the new entrance opening up views from properties on the opposite side of the road.
  - (i) Why has the proposal been increased to three dwellings?

## **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

33. I have reported this application back to Members as the amended drawing, in proposing to raise the existing ground level within the site by up to 1m, has materially changed the scheme from that previously considered and may attract further comment from consultees
34. The key issues to consider with this application is whether the scheme complies with the criteria for exception sites in Policy HG/5. Although Members considered these matters at the August meeting I have rehearsed the issues again below, updating the comments as appropriate
35. The planning consent for the erection of the two market dwellings on the former woodyard site required either the erection of two affordable dwellings, subject to obtaining the necessary planning consent, or the payment of a sum in lieu of their provision. The previous application indicated that the north east corner of the land was where these dwellings might be sited. The Section 106 Agreement did not specify the size of the units but required one to be for rent and one for shared equity lease.
36. The current application proposes the erection of 3 affordable dwellings rather than 2. I have no objection to this change and the additional affordable units have been demonstrated to be in line with the proven local need for the village. The Affordable Housing panel supports the scheme .
37. I am of the view that the site complies with the criteria in Policy HG/5 in that it is well related to the built-up area of the settlement and that the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the size and character of the village. Although one of the neighbours has pointed out that the existing dwellings on this side of Cambridge Road are semi-detached, I do not consider that a well-designed small terrace of three dwellings would be inappropriate.
38. As an infill village the level of facilities and services are limited but existing development on the opposite side of Cambridge Road extends beyond the site to the south west so I consider it to be as well related as existing properties.
39. Provided there is a high quality of design achieved, with appropriate landscaping I consider that the development will not materially harm the character of the village or the rural landscape although at the reserved matters stage I will want to look at the maximum height of the units proposed to ensure that it is in keeping with the existing properties to the north east. The proposed raising of ground levels will mean that this issue is particularly important but does not in my view prejudice the potential development of the site when considered alongside the level of adjacent land. The existing property to the east of the site will still be sited on land that is slightly above the proposed levels within the application site.
40. I note the comments made about highway safety, including those of the Local Highway Authority. The amended drawing increases the width of the access to Cambridge Road and provides for 7 car parking spaces within the site. Existing ground levels are to be raised in recognition of the existing change of level from Cambridge Road. In response to the issues of sharing the existing access serving the two new dwellings to the west the applicant comments the original application for the market houses envisaged access for the affordable housing in the current proposed position. The applicant states that the markets units are of a size and have been positioned in such a way that he considers access via the existing gateway to the main site to be virtually

impossible and it is believed that the proposed access is in the best position. I am of the view that the subject to the comments of the Local Highway Authority on the revised plans that the access arrangements are acceptable.

41. The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) requests a condition regarding the investigation into possible contamination of the site. Although the applicant has indicated that this work has been carried out as part of the conditions attached to the planning consent for the erection of the two market dwellings the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) is of the view that insufficient investigative work would have been carried out in this part of the site and further work needs to be done.
42. Anglian Water has confirmed that in its view the existing foul sewage system is adequate to cater for the new development.
43. In response to comments made about flooding of the site the applicant comments that water levels in the Woodyard have been monitored since 2004 and it is considered that the risk of flooding to the market houses to be very low and even lower for the affordable houses.
44. The amended scheme has increased the depth of the rear gardens from 6.5m to 10m, and in my view has addressed Members concerns on this.

#### **Recommendation**

45. That, subject to the response to consultations on the amended drawings, the application is approved subject to safeguarding conditions.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007
- Planning Files Ref: S/0805/08/O, S/1407/07/F and S/0031/06/F

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