

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th February 2009

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

S/2088/08/RM - GAMLINGAY

Approval of Appearance, Access, Landscaping, Layout and Scale of Outline Planning Permission S/0034/06/O for the Erection of 8 Dwellings at 22a West Road for Wyboston Lakes Ltd

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 4th February 2009

Notes:

Members will visit the site on 4th February 2009

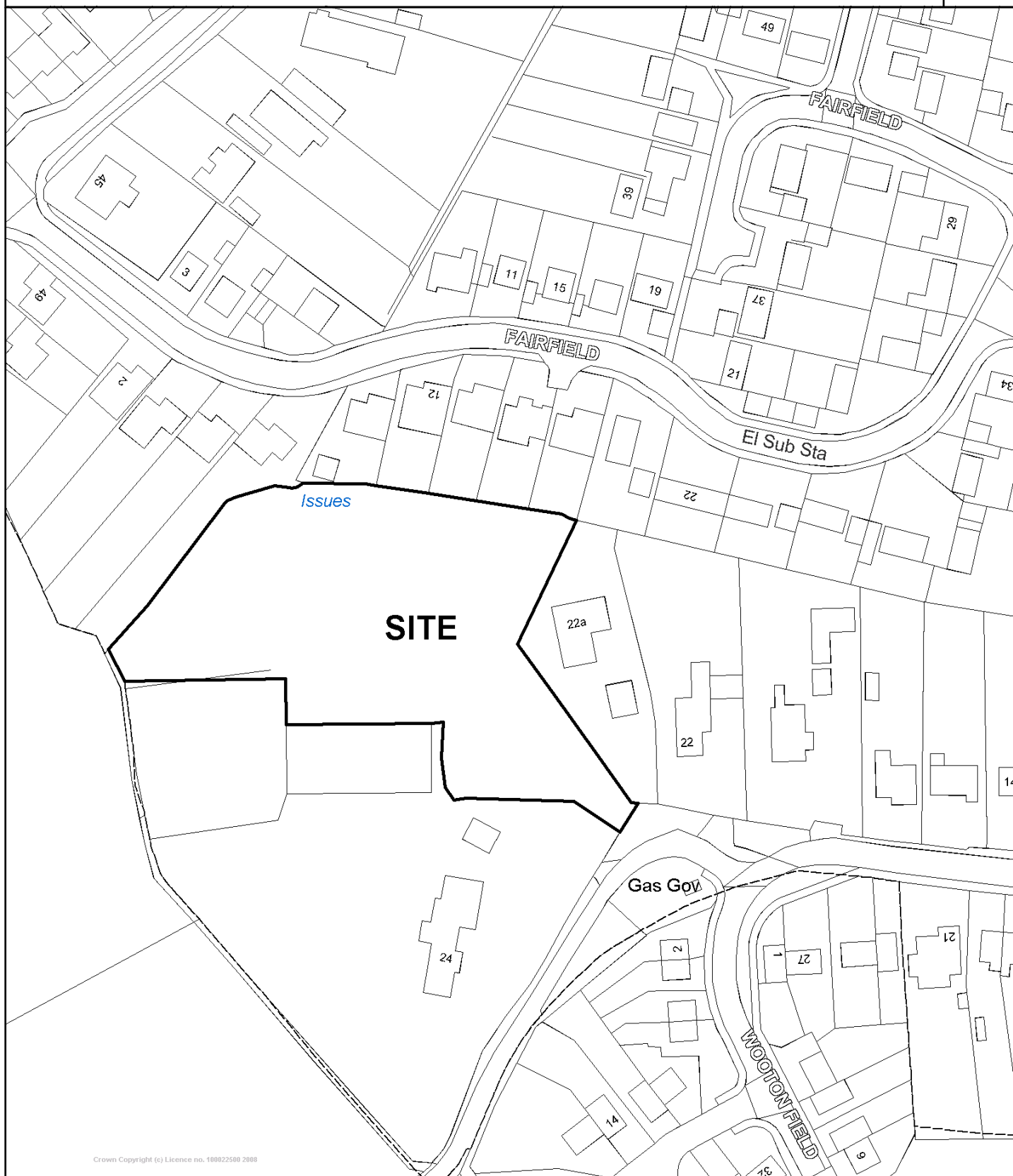
The application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination on the basis that the Parish Council recommendation of refusal does not accord with the officer recommendation.

Site and Proposal

1. As members will note from the site visit, the site is a irregular shaped plot of land, measuring 0.497 hectares, that formerly comprised part of the garden land to 24 West Road, a large detached house to the south of the site. The site features a significant change of levels, dropping by approximately 4m from east to west.
2. The site is partially screened by trees and conifers on the north and west boundaries with the rear gardens of detached houses in Fairfield. To the east is an existing bungalow, also built on part of the original garden of 24 West Road, now known as 22a. Access to the site is achieved from West Road using the private driveway serving this bungalow.
3. This reserved matters application, submitted on 10th December 2008, seeks consent for eight detached market dwellings, with specific details required by the outline consent extant on the site, of their method of access, site layout, appearance, scale and landscaping. The scheme comprises four 2 bedroom dwellings, two 3 bedroom dwellings and two 4 bedroom dwellings.
4. The scheme equates to a density of approximately 16 dwellings per hectare (dph).

Planning History

5. Outline planning consent was originally granted for residential development of the site in December 1995 (**Ref S/1780/95/O**). In December 1998 an application to allow a further period for submission of reserved matters was approved (**Ref S/1839/98/O**). An additional condition attached to that consent restricted development of the site to a maximum of 2 dwellings to comply with Local Plan policy.



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February 2009 Planning Committee

6. In February 2001 consent was granted for variation of conditions to allow a further period for the submission of reserved matters and to allow the erection of four dwelling on the site, reflecting a change in Development Plan policies (**Ref S/2229/00/F**).
7. At the January 2005 Committee meeting a reserved matters application (**Ref S/0266/04/RM**) for the erection of four dwellings was refused following a site visit by Members on the grounds that the design of the proposed dwellings were out of character with the area. That decision was upheld at appeal.
8. Subsequent to that decision in March 2006 a further outline planning consent was granted for residential development (**Ref S/0034/06/O**). Conditions of consent required the submission of reserved matters for siting, design and external appearance, access and landscaping of the dwellings; and further required the submission of additional details including finished floor levels and foundations for the proposed dwellings, details of site boundaries, and the commissioning of a landfill gas investigation. A further condition of consent required that should any reserved matters scheme proposed more than 10 dwellings on the site a scheme of affordable housing must be agreed.

Planning Policy

9. *South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy*, **Policy ST/5** of the LDF identifies Gamlingay as a Minor Rural Centre.
10. *Local Development Framework, Development Control Policies, adopted July 2007:*
Policy DP/1 – Sustainable Development
Policy DP/2 – Design of New Development
Policy DP/3 – Development Criteria
Policy DP/7 – Development Frameworks
Policy HG/1 – Housing Density
Policy HG/2 – Housing Mix
Policy HG/3 – Affordable Housing
Policy NE/6 – Biodiversity
Policy NE/9 – Water and Drainage Infrastructure
Policy TR/1 – Planning for More Sustainable Travel
Policy TR/2 – Car and Cycle Parking Standards

Consultation

10. **Gamlingay Parish Council** – recommends refusal and comments that the previous comments to the earlier outline and reserved matters applications are reiterated. No affordable housing is being provided and the design of the new dwellings does not comply with the Village Design Statement (VDS). Greater consideration to local design needs to be incorporated.
11. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** – raises concerns regarding potential effects of noise, recommends conditions regarding use of power operated machinery and pile driven foundations and recommends informatives regarding no burning of waste materials.
12. **Contaminated Land Officer** – notes the findings of the Environment Agency with regard to the details that have previously been submitted with regard to landfill gas and agrees with the proposal given in the Design and Access statement of the reserved matters application to incorporate gas infiltration protection measures within the floor slab in plots 5-8 in accordance with BRE guidelines.

13. **Environment Agency** – states that its comments on the outline application remain pertinent.
14. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – has raised initial concerns regarding the effect of pruning back the cypress hedges that surround the site and has asked for a larger copy of the landscape plan to be sent through for detailed analysis. She has also made comments in respect of the width of the access and its ability to be adopted. However, comments from the Local Highway Authority have yet to be received in this regard. Any further comments that are received will be reported verbally to members at Committee.
15. **Local Highway Authority** – comments currently awaited. Members will be updated verbally at Committee.
16. **Ecology Officer** - comments currently awaited. Members will be updated verbally at Committee.
17. **Environment Operations Manager** - comments currently awaited. Members will be updated verbally at Committee.

Representations

18. The owner/occupiers of 8 Fairfield have raised concerns/comments regarding the sewage system, which has had problems in the past, resulting in sewage flooding garden.
19. The applicant's agent has responded to the Parish Council's comments with regard to affordable housing and design. The comments in respect of affordable housing are addressed in the planning comments below. In respect of design they note they have reviewed the Village Design Statement and comments within PPS1 and consider that there is no strong local distinctiveness close to the development site and that the proposals achieve a balance between the single and 2 storey dwellings along West Road and recognise the change of levels on the site.

Planning Comments

20. By virtue of the above and the conditions of the outline consent for the site I consider that the main issues for members to consider with regard to the current proposals are as follows:
 - (a) Density and Mix of Dwellings
 - (b) Layout, Design and External Appearance of the Dwellings
 - (c) Provision of Affordable Housing
 - (d) Residential Amenity

Density and Mix of Dwellings

21. The scheme proposes the erection of eight market dwellings, at a density of approximately 16 dwellings per hectare. Although this is significantly below the 30 dph typically sought by Policy HG/1 of the LDF, it must be noted that the site does not possess a uniform character, with an irregular shape, a significant change of levels and numerous dwellings surrounding its boundaries, particularly to the north, east and south. Furthermore, by virtue of its backland nature, regard must be had to the ability to access the site and allow any visiting vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear.
22. In light of the physical characteristics of the site it would be unrealistic to expect the scheme to provide the number of dwellings required on site without drastically altering the mix of dwellings by increasing the number of smaller units proposed. This, in turn,

would have implications for the design and appearance of the dwellings on the site, as well as the potential for additional considerations for parking, refuse storage and the overall scale of the buildings proposed.

23. The scheme proposes a mix of dwellings to provide four 2 bedroom dwellings, two 3 bedroom dwellings and two 4 bedroom dwellings, giving 50% of the dwellings as 1 or 2 bedroom, 25% as 3 bedroom and 25% as 4 bedroom, which accords with the mix sought by Policy HG/2 of the LDF.
24. Given the suitability of the mix of dwellings across the site and the physical characteristics that it is constrained by, I am satisfied that the scheme proposed is satisfactory in terms of density and mix.

Layout, Design and External Appearance of the Dwellings

25. The scheme proposes a single access road, measuring 5m in width for the first 15m, narrowing to 4.5m beyond that point. The road terminates in a turning head in front of plots 4 through 8. A single 1.8m wide footpath runs along the northern edge of the proposed roadway. The comments of the Local Highway Authority in respect of the suitability of the roadway design are awaited at the time of preparing this report and will be reported verbally to members at Committee.
26. The dwellings are laid out around the proposed access in road in a 'fan', with plot 1 located to the south of the proposed access road, adjacent to 24 West Road, with the remaining 7 plots located to the north and west of the proposed road way. All of the proposed dwellings are detached 1½ storey structures, featuring a mix of facing brickwork and weatherboarding. The dwellings are designed with ridge heights of 7m-7.2m, before accounting for changes in site levels. The applicants have provided a plan illustrating ridge heights and finished floor levels relative to the changes in site level, as required by condition 3 of the outline consent.
27. Noting the Parish Council's concerns regarding the design of the proposed dwellings I am mindful of the inspector's comments when upholding the refusal of the earlier reserved matters application, S/0266/04/RM. In his determination, paragraph 10 of his report states that "whilst there is no distinctive style of house that typifies the area, the VDS states that new dwellings should reflect the style of adjacent buildings. The architectural guidelines of the VDS include high pitched roofs with long overhangs on the eaves." Considering these comments and comparing the current proposals I am of the view that the scheme has broadly overcome these comments. The design of the proposed dwellings features low eaves levels, overhanging the facing elevations far more than those dwellings proposed under the earlier scheme which featured a parapet at odds with the local architectural style. The dwellings, although featuring a relatively wide span of approximately 11m and 12m on plots 1 through 4, are designed to reduce their bulk and massing at first floor, featuring hipped roofs to the rear. The front elevations serve to reduce the overall visual impact of the dwellings by featuring projecting elements, with the elevation featuring the garage being set back. The detached layout of the dwellings affords visual gaps through the development, emphasised by the 1½ storey nature of the proposed structures.
28. Each plot benefits from a minimum of one internal parking space, with further parking facilities available in front of the garage. Although the proposal appears to benefit from a slight over provision of parking facilities, given the confined nature of the site and lack of space available for occasional on-street parking within the estate, the scheme would appear adequately catered for in this regard.
29. The full comments of the Trees and Landscape Officer will be reported verbally to Committee in respect of the proposed landscaping details and boundary treatments.

Provision of Affordable Housing

30. Whilst noting the concerns of the Parish Council in respect of the lack of provision of any affordable housing in the current scheme I am mindful that the current application is a reserved matters submission, which is serving to effectively discharge the outstanding issues from the outline application, reference S/0034/06/O.
31. In considering the issue of affordable housing at the time of the outline application, the Authority determined that only where any reserved matters scheme were to include more than ten dwellings could provision of affordable housing be secured as a proportion of any subsequent scheme of residential development. This was secured by virtue of the terms of condition 16 of the outline consent. Whilst current LDF Policy would seek a provision of affordable housing on the site, the conditions of the outline consent are material in this instance. In accordance with those conditions, therefore, should the Authority be satisfied that eight dwellings is an acceptable number of individual plots on this site it cannot require the provision of affordable housing within the scheme.

Residential Amenity

32. The proposed site layout dictates that the plots at 2 through 8 back on to the existing dwellings within the Fairfield estate. Plots 2, 3 and 4 have rear gardens of approximately 12 metres, with back-to-back distances between the existing and proposed dwellings of approximately 26 metres. The dwellings at plots 5 through 7 have shorter rear gardens, varying between 7m for plot 5, to 9/10m for plots 6 and 7. The rear garden serving plot 8 would be approximately 15m long on average.
33. By virtue of the distance separating the existing and proposed dwellings at plots 2 through 4, coupled with the design and scale of the proposed dwellings, featuring a ridge height of approximately 7m and a single roof light window at first floor level in the rear elevation, which serves a study/store room, there should be no significant loss of light, overlooking or overbearing impact upon the amenities of the adjoining residents. Although the visual outlook of the existing dwellings will undoubtedly change, this can be mitigated through appropriate boundary treatment. The applicants have proposed a 1.8m high close-boarded fence. Although the dwellings at plots 5 through 7 are much closer to the neighbouring dwellings, plot 5 particularly so, by virtue of each dwelling's orientation on its plot, coupled with the design and scale of each dwelling, which have a solitary low-level rooflight serving a bedroom in the rear elevation and a ridge height of approximately 7m, I am satisfied that again there should be no significant loss of light, overlooking or overbearing impact upon the amenities of the adjoining residents. Any views afforded from the rear facing bedroom windows would be oblique by virtue of its height and the dwelling's orientation. Conditions of consent can remove permitted development rights on all plots for additional openings and extensions to ensure that the relationship between the existing and proposed dwellings is preserved.

Other Matters

34. The comments of the Chief Environmental Health Officer, in respect of noise and pile driven foundations were considered and addressed in conditions attached to the outline consent and therefore do not need to be repeated on any reserved matters application. Similarly the comments of the Environment Agency were incorporated into conditions on the outline consent that would need to be addressed prior to the commencement of any work on site. I am satisfied that the development proposed does not prejudice either matter. Furthermore, the conditions on the outline consent in respect of drainage should serve to satisfy the concerns of the neighbouring resident, as they require the prior submission of full details in this regard prior to the commencement of development.

35. The comments of the Contaminated Land Officer are also noted in respect of the development proposals to overcome issues arising from landfill gas. A condition of consent can require that the proposed measures are incorporated into any approved scheme.
36. The comments of the Ecology Officer, in respect of the ecological impact of the development, which the applicant has addressed in the submitted details, are awaited at the time of preparing this report. Any comments received will be reported verbally to members at the Committee meeting.

Recommendation

37. Subject to the nature of the comments of the Local Highway Authority, Ecology Officer, Environment Operations Manager and Trees and Landscape Officer, it is recommended that the application be approved.
38. Additional conditions to be attached to the reserved matters consent to require:
- Removal of permitted development rights for all plots for further extensions, curtilage structures and insertion of openings into all elevations
 - Scheme of landfill gas mitigation to be carried out in accordance with the details outlined in the Design and Access statement accompanying the application
- + any further conditions relevant to reserved matters as recommended by the awaited consultees.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2007
- Planning files Ref. S/2088/08/RM, S/0034/06/O, S/0266/04/RM, S/2229/00/F, S/1839/98/O, and S/1780/95/O

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