

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 6th October 2004  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/0696/04/RM - Longstanton  
Erection of 200 Dwellings and Ancillary Works on Land West of Longstanton  
(Phase 2 - Home Farm) for  
Cofton Ltd, Peter Stroude, George Wimpey East Anglia and Kings Oak Homes Ltd**

**Recommendation: Refuse**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. This open and largely featureless site extends to 6.4 hectares (15.8 acres) and has, until recently, been in agricultural use. Over Road bounds the site to the west. Agricultural land extends to the north, beyond a watercourse. High Street is situated to the east, beyond an awarded watercourse. Along its Over Road frontage, the site is bounded by an established hedge. A Public Footpath crosses the site from southwest to northeast.
2. This reserved matters application, received on 1st April 2004 and amended by plans date stamped 9th July 2004, provides details of the siting and design of, the means of access to and landscaping for 200 dwellings on the second of three phases that are intended to provide 500 dwellings (outline planning permission S/0682/95/O). The proposed density is 31.25 dwellings per hectare.
3. The proposal includes six areas of open space within the development which would accommodate Local Areas for Play (LAPs).
4. The development would be comprised of 39 (19.5%) no. 2-bedroom dwellings, 73 (36.5%) no. 3-bedroom, 55 (27.5%) no. 4-bedroom and no. 33 (16.5%) 5 plus-bedroom houses.
5. Approximately 52.5% of the dwellings (105) would be 2-storey, 41.5% (83) 2½ storey and 6% (12) would be 3 storey. The ridge heights of the proposed dwellings range from 6.8 to 10.5 metres with one pyramid roof on a 3 storey element rising to 11.7m.
6. The access would be off Over Road, and this would serve a number of secondary roads, shared surface access ways and 'Home Zones'.
7. The application is accompanied by a Sustainability Statement and a Planning and Design Statement.

A letter received from the applicant in support of the application and dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 2004 is attached as an Appendix.

### **Relevant Recent History**

8. Outline planning permission for comprehensive phased development to provide B1050 Bypass for Longstanton and related road works together with housing (21Ha), a business park (6.3Ha), extension to village recreation ground (2.8Ha), village green

including land for local shop and surgery, open space, landscaping and related infrastructure` on land west of Longstanton, including the application site, was granted in October 2000 (S/0682/95/O). The Decision Notice was issued following the signing of a legal agreement relating to education contributions and highway works. Condition 16 restricted development to no more than 500 dwellings unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.

9. An application to vary conditions 2 and 3 of S/0682/95/O, which relate to the timescales for the submission of details and the commencement of development, was submitted under reference S/1268/02/F but is currently being held in abeyance at the applicant's request.
10. S/1762/03/RM – 91 dwellings and ancillary works (Phase 1) – approved 22.12.03.
11. An appeal against a refusal to vary condition 16 of the Outline Planning Consent S/0682/95/O to allow the construction of more than 500 dwellings is pending. Public Inquiry has been arranged for 5<sup>th</sup> October 2004.
12. S/0246/04/RM – Duplicate application for 200 dwellings (Phase 2) – Appeal pending against non-determination.
13. S/0625/04/RM – Reserved Matters application for the construction of on-site roads and sewers (Phase 2) – In progress.
14. S/0845/04/RM and S/1429/04/RM – Duplicate Reserved Matters applications for 103 dwellings on part Phase 3 – In progress.
15. S/1379/04/F and S/1864/04/F – Applications for balancing pond and scheme of ditch widening to serve development approved by virtue of outline planning permission S/0682/95/O – In progress.

### **Planning Policy**

16. The site forms part of the 21 hectare area of land allocated for some 500 dwellings on land north of Over in South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: 2004 **Policy HG5**.
17. The principles of development are encapsulated in **Policy Longstanton 1** of the Local Plan 2004. The supporting text at Paragraph 67.17 states:

”The District Council has granted outline planning permission for residential, employment and recreation uses, which includes the provision of a development related bypass. The bypass between Hatton Road, Over Road and Station Road would provide access to Over or Willingham and onto Fenland without passing through the village. The District Council considers that the provision of the bypass is crucial for the village and therefore allocated a larger area for a housing estate than would otherwise be appropriate. In this instance there is no requirement for affordable housing as set out in **Policy HG7** because of the need to ensure the provision of the bypass and other community facilities such as a village green, shop and surgery”.
18. Longstanton is defined as a Group Village in South Cambridgeshire Local Plan: 2004 (**Policy SE4**).
19. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/3** requires all new developments to incorporate high standards of sustainability and design and to provide a sense of place which:

- “responds to the local character of the built environment;
  - is integrated with adjoining landscapes;
  - creates distinctive skylines, focal points, and landmarks;
  - includes variety and surprise within a unified design;
  - includes streets, squares and other public spaces with a defined sense of enclosure;
  - includes attractive green spaces and corridors for recreation and biodiversity;
  - conserves important environmental assets of the site;
  - pays attention to the detail of forms, massing, textures, colours and landscaping.”
20. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P5/3** states that densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable “Local Planning Authorities should seek to maximise the use of land by applying the highest density possible which is compatible with maintaining local character”.
21. Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG10** states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. It also states that the design and layout of the scheme should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape and schemes should achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency.
22. Local Plan: 2004 **Policy TP1** states that the Council will seek to promote more sustainable transport choices and one of the ways this can be achieved is restricting car parking for residential developments to a maximum of an average of 1 ½ spaces per dwelling with a maximum of 2 spaces for 3+ bedroom dwellings in poorly accessible areas.
23. A development brief for the Home Farm site, covering matters such as development aims, design philosophy, scale of development, built form (advocating a series of townscape zones including greenways, village lanes, village streets and hamlets), architectural form and open space was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 1998. Whilst design guidance has evolved since this brief was adopted, many of the principles contained within the brief remain relevant.
24. Government’s **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 3**, “Housing” (March 2000) aims to avoid developments which make inefficient use of land (those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare). In terms of village expansion, development should be designed sympathetically and laid out in keeping with the character of the village. Design and layout should be informed by the wider context, having regard to the townscape and landscape of the wider locality.

### **Consultation**

25. **Longstanton Parish Council** recommends refusal for the following reasons:
- ”The Outline Consent for the total Home Farms development is for 500 Homes. Consent has already been granted for 91 homes on the Phase 1 site (2.995 Ha). The

Phase 2 site is 6.545 Ha. That means that this development will be at a higher density than Phase 1, although it has always been stressed by SCDC Officers that the density of Phase 2 would be below that of Phase 1 (and the density of Phase 3 would be below that of Phase 2). The Parish Council considers that 160 would be a more appropriate figure than the currently proposed 200. If you examine the table below, you will see how the densities work out:

Phase	Area (Ha)	# of Homes	Density
Phase 1	2.995	91	30.4
Phase 2 (200 homes)	6.545	200	30.6
Phase 3 (Phase 2 = 200)	11.5	209	18.2
Phase 2 (160 homes)	6.545	160	24.5
Phase 3 (Phase 2 – 160)	11.5	249	21.7

26. Committee Members can see for themselves that if the current application is accepted then Phase 3 will almost certainly be submitted for substantially more than 209 homes. The Parish Council is completely opposed to any increase in the total Home Farms development beyond the agreed 500. Even this number represents an increase of over 70% in the size of our community. One of the biggest problems with this development remains its background. Originally there was only going to be one developer (Beazers). Now we have already had 3 or 4. That is causing major difficulties on two fronts:

- Enforcement of Section 106 and Planning Conditions, and
- A fair allocation of houses to land. There is a serious risk of “devil take the hindmost” with Phases 1 and 2 grabbing far more housing than would have happened under one contractor, leaving Phase 3 uneconomic. Local Plan **Policy H15**, adopted by South Cambs DC, requires that “housing development on unallocated land in Rural Growth Settlements should be sympathetic to the character and amenities of the locality”. This Application would clearly fail to achieve that objective.

Carpenter’s submission makes frequent reference to PPG3 and the high densities it proposes. However, PPG3 also expects Affordable Housing. This application makes no mention of Affordable Housing. Outline Consent was granted for this development before the days of PPG3 and the only reason the development is as large as 500 homes is to fund the Longstanton Bypass. Increasing our community by 70% is surely quite enough.

27. Our specific objections can be summarised as:

- Density  
The current density is incompatible with the rural location.
- Lack of amenities  
The development needs more incidental open space.

- **Compromising Phase 3**  
The proposal for 200 homes would clearly result in Phase 3 being a very unattractive proposition for any developer – unless its housing numbers were to be dramatically increased.
- **Sewage disposal**  
Anglian Water has confirmed that they can accommodate the Phase 1 homes within their existing framework. We have received a letter from Anglian Water which quite clearly states that development beyond Phase 1 cannot be accommodated until they make a major upgrade to their sewage arrangements, which they are “considering” to do “in the next 2-3 years”. It is essential that this Phase 2 is not permitted to proceed until this upgrade is in place. Our village is still subject to raw sewage discharges because the existing sewage infrastructure is overloaded. Note also that clause 23(b) of the Planning Conditions requires written confirmation from AWSL that the sewage arrangements will be entirely adequate.
- **Storm water disposal**  
The Parish Council fully endorses the concerns raised by Longstanton residents for Dry Homes in the letter from Ned Grace to David Rush dated 28<sup>th</sup> February.
- **Children’s play area**  
Though the plans incorporate LAPs, there is no provision for a LEAP play area for larger children. There needs to be a substantial such area in the Phase 2/3 Public Open Space.
- **Pedestrian crossings**  
The extra traffic this development will generate will require additional pedestrian crossings on affected roads, i.e. Over Road, High Street.
- **Longstanton Bypass**  
Clause 17 of the SCDC Planning Permission Conditions document S/0682/95/O makes clear that the interim bypass must be completed before 100 homes are built on the total Home Farms site. However, 91 homes have already been approved for Phase 1 and the assumption has to be that these will be built before the Phase 2 homes.

It is ridiculous to assume that when only 9 homes have been completed the initial Bypass will be constructed. Unless SCDC asserts itself, we will end up in the kind of situation that has happened with several other developers recently, in which the terms of these agreements are ignored by developers. The only way in which the D&CC Committee can ensure that this clause is adhered to is to make it a condition that the Phase 1 Bypass must be completed before Phase 2 development commences.”

28. **Swavesey Parish Council** “raises the following objections and concerns to this application, which are in line with objections and concerns raised over previous applications for development at Home Farm:

- Local sewage system – additional pressure from increased development will be put onto the local sewage system, which is currently believed to be at capacity.
- Flood assessment report should be carried out to assess the future flood risk to the surrounding area resulting from the proposed development. In the light of recent flood events around Swavesey, concern over future flood risk is high.

- Further development in this area will lead to an increase in traffic levels along Ramper Road, Swavesey. This road is currently deteriorating rapidly and cannot cope with further increased traffic use and is becoming increasingly dangerous for use by cyclists and horse riders. Improvements to Ramper Road are urgently required if this housing development is to be approved.”
29. **Willingham Parish Council** “unanimously resolved to recommend refusal unless a bypass for Willingham is constructed in advance of the development.
  30. **Bar Hill Parish Council** recommends approval.
  31. **Environment Agency** has no objections from the Land Drainage/Flood Defence point of view. It states that the submitted plans and associated documentation satisfactorily demonstrates to the Agency that the development proposals are in line with the agreed drainage strategy. The agreed strategy involves certain channel modifications to the local watercourses to allow additional capacity within the receiving system and the construction of a balancing pond downstream. Details are the subject of current applications (see Paragraph 15 above).
  32. **Middle Level Commissioners** comment: “The Commissioners, on the Board’s behalf, have recently concluded negotiations with the applicant’s consultant and the Environment Agency to ensure that the Home Farm development does not detrimentally affect the Board’s area. As a result, planning application S/1379/04/F, has recently been submitted by Persimmon Homes (East Midlands) Ltd for a balancing pond and associated drainworks. Provided that these works are constructed before the site is developed, and as agreed and shown on the drawings, we have no objection to the amended plan.”
  33. **Anglian Water** has no objections to raise in principle but requests that a condition requiring the submission of details of foul and surface water drainage be imposed.  
  
Anglian Water also states that the current infrastructure can accommodate Phase 1 development but capacity will not exist for the remaining properties until improvements in the infrastructure have been completed. Anglian Water is currently working on a scheme.
  34. **Local Highways Authority** comments in general:  
  
”I am unable to fully assess the proposal unless/until the layout(s) are fully dimensioned to give carriageway, footway, footpath, cycle and verge widths together with junction, centre line and turning head radii. In addition, all junction and pedestrian visibility splays must be given. It would also be very helpful if all roads could be assigned numbers for ease of reference.  
  
The off-site footway adjacent to Over Road to be provided to link with that associated with the Phase 1 junction should be clearly identified on the layout plan(s).  
  
Where is the pedestrian/cycle permeability to Phase 3? I note that links are shown to the open space but how are direct links to Phase 3 going to be achieved?”
  35. More specific comments are raised by the Local Highways Authority aimed at achieving a less engineered approach, reducing the distance for vehicles having to reverse in front of Plots 19 and 27 (Wimpey) and ensuring visibility is not compromised by tree planting. The LHA has been involved in a meeting with the

applicants to discuss highways issues but has not commented on the amended drawings, which do incorporate full dimensions.

36. **Highways Agency** has no comments.
37. **The Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service** asks that adequate provision is made for fire hydrants by way of Section 106 agreement or condition.
38. **Transco** confirms that it has plant in the vicinity which may be affected by the proposal. It also states that gas pipelines owned by other gas transporters, and privately owned, may also be present in this area.
39. **Network Rail** states that it has no comment.
40. **Cambridge Water Company** has no objections and is able to make water available to the whole of the proposed development by reinforcing the local mains network. The Developers have been made aware of the likely costs.
41. **County Council's Definitive Map Officer (DMO)** has discussed with the applicants improvements of Public Footpath No. 3 necessitated by the Development specifically in regard to surfacing in the central open space to the north, replacement bridge where the path joins the open space and a link between the open space westwards to the new public bridleway/leisure walk.
42. The DMO is disappointed that the applicant has decided not to create a public link from Phase 2's recreation area alongside the drain to Phase 1 (northeast site boundary). This may be a "lost way". It would make good use of an existing natural feature and would pre-empt the public's acquisition of a right of way through prescription.
43. It is also regretful that a public footpath link from the access to Phase 2 along Over Road to link with Public Footpath No. 2 Longstanton has not been proposed. This would have fulfilled the duties under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 and the environmental policies of the Structure Plan to improve the rights of way network by providing a safe link between existing rights of way facilitating better access to both community facilities and the countryside.
44. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no objections.
45. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** is concerned that several parking courts are still too large, in some cases parking is remote from the dwellings served, the number of pedestrian/cycle routes on the south east boundary is at five, too great with adjoining parking being vulnerable and there being cases of adjoining parking courts. These are all issues which can create an environment in which crime, particularly against vehicles, can grow.
46. In 'Home Zone' areas and elsewhere, such as on the boundary of the development, there are many cases where dwelling elevations do not benefit from clearly identifiable private/defensible space, thereby raising the risk of damage as in the form of graffiti or disputes between occupiers and others immediately outside their dwellings."
47. In earlier comments he recommended that parking courts should be small, serving a maximum of six dwellings, with spaces close to and within natural supervision of the dwellings they serve.

48. **Council's Lands Drainage Manager** comments that:

"Under Council's Land Drainage Byelaws the following applies:

1. No excavating, hedging, fencing, buildings or other obstructions will be allowed within 5 metres of Council's Award Drain.
2. Maintenance contribution will be required from developer to cover ease of enhanced maintenance work to Award Drain."

49. **Sustrans** recommends that a cycling/walking link be added to the north west towards Over and to enable local children to get to Swavesey Village College. Concern is also expressed that the links between Phases 1 and 2 appear to be poor – staggered junctions are not suitable for modern design and will create visibility problems.

50. **Ramblers Association** comments in respect of Public Footpath 3:

- (a) surface should not be unduly disturbed;
- (b) materials are not stored/dumped on it;
- (c) vehicles visiting the site should not impede the safe passage of pedestrians; and
- (d) any footpath signs are not obscured or removed during building works.

51. **English Nature** comments:

- "(a) **Bats**  
Section 1.1.4 of the Habitat Assessment Report refers to a bat survey being undertaken on trees along the Longstanton Drain and that these trees should be made safe and retained. If these trees are destined to be lost then the trees should be surveyed for bats in line with the statement in the landscape strategy.
- (b) **Water Voles**  
We support the provision of a pre-construction water vole survey described in Section 1.1.8 of the Habitat Assessment Report.
- (c) **Badgers**  
We support the provision of a pre-construction badger survey described in Section 1.1.9 of the Habitat Assessment Report.
- (d) **Birds**  
Section 6.1.3 states "all hedges in the site .... are potential nesting habitat". We would wish to learn if any are being lost and if so how will they be removed without impinging on nesting birds. We request that a planning condition is used to prevent scrub and tree removal during the bird nesting season.
- (e) **Landscape Management Strategy**  
We would wish to see the Landscape Management Strategy focus on how the scheme would create biodiversity gains and contribute to the targets in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Action Plan."

52. **The Council's Ecology Officer** comments:

"The design brief does not mention nature conservation. The Sustainability

Statement has little over five lines on biodiversity. Whilst I generally agree with the broad statement, the gardens will attract wildlife, in terms of sustainability the question should be “how is this development sustaining the present biodiversity?” The answer to this would then be ‘very poorly’ as there is not even an intention to provide bird or bat boxes. If every garden in ten was designed for wildlife a significant contribution would be made.

At present wildlife is being forced to adapt to gardens from an arable environment rather than being actively encouraged within the development.

Measures could include:

- erection of high quality species specific bird and bat boxes (i.e. for sparrows, robin and starlings);
- fence lifting to allow small mammals such as hedgehogs through the development in future;
- insect hibernation boxes adjacent to play areas;
- hedgehog boxes adjacent to boundary hedging.

Perhaps a show home could be planted as a wildlife garden to encourage biodiversity conservation.”

53. **The Council’s Strategic Development Officer** has commented in detail upon the applicant’s Sustainability Statement. These comments relate to climate change, energy efficiency, the need to refer to Building Research Establishment’s “A Sustainability Checklist for Developments”, the importance of renewables in new developments, possibility of car-sharing schemes and car clubs, creation of home zones (incorporated in amended scheme), sustainable urban drainage systems, locally sourced labour, verifiably sustainable materials and the on-site recording and monitoring of waste.
54. **The Council’s Landscape Design Officer** is concerned about practical space for planting and long-term retention, lack of mention of service locations, reduction in tree planting along Over Road, pressure on the hedge along Over Road and lack of details of fence/tree protection. Specific comments are made on particular drawings and inconsistencies between particular drawings.
55. **The Council’s General Works Manager** is reluctant to provide the collection service given the restricted access as originally proposed. Specifically:
1. “Will all the numbered lanes and roads be constructed:-
    - (a) to take 6 x 4 heavy goods vehicles with a minimum gross weight of 26 tonnes;
    - (b) using materials that will withstand tyre scrub; and
    - (c) so that the hammerheads will facilitate turning and reversing without the need to encroach on verges or footways bearing in mind not all residents will have off-street parking.
  2. Could you please confirm:-

- (a) every dwelling will be provided with suitable and approved storage facilities for a minimum of 2 wheeled bins and a 55 litre kerbside box;
- (b) that the construction of the dwellings facilitates waste collection from the front boundary of each property;
- (c) the purpose of the 'refuse collection points' as shown by blue stars; and
- (d) that every property can be driven passed or up to by a 26 tonnes GVW RCV. It would appear that this is not the case, some are served by a footpath only (from Over Road) and others by a lesser carriageway (between lane 2 and road 2. Also lane 1 from road 1 does not appear to be accessible). Areas that cannot be easily reached by vehicle will require a location for residents to take their containers for emptying without encroaching on other residents' land or amenity."

56. **The Council's Cultural Services Manager** has commented on issues relating to the discharge of conditions on the outline planning permission ( Landscape Management Strategy, Neighbourhood equipped area for play (NEAP) on the recreation ground extension and locally equipped area for play (LEAP) on the central open space). These are not for consideration at this meeting.

57. Of relevance to this reserved matters application are her comments on the LAPs, as follows:

- (a) "LAPs 1 and 2 do not seem to provide the minimum NPFA space of 100 sq. m. plus 5m buffer zone. Please can these be extended? I am still not convinced that LAP 1 will properly serve the public as it will be very much linked to property 5 of that block.
- (b) The LAPs illustrated are too similar and should offer greater variety and a range of designs. They should incorporate a variety of grass and paved surfaces and include design features to stimulate play. There is currently very little paving shown. The boundaries of these areas should be marked by low level planting and not fencing. Fencing should only be used where absolutely essential for children's safety i.e. when LAP is adjacent to roads and planting is not sufficient to stop children running onto the road. This may be the case for the road side of LAP 4 and LAP 6, depending on the design.
- (c) Each LAP should have a bin and a bench capable of seating more than one person. Single seats are not appropriate.
- (d) The proposed earth mounds may be difficult to maintain. These should not be a feature of every LAP as currently illustrated – possibly in 1 LAP only. The footprint trails and wooden model animals are good in principle but other ideas are also needed to offer greater variety. Natural features may also be used e.g. a fallen tree.
- (e) These areas may well be used by adults as well as children. Appropriate signage will include reference to 'no dogs' and 'children playing'. Signs saying 'no adults unless accompanying children' are not appropriate.
- (f) A final point is that 2 of the LAPs appear to have electric sub stations next to them. (They are pretty close to houses also). In my experience these can be

quite noisy and will certainly detract from the attractiveness of these areas of POS. I expect the home owners close by will be badly affected also. Please can these be well surrounded by planting to help provide a noise buffer.”

58. **County Principal Archaeologist** comments:

”The site is located in an area of high archaeological potential to the west of the historic village of Longstanton. The site has been subject to an archaeological evaluation (Birmingham Archaeology, 2003) which revealed significant archaeological remains relating to the late Saxon and medieval settlement of the area. A programme of archaeological investigation has been commissioned by the applicant, in consultation with this office, intended to preserve these important archaeological remains by record and present the results of the investigation in an appropriate publication. The fieldwork is currently being undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology and is nearing completion.

We would consider it appropriate to secure the post excavation analysis and publication of these results by means of a suitable negative condition. However, once the fieldwork is complete to the satisfaction of this office, we will have no further objection to the commencement of development on this site.

I note that the area of public open space to the north of the Phase 2 housing area is included in the accompanying plan. No archaeological work has been undertaken in this area. Should any landscaping involve significant below ground disturbance this would need a separate scheme of archaeological investigation, which could be secured through the inclusion of a suitable negative condition in any planning consent.”

### **Representations**

59. **The Longstanton Residents for Dry Homes** (LRDH) objects on the basis that the number of homes is not consistent with the capacity of the surface or foul drainage or with the outline consent. It would lead to an inevitable increase in the total number of houses.

60. LRDH comments further:

”Based on this (outline planning permission) and the approved Phase 1 plans, the densities would be as follows:

- Phase I: 3.1 Ha, approved for 91 homes (29.4 dph)
- Phase II: 6.4 Ha, applied for 200 homes ( 31.2 dph)
- Phase III: 11.5Ha, residual is 209 homes (18.2 dph)

Phase III would, therefore, be significantly below the densities for either Phase I or Phase II, making it financially unattractive. The result would be an inevitable push for an increase in housing density (probably for 350 homes rather than 209), citing current government targets rather than correctly referring to the targets in effect when the plan was agreed by SCDC and the village. LRDH would find this totally unacceptable and would expect SCDC opposition to be as fierce as was indicated recently with the proposed Cambourne extensions.

61. Given a 500-home limit to Home Farm, it is sensible to provide equal density for both Phases II and III (meaning 22.9 dph). This leads to 147 dwellings for Phase II and 262 dwellings for Phase III. We would, therefore, like to see no more than 147

homes approved for Phase II. Any approval beyond that can only be seen as an abandonment of the original outline consent. In that case, we would welcome Phases II and III to be reapplied for in totality rather than choosing to change only those parts of the outline plan that suit the developers.

62. We note Cofton's statement that any reduction in the size below 200 would be "contrary to Government Advice in PPG3." They further state that since the site has already been chosen, the PPG3 requirements that densities be sympathetic to the existing village are moot. They further include unconcealed threats to increase densities significantly by referring to precedents in which developers have appealed and ended up with more houses than they had at the beginning.
63. We find this approach insulting and an affront to the authority of the Council and the sensibilities of the affected village. In each precedent to which Ms Adcock refers, there was no initial agreed housing limit. S/0682/95/O, on the other hand, specifically limits both housing and residential area to 500 homes and 21 Ha respectively. There is no ambiguity in the plan, and it is a plan to which Cofton have subscribed by taking on Phase II. New legislative requirements can surely only apply to new applications, not ones to which outline consent has already been given."
64. Finally, LRDH considers that no approval should be issued which would create a sewage overload beyond Anglian Water's stated capacity. The necessary infrastructure must be in place.
65. **The Occupiers of four properties** in Longstanton object to the scheme on the following grounds:
  - It is stated that foul and surface water drainage will be channelled to existing outlets, but both these systems are already overloaded; existing brooks do not have the capacity to cope with further surface rainwater discharge;
  - Existing foul and surface water problems will be exacerbated by this development. Anglian Water knows full well that the existing foul drainage system in Longstanton is unable to cope yet still gives approval to the development;
  - There is no mention of continued use of the haul road for construction traffic, which would otherwise cause great problems along High Street and Over Road;
  - There should be no bridleway on Few Lane. Its surface is not suitable. Public footpath status should be retained;
  - The ditches and watercourses around the central open space would be a danger to children;
  - Open spaces should be managed long term by a Residents Association Committee;
  - Density of development is inconsistent with the outline planning permission (see Longstanton Parish Council's objections above);
  - To develop the site of the former farm buildings would be an asset to the village but the remainder is ill-conceived and fragmented; it will have no positive benefit to the village; and

- No provision is made for the storage of caravans, boats, trailers and horseboxes on site (draft Section 106 Agreement).

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

66. The principle of erecting 500 dwellings on the Home Farm site has already been established by the grant of the outline permission. The permission allows for the phased development of the site, and includes conditions relating to the phasing of the residential development, business park, open spaces and the timing/thresholds for the provision of the necessary infrastructure and roads.
67. This reserved matters application provides details of the siting, design, means of access and landscaping to Phase 2 of the residential element of the development approved in 2000 (S/0682/95/O) only, and these are the matters to be considered.
68. It is also important for the Committee to reach a decision today to inform the Public Inquiry of the Council's case in respect of the appeal against non-determination of the duplicate application (see Paragraph 12 above).
69. The key issues are:
- (a) density and numbers;
  - (b) design and layout; and
  - (c) drainage.

### ***Density***

70. The density of development on the site is guided by:
- (a) the outline planning permission, condition 16;
  - (b) the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 **Policies SE4, HG5** and **'Longstanton 1'**;
  - (c) the adopted Development Brief for Home Farm;
  - (d) the approved Structure Plan **Policy P5/3**; and
  - (e) **PPG3**, Housing.
71. Condition 16 of the outline permission states that "Not more than 500 dwellings shall be constructed on the site unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority". This equates to approximately 24 dwellings to the hectare. The reason for condition 16 is "To ensure an appropriate balance is achieved between scale of development and the provision of essential services, infrastructure and the Longstanton Bypass". In his January 2002 report, the Local Plan Inspector recommended that Longstanton be downgraded from a Rural Growth Village to a Group Village in view of its relative poor level of sustainability. The District Council incorporated this change in its adopted Local Plan (**Policy SE4**).
72. Increasing the density to an average of 30 dwellings to the hectare throughout the site would result in a further 130 dwellings, whereas development in group villages is normally restricted to a maximum of 8 dwellings, although, exceptionally, a maximum of 15 dwellings may be approved if this would make the best use of a Brownfield site. The application was based on providing approximately 500 dwelling. To increase the density throughout at 30d/h would be clearly contrary to Policies SE4 and Longstanton 1 of the Local Plan.

73. Reserved Matters on Phase 1 have been approved at 29.3d/h. Phase 1 and proposed Phase 2 would leave a residue of some 209 (224 if **Policy SE4** is taken into account) dwellings on 11.5 hectares in Phase 3 at a density of 18.2 d/h (19.5 d/h). This, in my opinion, is unrealistic having regard to the Development Brief which, although envisages greater areas of lower density in the form of 'village lanes' and 'hamlets' in Phase 3, does incorporate higher density areas of 'village streets'.
74. Having regard to the outline planning permission Condition 16 and the adopted Development Brief's illustrative Master Plan, it is not, in my view, appropriate for the density of the whole of Phase 2 to exceed the approved density of Phase 1.
75. Clearly the approved Structure Plan **Policy P5/3** and **PPG3** advice would support the proposed density in the application were it not for the circumstances which led to the imposition of condition 16 on the outline planning permission.
76. The applicants have been consistently advised that, if the number of dwellings on the whole site is likely to exceed 500 (plus any margin allowed for by **Policy SE4** of the Local Plan), a new planning application should be submitted.
77. In my view, this reserved matter application should not be supported without a master plan for the whole of the site under the existing planning permission. The Master Plan should set out prospective densities in relation to land to be used for residential development. This would enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure the proper development of the whole of the site under the extant planning permission.
78. Alternatively, if a new planning application and master plan were to be submitted, the costs and benefits of any additional dwellings in terms of transport, education, open space and affordable housing obligations, together with impact upon infrastructure capacities, could be properly assessed and shared over the bulk of the remaining development. Such an application would also need to be considered in the context of Development Plan Policies (see above) or those appertaining at the time of determination of the application.

### ***Design and Layout***

79. The adopted Development Brief sets out a series of design principles to ensure the new development is appropriate in terms of scale and style. The illustrative Master Plan shows how these principles could be put into practice. This indicates that Phase 2 would contain an element of each townscape zone (greenways, village lanes, village streets, and hamlets) with these more informal, lower density areas located to the west, on the periphery of the site.
80. An assessment of the design and layout proposals of the amended scheme has been carried out by an experienced Design Architect. I quote below the general comments:
81. "The site itself is split into two zones separated by the main spine road. To the South and East is located the George Wimpey East Anglia Ltd development and to the North and West is the Kingsoak Homes Ltd development. The spine road forms the only access into the site and separates the two developers' proposals. The road pattern around the site is generally acceptable providing a number of styles and grades of roads and accesses. A number of footpaths are provided around and across the site which provide good permeability. Positions of buildings are generally well considered to provide overlooking of public open spaces and footpaths and vista

stops at important junctions, however, there does appear to be a lack of focal point buildings around the site (these are detailed in the assessment).

82. **General Comments**

- Pavement widths and road widths around the scheme should be varied in order to provide an informal arrangement and variation in streetscene;
- The implementation of semi-mature landscaping features should be considered in order to provide an established sense of place to focal areas within the site;
- The scheme would generally benefit from some further variation in street scenes by the introduction of some frontages tight to the back edge of the pavement and some further gables positioned on to the street;
- The detailing of front garden areas needs to be carefully considered along the tree lined spine road, the use of front walls and/or railings should be considered along with brick garden walls of varying heights around the scheme. It is important to recognise that the use of front boundary garden treatments of this type can act as a good device to break down the scale of the buildings behind whilst also providing defensible space to the dwellings themselves. The use of walling in particular allows pinch points to be created within streetscapes when positioned hard along the back edge of pavement or road edge.”

83. The assessment incorporates detailed comments and suggestions which are aimed to improve the quality of the scheme and to highlight weaknesses within it. There are also detailed comments on, and suggested improvements to, house types, particularly those in the Kingsoak Homes Ltd development. One house type is considered to be completely inappropriate. In two cases, building proportions need to be adjusted and one house type should be used in groupings of four. The remainder are considered to be generally acceptable subject to suggested elevational improvements.

84. Wimpey house types have been considered to be acceptable.

85. The above assessment, coupled with comments and concerns of the Council's Landscape Design Officer, does in my opinion, justify a reason for refusal in itself, having regard to the design philosophy of the Development Brief and the objectives of Policies P1/3 of the Structure Plan and HG10 of the Local Plan. Nevertheless, a copy of these relevant comments have been sent to the applicants, who “are willing to continue to discuss the proposals.”

**Drainage**

86. Conditions attached to the outline permission state that no development shall commence until a phased scheme of foul and surface water drainage has been approved by the Local Planning Authority and constructed. Discussions between the applicants and the relevant parties (Environment Agency, Council's Drainage Manager, Middle Level Commissioners and the Longstanton Residents for Dry Homes Group) have concluded in the agreement of surface water drainage strategy. This strategy does not impact upon the layout of this reserved matters application but is to be taken forward by virtue of the applications referred to in Paragraph 15 above.

87. Although the capacity does not yet exist in the foul water drainage system to cater for development in excess of some 100 dwellings, condition 23 of the outline planning

permission precludes further development commencing until the necessary improvements to the infrastructure have been completed.

88. All necessary conditions are already imposed on the outline planning permission. No further drainage-related conditions are necessary or appropriate at this reserved matters stage. Therefore, there is no reason to withhold approval of reserved matters on this ground alone.

***Other Matters***

89. A 'LEAP' is to be provided in the central open space. The design and layout of this is the subject of separate and continuing discussions under a condition of the outline planning permission.
90. The question of additional pedestrian crossings would need to be pursued separately from this reserved matters application. Any need would have to be balanced with the longer term reduction in vehicular traffic through the village when the development-related bypass is constructed.
91. Conditions of the outline planning permission already set out the timescales for the phased construction of the bypass. No further conditions are either necessary or relevant to this reserved matter application.
92. Any improvements to Ramper Road, between Longstanton and Swavesey are outside the scope of the consideration of this application.
93. The outline planning permission does not provide for a Willingham bypass. This application cannot be withheld for that reason.
94. Further consideration should be given to footway and footpath links, having regard to comments from the Local Highways Authority, the County Council's DMO and Sustrans. There is, however, to be a bridleway through the perimeter landscaping area.
95. Further improvements are necessary to implement the applicant's sustainability statement.
96. The applicants will be asked to respond to the Council's General Works Manager's comments, although the application is accompanied by a refuse collection layout.
97. Although the number of LAPs provide satisfactory coverage, their design appears to warrant further attention.
98. Condition 11 of the outline planning permission requires the haul road to be available for construction traffic.
99. I am not aware of any proposal to upgrade Public Footpath no. 3 on Fews Lane to a bridleway.
100. Defensible boundaries would be provided to the LEAP on the central open space.
101. A scheme of management of open spaces is required by virtue of Condition 8 of the outline planning permission.
102. The Section 106 Agreement makes no provision for the storage of caravans or other ancillary vehicles.

103. Finally, I have expressed reservations to the applicants regarding the mix of houses, particularly aiming to increase the proportion of one and two bedroom houses. However, given the lack of specific targets in the Local Plan and a favourable comparison with the approved mix in Phase 1 (16.5% 2-bedroom, 27.5% 3-bedroom, 55% 4-bedroom and 1% 5-bedroom), I do not consider that the application could be refused for that reason.

### **Recommendation**

104. Having regard to all considerations, I conclude that this reserved matters application should be refused for the following reasons:
1. The proposed density at 31.25 dwellings per hectare, which exceeds the approved density of Phase 1 (29.3 d/h), would be contrary to the development principles of the Adopted Development Brief for Home Farm, would fail, in the absence of an appropriate master plan, to coherently implement the phased provision of 500 dwellings over the whole Home Farm site as required by the Outline Planning Permission, reference S/0682/95/0 dated October 2000 and would not reflect the character of the existing built environment; consequently the proposal would be contrary to Policies P1/3 of the Approved Structure Plan 2003 and HG5, HG10 and Longstanton 1 of the approved South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
  2. The design and layout of the proposed development fails to achieve a sufficiently high standard of design and a sense of place as required by Policies P1/3 of the Structure Plan 2003 and HG10 of the Local Plan 2004 and by the adopted Longstanton Development Brief 1998.
105. That the Council's case at the forthcoming Public Inquiry against the non-determination of the duplicate reserved matters application, reference S/0246/04/RM, be based upon the above-mentioned objectives.

### **Background Papers:**

Reserved Matters Applications File Refs S/0696/04/RM and S/0246/04/RM  
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003  
South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004  
Development Brief for Home Farm, Longstanton 1998

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