

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation
Control Committee

3rd November 2004

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/2476/03/O - Papworth Everard
Residential Development Including Public Open Space, Vehicular Access, Together
with the Demolition Of Nos. 18, 20, 52 & 54 Ermine Street South and 1 & 3 St John's
Lane, Land to the South of Church Lane and West Of Ermine Street South for the
Papworth Trust and the Varrier Jones Foundation**

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Adjoining Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. The 21.633 ha (53 acres) site lies on the south western side of the village and is fringed with a ribbon of housing on the north-eastern, Ermine Street boundary and a residential nurses home, sheltered housing and the Church on the north-western boundary. To the south-west and south-east is open countryside; Cow Brook runs along the south-western boundary.
2. Running north-west/south-east across the centre of the site at its highest point is a belt of young trees. To the west of the belt the site slopes sharply down into the valley of Cow Brook. There are few other trees on the site.
3. The application site includes 3 pairs of semi-detached houses dating from the 1940s-50s which are proposed to be demolished.
4. Also included in the north-east corner of the site is the existing car park to the Papworth Trust offices.
5. The outline application, received on 5th December 2003, proposes residential development, including public open space, vehicular access together with the demolition of nos. 18, 20, 52 and 54 Ermine Street South and 1 and 3 St John's Lane to gain vehicular access. Apart from access details all matters are reserved.
6. In a covering letter the agent states that as guided by the Development Brief, the application takes in more land than depicted in the Local Plan to include complementary open space, surface water attenuation facilities and means of vehicular access.
7. Detailed drawings are submitted for four potential points of vehicular access; three "all purpose" ones and the fourth for emergencies (via Southbrook Field into Church Lane). This is to ensure that all four, if required, are feasible and to enable preferences to be expressed during the consultation process. However, even if all the possible means of access are feasible and are granted permission, the intention would be to utilize only those having "preferred" status in the Brief.

8. Archaeological investigations are underway with the County Council. It should be noted that there is already an agreement in place between the Foundation, the District and County Council that, on the commencement of its development, this site will contribute towards the bypass construction costs.

Planning History

9. There is no relevant planning history.

Planning Policy

10. The following policies are relevant:

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003.

Policy P1/2 – Environmental Restrictions on Development

Policy P1/3 – Sustainable Design in Built Development.

Policy P5/3 – Density

Policy P5/4 – Meeting locally identified housing needs.

Policy P7/2 – Biodiversity

Policy P7/6 – Historic Built Environment

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004. Policy SE3 – Limited Rural Growth Settlement.

Policy Papworth Everard 2 states that within housing allocations an average density of 25 dwellings per ha will be achieved, although a range of densities above and below that level will be sought.

Policy Papworth Everard 3(c) states the following sites (inter alia) are allocated for development for housing and incidental open space:

12.01 ha south west of Papworth Everard, providing a minimum of 259 dwellings within a developable area of 10.36 ha.

Planning permission for area 3C will not be granted until appropriate contributions towards the funding of the bypass have been secured.

11. The supporting text refers to a shallow ridge running across the site and says extensive tree planting will be required to prevent intrusion into the surrounding open countryside and to soften the impact of the village from the proposed bypass. The close proximity to St Peters Church to the north west boundary of the site requires developers to demonstrate that the design and layout will not adversely affect its setting.
12. In order to absorb the new housing areas into the wider landscape, appropriate landscaping works will need to be undertaken within and around the areas so as to soften and screen the housing edge. Woodland belts, trees, hedgerows and copses should be used. The screen belt should have a minimum width of 10 metres. Additional areas of public open space are also required. These areas should be well related to the built-up area but may be beyond the village frameworks and the sites allocated for development.

Policy SE9 - Village edges

Policy HG4 – Allocations in Limited Rural Growth Settlements.

Policy HG7 – Affordable housing on sites within village frameworks.

Policy HG10 – Housing mix and design.

Policy RT2 – Public open space

Policy EN15 – Development affecting archaeology.

Policy EN28 – Development within the setting of a listed building.

Legal Opinion

Legal opinion has been sought as to whether or not the site is required to provide affordable housing under the Local Plan. The key points are as follows:

- As a result of changes made by the Inspector, para 4.17 states that there are: “allocations where no affordable housing is being sought for various reasons.”
 - The Policy Papworth Everard 3C allocation (i.e. the Summerfield allocation) is, in effect, an allocation that has been carried forward from the first South Cambridgeshire Local Plan of 1993. As the 1993 plan makes clear, it was part of the development planned to expand the village to help secure a better balanced population structure. No affordable housing was then sought.
 - Neither does the wording of Policy Papworth Everard 3C require the provision of affordable housing in contrast to the wording for other allocations eg at Melbourn.
 - Now paras 22-23 of the supporting text to HG7 envisages that the developer and Local Authority might both consider that an element of affordable housing should be pursued.
13. The site is subject to a Development Brief commissioned by the Council and adopted as supplementary planning guidance in September 2003 and to include the following: “There is a greater than normal provision of ‘social housing’ in the existing stock and that a lower level requirement may be more appropriate in the interests of achieving a balanced community.”

Consultation

14. **Papworth Parish Council** objects:
1. “NE access: it is not necessary to demolish nos. 18 and 20 Ermine Street South to provide this access; however there is no objection to their demolition on other grounds. If these houses were demolished, then the footpath could run around the north side of the pond, rather than the south side, as currently indicated. It is felt that the pond, and the area between the pond and the old Papworth Trust Head Office building, should be included within the application area, to ensure that the landscaping of these areas is included in future plans.
 2. Southbrook Field emergency access: no objection.
 3. Stirling Way access: this access has the agreement of all parties, the traffic lights are already in position, and it provides a logical access to the site, close to the Business Park and the bypass.
 4. 52/54 Ermine Street South access: we continue to hold a strong objection to full vehicular access at this point. It is vital for the integration of the development with the existing village that an access is provided at St John’s

Lane. With a primary access at Stirling Way, the only possible use for this access might be as a haul road. We believe that permission should be granted for a temporary haul road, to be relandscaped and reduced to pedestrian/cycle access on completion of construction. Since all interested parties to date (landowners, SCDC and PC) agree with the Summersfield Development Brief recommendation that the two full vehicular accesses should be in the NE and SE corners, there is no need to grant permission for full vehicular access at this point.”

15. **The Local Highway Authority** has carried out a safety audit on the proposed access and this has been passed to the agent for consideration at the reserved matters stage. No objections are raised in principle. Any connection to Southbrook Field must be restricted to cycle/footway and emergency vehicles only.
16. All off-site works relating to access junctions must be completed prior to the commencement of development.
17. **The Environment Agency**
The Environment Agency has objected to the scheme as originally submitted, and has indicated that the site is within area that is very sensitive to flooding, albeit that the maps indicate Flood Zone 2 (low/medium risk). Negotiations with the applicant about measures to alleviate flooding have been undertaken by the Environment Agency to achieve a 1 in 100 year protection. A preliminary flood risk assessment has been submitted and amended, taking into account Environment Agency guidance. The proposals include a balancing pond and an underground storage facility, but do not provide any detailed designs of surface water drainage proposals at this stage. The comments of the Agency on the most recent flood risk assessment are awaited, and will be reported verbally to Members if received prior to meeting.
18. **Anglian Water** has not commented.
19. **English Heritage** is concerned at the effect of the proposal on the setting of St Peter’s Church, which is Listed Grade II* and recommends refusal. It states:
 1. “Historically Papworth was a small settlement, the buildings of which were scattered along and to either side of Ermine Street. Extensive modern development has overwhelmed the few old buildings and created a village with little sense of place. St Peter’s Church stands on the hill to the west of the main road. Although modern development of indifferent character has spread to its east and north, the Church commands a fine view to the south and west over an unspoilt valley and the hills beyond. In other words it still stands in something of its historic setting, and Church and landscape form a beautiful scene. The Church itself is a thirteenth Century structure substantially restored in 1870.
 2. It is not wholly clear from the papers sent how far the proposed development would extend across the site. This lack of information is itself unsatisfactory. If, as seems to be the case, it would be largely confined to the area to the east of the trees that run north-south across the site its effect on the setting of the Church would be much more limited than it would be were it to extend over the whole site. Even if so limited, however, the development would still erode what remains of the rural setting of the Church; and one road is shown placed close to the south-east corner of the Churchyard.

3. If the proposed development were to extend across the large area to the south of the Church and west of Ermine Street its effect would be severe. The encroachment of further development into the rural setting of the Church would all but destroy any sense of that building's historic setting. Houses would be put up across the land to its south that is presently open. The landscape to the west of the Church would remain as farmland; but the Church's historic relationship with the countryside would be substantially destroyed.
 4. The effect of the proposed development – whatever its extent – would be made worse by its apparent character. The indicative plans submitted with the application suggest that what is intended is a housing development of the standard suburban type planned around meandering spine roads, roundabouts and *cul de sacs*. If this is correct it would continue the unfortunate pattern set by the majority of post-war development in Papworth and it would be wholly unsympathetic to the setting of St Peter's Church.
 5. Ideally the extent of the proposed development would be confined to leave that half of the proposed site that lies immediately south of the Church open. If this is the case it is welcome. I note, however, that the applicants' agents suggest that the entire site has already been designated for development in the local plan, and refer to a planning brief. If your Council has already agreed that the whole site can be developed, that leaves the form of any development to be considered.
 6. The English countryside owes much of its character to the historic pattern of villages set amidst farmland and woodland, and in that relationship churches play a particularly important part. In Cambridgeshire as elsewhere their towers and spires form the most conspicuous historic monuments and in a sense articulate the pattern of settlement within the countryside. If the site that is the subject of this application were to be wholly developed, the relationship between St Peter's Church and the surrounding landscape would necessarily be largely destroyed.
 7. It is the function of the planning system to ensure that if there is a case for building on this land its development should be conceived so as to create a place that is of itself of value, and – more particularly, from English Heritage's perspective – one that responds fully to the adjacent Church. The drawings submitted with this application suggest that what is proposed would do neither, and, indeed, would merely result in the creation of yet another unfortunate suburban sprawl. The most recent development in Papworth – the library and its environs – has been conceived so as to create some sense of place, and there is no reason why the development of this site should not be required to rise above the suburban model of development that is so often followed – to the detriment of towns, villages and countryside alike."
20. **Transco** has confirmed that the proposed works do not directly affect its apparatus.
 21. **Edf Energy Networks (Electricity)** has not commented.
 22. **The Countryside Services Team (County Council)** states:
 1. Public Footpath No. 2 Papworth Everard transverses part of the application site.

2. The footpath must remain open and unobstructed at all times during and after development. No encroachment onto the width (minimum 2 metres) of the footpath is permitted.
 3. No alteration or disturbance to the surface of the footpath is permitted without the County Council's prior consent.
 4. No building materials are to be stored on the footpath.
 5. No scaffolding is to be erected on the footpath.
 6. The footpath should not be used for vehicular access to the site. Vehicles should not be parked on the footpath (including contractors' vehicles.)
 7. Consent is required for temporary diversions.
23. **The Chief Financial Officer (County Council)** requires an educational contribution for pre-school, primary and secondary amounting to £3,900 per dwelling.
 24. **The Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Officer** requires adequate provision to be made for hydrants.
 25. **The Architectural Liaison Officer (Cambs. Constabulary)** has no comments at this stage.
 26. **The Conservation Manager** has no objection. "No significant impact on the Conservation Area or Listed Buildings. However, the proposed southern access is in open country at the gateway to the village, therefore the new access will make a major impact on the place as a whole. It is suggested this access in particular needs to be planted to re-establish the broken Ermine Street hedgeline and penetrate the site via a new woodland setting. This should be feasible without blocking sight lines."
 27. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** has no comment on the proposed access points. As highlighted on the application plan, the route of the internal road and the location of houses to the young tree belt is important. The indicative layout appears to indicate a significant impact.
 28. **The Ecology Officer** believes some ecological information on newt populations in the area has been gathered, but this has not been seen. An assessment of the site for farmland birds, particularly skylarks should be undertaken. An assessment of the semi-natural scrub, ditch and spring-wetland areas should also be undertaken. The adjacent (westward) grassland may be impacted upon by an increased local population; again some assessment should be carried out.
 29. As the applicants control adjacent land, provision should be provided for appropriately managed semi-natural areas. The adjacent ponds should be suitably enhanced as semi-natural features to complement the development.
 30. Adjacent water features should not be subject to any effects that will result in the lowering of their water quality (ie. used to receive water direct from culverts and underground storage tanks).
 31. The design brief states that badgers and water voles are within the development site. These are protected species. It also makes reference to the brown hare, a national biodiversity action plan species.

32. The proposed balancing lakes offer much potential for biodiversity, particularly if set in a semi-natural context.
33. **The County Archaeologist** has indicated that the site is of high archaeological potential, and has requested that a condition be attached to any planning permission issued to secure a programme of archaeological investigation.
34. **The Development Manager (Housing)** states: the last housing survey was in September 2002 and indicated a need for 52 units, mainly in the 1, 2 and 3 bed range and of all tenure types.
35. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no objection subject to an hours of work for power operated machinery during construction condition.

Representations

36. No representations have been received.

Planning Comments

37. – **Key Issues**

- Safety/appropriateness of proposed access points.
 - Demolition of 6 houses.
 - Extended site area to include complementary open space and surface water drainage.
 - Impact on setting of St Peters Church.
 - Affordable housing
38. This is the last quadrant of residential development, first designated in the 1993 Local Plan, to be developed.
 39. The Council commissioned a Development Brief in 2003 which was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in September 2003.
 40. The application site includes the area allocated for residential development in the 2004 Local Plan but also includes a large area on the western side of the allocation to be used as complementary open space and for surface water drainage attenuation facilities as envisaged in the Development Brief. A small area is added to the north to facilitate vehicular access. In total the two additional areas amount to about 11 ha.
 41. Three points of vehicular access are proposed to Ermine Street South, involving the demolition of 3 pairs of semi detached houses owned by the Trust. A fourth “emergency access” is proposed off Southbrook Field and hence onto Church Lane. The Local Highway Authority has carried out safety audits of the proposed access points and requested further information on the north eastern access. No objections are now raised in principle subject to conditions. Physical measures will be required to prevent the emergency access being abused by other motorists.
 42. The Parish Council would prefer the retention of one pair of semi-detached houses proposed for demolition for the north-east access but accept there is no objection to their demolition on other grounds. The houses would be isolated by the proposed new road and would appear rather incongruous. As they are very plain and of no architectural merit I have there is no objection to their demolition.

43. Also in the north-eastern corner the Parish Council would also like a pond and the old Papworth Trust Head Office included within the site area and a footpath around the northern rather than the southern side. This has been put to the applicants who have pointed out this area is not in the allocated area shown in the 2004 Local Plan and they would prefer to deal with this as a separate matter. The alignment of the footpath is a matter for the reserved matter stage.
44. The Parish Council is strongly opposed to a full vehicular access at the mid point of the Ermine Street South frontage. With accesses north and south to Ermine Street South, it considers this access should be a temporary haul road only and should be reduced to a pedestrian/cycle access. The applicant's intention is that this access would serve as a haul road and revert as described, providing the Local Highway Authority raised no objection to the northern and southern access points. This is the case and the use of the "middle" access point can be conditioned as a haul road.
45. English Heritage objects to the application because of the impact on St Peters Church which borders the north-west corner of the site. This objection appears to be partly based on the assumption that the proposed housing would extend onto land to the south of the Church but this is intended to be public open space and is shown as such in the Development Brief. The Conservation Manager has raised no objections to the impact on the Church or the Conservation Area in general.
46. The Trees and Landscape Officer is concerned that the illustrative internal road layout "clips" the plantation of small trees on the west of the site. The road can be excluded from the permission by condition.
47. Notwithstanding the relevant Local Plan policies, the applicant has been very positive about the scheme bringing forward financial contributions towards the provision of affordable housing. Indeed, discussions are currently taking place between the Council's Housing Policy officers and the applicant to this end.

Recommendation

48. Subject to the comments of the Environment Agency, and subject to the prior signing of a Section 106 Legal Agreement concerning financial contributions towards provision of affordable housing, maintenance of public open space, footpath improvements and education contribution,

Delegated approval, subject to the following conditions.

1. In respect of any matter reserved for further consideration by the Local Planning Authority, application for approval shall be made not later than the expiration of 3 years beginning with the date of this Decision Notice.
2. The development to which this permission relates shall be started not later than whichever is the later of the following dates:
 - i) The expiration of 5 years from the date of this Decision Notice; or
 - ii) The expiration of 2 years from the final approval of matters reserved by this permission for further consideration by the Local Planning Authority or in the case of approval on different dates the final approval of the last such matter to be approved.

(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development which have not been acted upon.)

3. No development shall commence until full details of the following reserved matters have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - a) the siting of buildings;
 - b) design and external appearance of the buildings;
 - c) the landscaping of the site.(Reason – The application is for outline permission only and gives insufficient details of the proposed development.)
4. The details to be submitted pursuant to condition 3 shall accord with the Council's Development Brief for the site adopted as supplementary planning guidance in September 2003.
(Reason – To ensure that an appropriate form of development is achieved.)
5. Sc 52 Implementation of landscaping. (Rc 52)
6. Submission of details of site boundaries and plot boundaries.
7. Permanent reservation of parking and turning areas.
8. No access to be gained from Southbrook Field except for emergency vehicles or as cycleway/footway.
9. All off-site works relating to the access junctions to be completed before development commences.
10. Details of road layout and construction, surface water drainage and street lighting.
11. Adequate provision for fire hydrants to be made.
12. No development to take place prior to the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.
13. During the period of construction, no operation of power operated machinery during unsocial hours.
14. Submission of habitat assessment of all semi- natural habitats including farmland.
15. Submission of surveys and schemes of mitigation, including habitat creation and enhancement, for Protected Species and species of importance to local biodiversity.
16. As may be recommended by the Environment Agency

Informatives

1. No bonfires on site.

2. Further planning application required to authorise provision of a haul road during the construction period.
3. As indicated by the Countryside Services Team.

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:

- a) **County Structure Plan 2003:**
 - Policy P1/2** – Environmental Restrictions on Development
 - Policy P1/3** – Sustainable Design in Built Development.
 - Policy P5/3** – Density
 - Policy P5/4** – Meeting locally identified housing needs.
 - Policy P7/2** – Biodiversity
 - Policy P7/6** – Historic Built Environment
- b) **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2003:**
 - Policy Papworth Everard 2**
 - Policy Papworth Everard 3(c)**
 - Policy SE9** – Village Edges
 - Policy HG4** – Allocations in Limited Rural Growth Settlements
 - Policy HG7** - Affordable Housing
 - Policy HG10** – Housing Mix and Design
 - Policy RT2** – Public Open Space
 - Policy EN15** – Development Affecting Archaeology
 - Policy EN28** – Development Within the Setting of a Listed Building

2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations, which have been raised during the consultation exercise:

Means of access
Surface water drainage
Impact on the Conservation Area and St Peter's Church

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

County Structure Plan 2003, South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, Summerfield Development brief and Planning Application File S/2476/03/O

Contact Officer: Mr R McMurray - Senior Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713259