

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation
Control Committee
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

3rd November 2004

S/1740/04/O - Harston
Residential Development – Land at 18 High Street for Mrs S James

Recommendation: Approval

Site and Proposal

1. The application site is a 0.46 hectare plot of land occupied by a detached dwelling and range of outbuildings. The site is located at the eastern end of Orchard Close which is located on the eastern side of the High Street. To the north of the site is the village recreation ground whilst to the west are two storey detached dwellings situated within Orchard Close. There are also dwellings beyond the site to the south and north-west. Access to the site is via Orchard Close.
2. The outline application, submitted on 18th August 2004 and amended by Flood Risk Assessment dated 1st October 2004, proposes residential development of the site. Details of siting, design, means of access and landscaping are reserved for further consideration. The scale of development is not specified.
3. A covering letter submitted with the application states that the site must be regarded as previously developed land, the definition of which includes the permanent structure, associated fixed surface infrastructure and the curtilage of the development. The status of the application site as a brownfield site should fall to be considered within the context which considers development up to 15 dwellings.

Planning History

4. None

Planning Policy

5. Harston is identified within **Policy SE4** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") as a Group Village. In such locations, Policy SE4 states that residential development up to a maximum of 8 dwellings will be permitted providing the site does not form an essential part of village character, and development is sympathetic to the historic interests, character, and amenities of the locality. Exceptionally, development may consist of up to 15 dwellings if this would make the best use of a brownfield site. All developments are expected to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability.
6. **Policy P1/3** of the County Structure Plan 2003 stresses the need for a high standard of design and a sense of place which corresponds to the local character of the built environment.

7. **Policy HG10** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local landscape and townscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness. The supporting text to the latter policy states that, in line with the guidance set out within Planning Policy Guidance Note No.3 (Housing) and within the Structure Plan, new residential development should be constructed at a density of 30-50/hectare in order to make best use of land.
8. **Policy HG7** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 requires affordable housing to be provided at a rate of up to 50% on sites within village frameworks with a population of 3000 or fewer.

Consultation

9. **Harston Parish Council** recommends refusal stating:
 - “Overdevelopment of site where at present is one house and surrounding garden;
 - Would query description ‘brownfield site’ for existing. Large house, old tarmac tennis court, and landscaped garden! ‘Brown Field’ is an exaggeration;
 - Query boundary line of development on eastern side adj paddock: why not follow existing hedge boundary?
 - Development of any size will impact on residences on 3 sides.”
10. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** states that a stand of poplars is situated on the southern boundary of the site. Any detailed application should include a tree survey.
11. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections in principle although does express concern about noise disturbance to nearby residents during the construction period. As such, a condition restricting the hours of use of power operated machinery during the construction period needs to be attached to any planning consent.
12. **The County Archaeologist** states that it is considered likely that significant archaeological remains survive in the area and that these would be damaged by the proposed development. A condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation to be carried out should be attached to any planning consent.
13. **The Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** requests that adequate provision be made for fire hydrants.
14. **The Local Highways Authority** states that Orchard Close is acceptable to cater for the additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic likely to be generated by the development. Also, the Orchard Close/High Street junction comprises suitable geometry and visibility to cater for additional traffic. However, in view of the alignment of Orchard Close, intensification of vehicular use is likely to result in vehicle speed becoming an issue. Therefore, following consultation with existing residents, the installation of some form of traffic calming should be considered as part of the proposals.

15. **The Ecology Officer** raises no objections in principle, stating that there is no evidence to suggest that bats are using the buildings. However, opportunities for artificial bat roosts and retention of more significant vegetation should be considered at the full application stage.
16. **The County Chief Financial Planning Officer** advises that adequate education capacity is available in the area to meet additional demand that could arise from the development. A planning contribution is therefore not required.
17. **The Environment Agency** raises no objections in principle to the submitted Flood Risk Assessment, stating that there are no Agency related issues in respect of the application. This Authority is therefore required to respond in respect of flood risk and surface water drainage issues.
18. **The Building Inspector** states that, although the issue of flood risk has been addressed in respect of rivers, surface water drainage issues have not been dealt with. A condition requiring such details should therefore be attached to the planning consent.

Representations

19. Letters of objection have been received from 8 local residents, Nos. 4, 6, 12 and 16 Orchard Close and Nos. 9, 10, 13 and 18 The Paddock. The main points raised are:
 - Access via The Paddock would be inappropriate;
 - Development could result in the loss of mature trees on the site;
 - The increase in traffic would result in highway safety problems on the A10;
 - Planning permission for development of land to the south of the site has already been denied;
 - Orchard Close is a narrow access road opening onto the A10 between the school and village hall adjacent to traffic lights and the shop/post office. Any consent on this site should not allow Orchard Close to be used as the means of access;
 - The site is not a brownfield site. It is in residential use;
 - Recent highways reports have concluded that further major development of Harston with direct access onto the A10 should not be permitted until through traffic by-passes Harston village centre;
 - A colony of bats may reside on the site;
 - The erection of 15 dwellings on the site would amount to overdevelopment;
 - Orchard Close is used for parking during school pickup/drop-off times. This together with on-street residents parking reduces the road to a single lane and makes turning into Orchard Close from the High Street a hazardous manoeuvre;
 - Getting out of Orchard Close onto the High Street takes a long time due to the volume of traffic. A development of 15 houses would add significantly to this problem.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

20. The key issues in relation to this application are:
- Neighbour impact;
 - Highway safety;
 - Density/best use of land;
 - Impact on trees.
21. The site lies within the village framework where policies state that the principle of residential development up to a maximum of 8 dwellings (15 dwellings in exceptional circumstances) is acceptable providing the site in its present form does not form an essential part of village character, providing development is sympathetic to the character and amenities of the surrounding area and providing there is the necessary infrastructure capacity.
22. The application merely seeks to establish the principle of developing the site with details of siting, design and landscaping to be reserved for further consideration. Issues such as the impact of development upon neighbouring properties and the retention of existing trees/hedges would need to be considered at the detailed stage.
23. A covering letter submitted with the application indicates that the site could be developed with up to 15 houses given that it is a brownfield site within the framework. Residential/garden land does fall within the definition of brownfield land and, whilst 15 houses would result in a density of approximately 32 dwellings/hectare, I am not convinced that such a density can be achieved without adversely affecting the character of the area and the openness of the adjoining countryside/green belt. This would need to be fully considered as part of any detailed/reserved matter application.
24. The principal concern that has been raised by the Parish Council and local residents relates to the highway safety implications of the development. The Local Highways Authority has advised that Orchard Close is of sufficient width to cater for the additional traffic that development of this site may generate whilst there is also adequate visibility at the junction of Orchard Close with the High Street. A number of residents have commented that the Local Plan refers to a highways report which resists any major development in Harston until the village has been bypassed. The Local Highways Authority has confirmed verbally that the proposed development would not be classified as major in the context of the highways report.
25. The Local Highways Authority has recommended that the possibility of traffic calming be explored further. A requirement for traffic calming cannot be insisted upon as part of a planning permission as it relates to off-site works and can only be carried out with the full agreement of all parties involved including local residents. However, a condition could be attached to any consent requiring the matter to be investigated further.
26. Any consent would need to be subject to a legal agreement to ensure that up to 50% of the housing erected on the site would be affordable dwellings.
27. Reference has been made to a previous refusal on the site. I can confirm that this refusal dates from 1973 and relates to a large area of land that includes the current application site as well land to the rear/east. That application was refused as the

majority of the site was located outside the built up part of the village and in the Green Belt.

28. With regards to the Parish Council comment about the boundary of the site, the applicant's agent has confirmed that some elements of the framework boundary on the eastern side do not follow any particular line on the ground and thus is rather arbitrary in parts. The planning application boundary reflects the land ownership and all of this falls within the framework.

Recommendations

29. Subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement to ensure that up to 50% of any development would be affordable housing, approval, as amended by Flood Risk Assessment dated 1st October 2004:

1. Standard Condition B – Time limited permission (Reason B);
2. Sc1a, b, c and d – (Rc1);
3. Sc5b – Surface water drainage details (Rc5b);
4. During the period of construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 hours on weekdays and 08.00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18.00 hours on weekdays and 13.00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays) unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions (Rc26);
5. Fire hydrants condition;
6. Archaeology condition;
7. No development shall commence until a feasibility study that explores the possibility of implementing a traffic calming scheme within Orchard Close has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority; the works that form part of any agreed scheme shall be carried out before the occupation of the first dwelling (Reason – In the interests of highway safety).

Informatics

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:** P1/3 (Sustainable design in built development);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** SE4 (Development in Group Villages) and HG7 (Affordable Housing);
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:

- Highway safety
- Neighbour impact
- Density
- Impact on trees

General

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
2. During demolition and construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.
3. Before the existing property is demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from the Environmental Health Department establishing the way in which the property will be dismantled, including any asbestos present, the removal of waste, minimisation of dust, capping of drains and establishing hours of working operation. This should be brought to the attention of the applicant to ensure the protection of the residential environment of the area.
4. A detailed tree survey covering the boundary trees together with those within the site indicating species, size and quality, should be submitted as part of any reserved matter/detailed application.
5. With regards to Condition 7 of the consent, the possibility of providing traffic calming within Orchard Close needs to be explored in consultation with the Parish Council, District Councillors, Orchard Close residents and Local Highways Authority. A traffic calming scheme can only be required if all parties are in agreement with both the principle and details of such a scheme.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003, Plan File Ref: S/1740/04/F

Contact Officer: Lorraine Casey – Senior Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713251