

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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### **S/1662/04/F - Highfields Caldecote Erection of Two Shops and Four Flats with Associated Car Parking.**

#### **Recommendation: Approval**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site occupies 0.05ha of land situated at the junction of Furlong Way and Highfields Road. The land is laid to grass and bounded by railings to the grounds of the village hall, which adjoins to the west. On the opposite side of Furlong Way there is an open landscaped area which is being considered by Caldecote Parish Council for adoption as a village green.
2. The full planning application received 10<sup>th</sup> August 2004 and amended by plans received 5<sup>th</sup> October and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2004, is for the erection of two ground floor shops and four first and second floor flats. Two flats have two bedrooms, and the remaining units have one bedroom each. The shop units each have gross retail areas of 36 sq m. Parking provision for 10 cars and 6 bicycles is shown. Access is proposed from Furlong Way, sited 18 metres from the junction. Vehicle-to-vehicle visibility to the west along Furlong Way is limited to 23 metres.
3. The proposed elevations show a single block with double gables and a ridge height of 10.1 metres. External materials have not been specified. Provision has been made for bin storage.
4. The agent has indicated that the Parish Council may be able to offer additional land to provide a lay-by on the opposite side of Furlong Way, but this is dependant on the Parish Council successfully completing negotiations to purchase the land.

#### **Planning History**

5. Outline planning permission for the erection of a single shop and flat on the site was granted in 2001 (**S/0494/01/O**). All details, including means of access, were reserved for subsequent approval and no consultation with the Highway Authority was made.
6. The land is affected by a Section 106 Agreement dated 17<sup>th</sup> December 1999 that was drawn up at the time of the applications for the adjoining housing development by Wilcon Homes Ltd. In this Agreement, the site is reserved for use for the development of shops with or without ancillary living accommodation for a period of ten years, i.e. until 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009. If after that time, and after reasonable endeavours to market it, the site remains unsold for this purpose, it may then be offered for general residential development.

#### **Planning Policy**

7. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: **Policy P2/6** (Rural Economy): sensitive small-scale employment development in rural areas will be facilitated where it contributes to, amongst other things, helping to achieve a balance

of employment with the type and quantity of local housing, and helping to maintain the vitality of rural areas. **Policy P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas): small-scale housing developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account the need for affordable housing, the character of the village and its setting, and the level of services provision in the immediate area.

8. South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: **Policy SH5** (New retail development)- proposals for the development of new shops within the village framework will be permitted provided:
  - the size of the shopping development is of a scale appropriate to the size of the village;
  - development would not have an adverse impact upon the amenity of adjoining uses;
  - the existing site does not form an essential part of village character.
9. **Policy SE4** (Group Villages) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that redevelopment up a maximum scheme of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework provided that the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenities of neighbours.
10. **Policy HG7** (Affordable Housing on Sites within Village Frameworks): Within villages with less than 3,000 population, affordable housing of up to 50% of the total number of dwellings will be expected, unless other factors indicate a higher or lower proportion.
11. **Policy TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel): in considering planning applications, the Council will seek to restrict car parking to the maximum levels set out in Appendix 7/1, and will require safe and secure cycle parking as set out in Appendix 7/2. **Appendix 7/1**: developers will be required to provide car parking spaces up to the maximum standards –food shops: 1 space per 14 sq m gross sales area, non-food shops: 1 space per 20 sq m gross sales area. Small shops should have short stay parking at the front. Dwellings should have an average of 1.5 spaces per unit. Disabled parking at a rate of 5% of capacity should be made. **Appendix 7/2**: for small shops, one cycle space per 25 sq m should be made.
12. **Housing Needs Survey** (Caldecote 2002) indicates that 4.5% respondents required a 1bed home/flat, whilst 15.5% required a 2 bed house.

### Consultations

13. **Caldecote Parish Council** – strongly recommends approval of this application for a much-needed Parish facility. It supports the design of the building. It recommends the imposition of conditions to control noise, smell, late night trading and litter. It asks for additional screening on the boundary with Highfields Road. One shop is to be leased to the Parish Council.
14. **Highway Authority** – the HA has concerns about the proposal. The provision of eight parking spaces in the original proposal is considered to be insufficient, as well as poor vehicle-to-vehicle visibility. The comments of the HA on the latest amended proposals are as follows:

“Given the location of the carriageway narrowing within Furlong Way, I am prepared to accept the vehicle-t-vehicle splay of 2.4m x 23.0m shown on the submitted plan.

I remain most concerned about the likely on-street parking that will be generated by this development - which clearly has insufficient parking spaces to serve even the residential units and staff parking.

I trust your authority will consider the implications of the likely on-street parking and the problems that this is likely to cause for residents accessing the exiting the housing development.”

15. **Environment Agency** – the EA has indicated that surface water discharge to the adjacent housing estate system is acceptable in principle.
16. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** - no objection in principle subject to a condition to ensure adequate sound insulation between the shops and flats.

### **Representations**

17. Caldecote Village Institute Trustees welcomes the project in an area that may soon be the vibrant heart of Highfields. The Trustees have some concerns, however;
  - a. possible noise disturbance to future residents of the flats from discos and live music in the adjacent village hall;
  - b. possible conflict with future plans to extend the village hall.
18. Two letters from residents of Highfields Road have indicated concerns:
  - c. at three storeys, the building is too high and is out of keeping with the appearance of dwellings in the adjacent housing estate, the school and the village hall;
  - d. overdevelopment – one shop plus two flats would seem to be more appropriate for village needs;
  - e. possibility of the shops remaining empty and being converted to additional flats;
  - f. inadequate provision for car parking on site. Could cars park in the village hall car park?
  - g. possibility of parking on the road blocking private driveways. This already happens as a result of the primary school being close by;
  - h. possible noise disturbance to residents from users visiting the shops after 6pm. A condition to control opening hours is requested;

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

19. The main considerations are the scale and height of the development, the provision for car parking and visibility splays, and affordable housing provision.

#### **Scale and height of development**

20. The previous permission for one shop and one flat has not been implemented because of the economics of developing the site. The Parish Council is persuaded that the current scheme is much needed in the village, and in my opinion the scale of development is acceptable. The height, at 10.1 metres, is considerably greater than the adjacent single-storey village hall. However, given the open setting of the site

and its position at the entrance to the housing estate, a well-designed landmark building is appropriate in my opinion.

#### **Car parking and visibility splays**

21. The submitted scheme shown is one car parking space less than the maximum requirement, and there is a possibility that off-site provision may be made on the adjacent open area in the future on land to be acquired by the Parish Council. In my opinion the shortfall is not significant. The siting of the proposed access midway on the Furlong Way junction results in a 23 metres visibility splay to the west. The road turns and narrows with traffic calming surfacing at this point, with a result that traffic speeds are likely to be low.

#### **Affordable housing provision**

22. As the market value of the proposed 1- and 2-bed flats is likely to be modest and will meet some of the demand for smaller housing in the village and the scheme brings forward much needed retail units, I am proposing that no formal requirement for affordable housing be made in this instance.

#### **Other matters**

23. Both the Parish Council and a nearby resident have requested the use of a condition to control opening hours of the shops in the evening. I am not convinced that this is necessary in this case, as no hot food takeaway is proposed and there is no evidence to suggest that any disturbance will be likely to occur. The Village Hall Trustees have indicated concern at possible noise disturbance to future residents of the flats, but as the scheme's architect has confirmed that each unit will be provided with double glazing I believe this to be a case where purchasers will be aware of the potential for noise from events prior to deciding to buy.

#### **Recommendation**

24. Approval

1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
2. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5a(ii));
3. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
4. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
5. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
6. Sc29 – Details of noise insulation between shops and flats (RC29);
7. Highways C3 – Provision for parking and turning;
8. Surface water drainage details.

#### **Informatives**

#### **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: Policy P2/6** (Rural Economy) **Policy P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas);
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: Policy SH5** (New retail development); **Policy SE4** (Group Villages); **Policy HG7** (Affordable Housing on Sites within Village Frameworks); **Policy TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel); **Appendices 7/1 and 7/2** (Car and cycle parking standards).

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

- Economic vitality of the village;
- Residential amenity including noise disturbance issues;
- Highway safety;
- Visual impact on the locality

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Planning applications S/0494/01/O and S/1662/04/F, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

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