

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee      5<sup>th</sup> January 2005  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/2410/04/F - Fen Ditton**  
**Construction of Temporary Vehicle Parking Area at Land Adjacent to The East Access Road, North Works, Newmarket Road, Cambridge for Marshall Motor Group**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for Determination: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2005**

### **Departure Application**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site is an area of land totalling approximately 0.198 hectares that lies adjacent to car parks serving the Marshall Motor Company on Newmarket Road. An existing lorry park lies to the north of a row of poplar trees, which provide screening from the main road. The land is within the Green Belt and is currently used for arable farming.
2. The application, received on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2004, proposes the change of use from agriculture to vehicle parking area for a temporary period of up to 5 years. The proposal is to enclose an area of land to the east of the Marshall Motor Group site and north of a smaller lorry park that is located north of the poplar trees. It will be accessed via the existing lorry park, from off the eastern access road. Surfacing materials will be permeable to allow free drainage.

#### **Planning History**

3. **S/1096/96/F** permitted an extension to form commercial vehicle bays together with lorry parking and access road. This relates to the existing lorry parking area.
4. **S/1656/04/F** sought a temporary extension of the existing lorry park in front of the line of poplar trees. This was refused on grounds that it is not development that is essential to the rural location and the expansion of development into the countryside would be detrimental to the semi-rural character of the location, contrary to Policies EM6 and EM7 of the Local Plan 2004.

#### **Planning Policy**

5. **Policy GB2 'General Principles'** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") outlines the circumstances under which planning permission may be granted for development within the Green Belt. By definition all development is considered to be 'inappropriate' unless it comprises one of specifically defined categories set out in policy GB2.
6. **Policies EM6 'New Employment at Rural Growth and Limited Growth Settlements' and EM7 'Expansion of Existing Firms at Villages'** of the Local Plan set out circumstances under which employment development and expansion will be

considered. These policies seek to limit such developments to land within village frameworks or on suitable brownfield sites next to or very close to village frameworks. Development should not have an adverse impact upon residential amenities, traffic conditions, village character or other environmental factors.

7. **Policy P1/2 'Environmental Restrictions on Development'** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") requires development to be restricted in countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
8. **Policy P9/2a 'Green Belt'** of the County Structure Plan identifies the purpose of the Green Belt and the limitations upon development within it.

### **Consultations**

9. **Fen Ditton Parish Council** made no recommendation.
10. **Local Plan Policy Officer** comments that it would be preferable to have a temporary car park in the Green Belt as an exception, rather than put it south of the tree belt. Whilst the land to the south is white land rather than Green Belt, the visual impact on this frontage would be considerably greater. There is concern that a 5-year permission would extend to January 2010. It is envisaged that the Area Action Plan will be adopted late 2006/early 2007 with the first phase of development north of Newmarket Road taking place soon after. The Council should not be doing anything that could prejudice the early development of Cambridge East. On this basis, they are of the view that a 3-year permission would be more appropriate i.e. to January 2008. If any extension were sought, this could be considered in the context applying at that time.

### **Representations**

11. No representations have been received to date. The application has been advertised in the local press as a departure to local plan policy. The consultation period expires on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2005 and should any comments be received these will be reported verbally at the Committee for its consideration.

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

12. The key issues in relation to this application are whether the proposals will be harmful to the Green Belt, residential amenities, traffic conditions, village character or other environmental factors. If no harm will result then consideration must be given to whether it is acceptable to approve for a temporary period as a departure from the adopted development plan policies.

### **Green Belt**

13. There is a presumption against all inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The proposal is inappropriate development. However, the proposed car park will be relatively discreet, sited to the rear of an existing car park and is screened from the road by mature poplar trees. When viewed from public cycle and footpaths to the north and east it will be seen against the backdrop of the existing car parks and buildings at the Marshall Motors site. In light of the future development proposals for the extension of Cambridge to the East, as detailed in the Structure Plan and the evolving Local Development Framework, it seems reasonable to agree a 3 year temporary period, subject to reinstatement of the land at the end of that period.

### ***Traffic Conditions, Village Character and Other Environmental Factors***

14. The proposed car park is to accommodate vehicles that otherwise are parked within the site or access road. This should improve access within the site and will not lead to a significant increase in traffic on the public highway. The proposals will not adversely affect the village character. In terms of other adverse impacts, it is important to ensure that a permeable surface material is used in order to ensure no surface water drainage issues result. This can be conditioned.
15. In view of the temporary nature of the proposal and the absence of objections from consultees, I do not consider it necessary to refer the application to the Secretary of State. Its scale would not, in my opinion, significantly prejudice the implementation of the Development Plan's Policies.

### **Recommendation**

16. Subject to no other matters having been received through local representations the application be approved, subject to the following conditions:
  1. Sc4 – Temporary permission for use of land until 5<sup>th</sup> January 2008 (RC3a)
  3. Sc5f – Details of hardstanding materials (Rc5b);
  4. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
  5. Condition requiring removal of surface material. (RC To protect the openness of the Green Belt.)

### **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:** P1/2 'Environmental Restrictions on Development' and P9/2a 'Green Belt'.
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** GB2 'General Principles', EM6 'New Employment at Rural Growth, Limited Growth Settlements' and EM7 'Expansion of Existing Firms at Villages'.
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
  - Cambridge East Expansion proposals.

**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
- Planning file Ref. S/2410/04/F and S/1656/04/F

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