

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

---

**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

6<sup>th</sup> October 2010

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

---

**S/0233/10/RM – MELDRETH**

**Submission of Reserved Matters in Respect of Approving Siting, Design and External Appearance of Buildings, Means of Access and Landscaping of Outline Planning Permission S/1543/02/O for the Erection of 20 Houses (including 6 Affordable Dwellings) at Land to the North of Chiswick End Meldreth for C. Holland and Sons, T. Dash and JS Bloor (Sudbury) Ltd**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval/Refusal subject to agreement on outstanding issues relating to Housing Mix**

**Date for Determination: 18 May 2010**

**A. Update to the report**

**Agenda report paragraph number 37 – Design and Appearance**

This paragraph is short several words. The last sentence should read 'I am now satisfied that this aspect of the proposal is appropriate'. This sentence refers to the design and external appearance of the proposed buildings only. The layout is considered to still require some minor work.

**Agenda report paragraph number 38 - Landscaping**

The Landscape Officer on further discussion with the Urban Design team add the following comments:

*Following my discussion with Urban Design it is agreed that officers are unhappy about the lack of space in the parking court of plots 3, 4, 5 and 6. He agrees the walls around the rear gardens of plots 4 and 6 should be pulled away from the footway to accommodate some planting, but it is not necessary to move the houses as has been done in the amendment of 7 September 2010 as this has led to the space needed for getting into and out of cars being squeezed. The garages should comply with the Design Guide SPD and be 3.3m wide x 6m long. This should provide adequate space for circulation around a parked car on the driveway outside a garage as well as allow the garage to be used properly. When this is applied to plots 11 and 12 the space for backing out etc will also be improved. Similarly the garages of plots 8-10 need to be enlarged and the space between the houses adjusted by taking the houses to the boundaries of the site. Plots 1, 2 and 20 also need adjusting to accommodate larger garages. This will still leave some space for the necessary greening of the garden walls but will considerably increase the practical usability of the plots.*

**Agenda report paragraph number 50 – Renewable Energy**

This paragraph should be under a different heading that has been missed out titled **Boundary Landscaping and Security**. The retention of the tree belt boundary between the existing properties on Whitcroft Road and the development site has been questioned by local residents and whilst it is not included in the site edged red the security of this tree belt is considered important to the character of the area as well as the proposed landscaping along Road 1.

## **B. Further Information received after publication of the agenda report.**

Further representation has been received from the occupiers of No. 51 and 53 Whitecroft Road. It reads as follows:

### *Design and Landscape*

*We find the back elevation (the one facing Whitecroft Road called 'side elevation' on dwg 11B) to be at best, bland and overbearing -- the gable is 8.5m high with arbitrary fenestration and is contiguous with a blank, unrelieved brick wall 4.5m high.*

*I spoke to an officer at length about the possibilities for improving the design - half hips, decorative brickwork, aligned fenestration etc - but they said that you were minded not to ask for any alterations to the design. At the very least, a break between the gable and flank wall would attenuate the house but if indeed the design is accepted, we would seek your assurances that adequate screening be provided for a potential eyesore. The design of this boundary has been conspicuously omitted from the DAS (and indeed the layout) as the developer seeks to rely on vegetation in an adjacent garden that is not guaranteed to be there for all time.*

*Given that the strip of land to the NE of the site appears not to be in the developer's ownership, we would seek to retain the trees on this boundary (the scheme appears to fell them all!) and to strengthen it further in the event that the strip is developed as a garden and the wild trees and shrubs removed. At the very least we would ask you to insist upon a good native hedge some 2.5- 3m wide. This may result in shunting the houses to the west a little but it looks feasible. Also, would it be possible to protect any of the trees outside the development site on the neighbouring NE strip?*

*In short we would ask the developer to live up to his claim on P23 of the DAS to create 'strong boundaries' and to ensure that as on P43 'separation is such that there will be no material loss of light or sense of enclosure to gardens adjoining dwellings' and that his aim for high quality of amenity is fulfilled.*

### **MATERIALS & DETAIL**

*The materials proposed are of lowest quality and indeed the developer may argue that they are in keeping with existing post-war housing in Meldreth. Having said that, the council houses as built had appropriate Crittall windows and clay tiled roofs and the odd brick flourish. I'm not sure if you have any powers to up the spec but the site is on the village edge and as a transition to open countryside demands a better quality. The DAS seeks to argue that different materials scattered in smaller scale buildings would be better than one large shed. If it were a scattering of gems we would agree but we can see no gain in 3- storey, unrelieved boxes being built 1m from adjacent boundaries*

### **DRAINAGE**

*The developer's bland assertion in the DAS that the foul sewer will connect to existing should be scrutinised and a condition precedent be strongly drafted to ensure that a proper foul drainage design is forthcoming.*

### **BIODIVERSITY**

*Apart from the Northern access, I cannot see in Section 4 of the DAS how the scheme hopes to contribute to biodiversity if none of the 3 boundaries are to be planted and the central spine has meagre green resource.*

*To summarise, we have little expectation for the quality of the development but as a last resort would urge you to ensure that it is adequately screened from the existing Whitecroft Road side and presents a reasonable face to the countryside to the west. Our other prime concern is that the drainage (especially the foul) be adequately designed and installed.*

### **Environment Agency:**

The site is identified as being less than one hectare within FZ1, with no known flood risk associated with the site. However the site is over a major aquifer and previous use of the site is of concern.

We have no objection to the reserved matters application for the new layout, providing it does not compromise Conditions 2 and 10 of S/1543/02/O, particularly with regard to surface water drainage facilities.

Any culverting or works affecting the flow of an ordinary watercourse requires the prior written Consent of the Environment Agency under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991 or the relevant Internal Drainage Board if within their rated area.

### **Cambridgeshire Police Architectural Liaison Officer:**

General comments on design and layout and boundary treatments:

- In terms of the track beyond the site entrance, I recommend the gate at the Whitecroft Way be relocated across the track beyond the entrance road. This will discourage casual use of the track and probably discourage causal access to the track towards the site.
- I note the intention to erect 1.8m high c/b fence to rear of plots 17/18/20 topped by 300mm trellis (it seems logical for the trellis to be extended for the remainder of this boundary as well as the boundary to the rear of plots 8-12 (if SBD accreditation is required, I recommend that this matter is discussed with me at an early stage once planning is approved and prior the fence being erected). It is important that the fence be close boarded to the outside with the arras rail inside the development (if this is not possible for SBD purposes, this is something I will need to discuss).
- I recommend the five bar gate to this track (rear plots 17/20) remain in place to enable this track/path to be secured.
- Plots 1 & 2: Neither of these plots is overlooked. It will be important for defensible space to be in place. I cannot make out from the plans whether 1.2m timber post and 3 bar rail is for the fronts of properties but recommend a fence and gate combined with planting. (sourced from SBD company)
- Plot 7,13 & 20 shows a side door to the driveway. I would recommend that this door be fitted with a split spindle to minimise the risk from a walk in crime and that the door be a PAS 24 approved door.
- Gate to be fitted to front of alley between 15/16. Recommend rim lock and key to each household. This takes away the risk of someone accessing the alleyway and being out of view from other residents within the development.
- The gable end walls to plot 20 will require defensible planting to protect the gable end and window.

- I note from the scheme the position of lighting columns. SBD does require parking courts to be lit. Consider for full accreditation a lighting column covering the parking area for plots 3-6 and also to the front of 14-17 (this would be dependent on the whole development being adopted by Highways).

**Contact Officer:** Saffron Garner- Senior Planning Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713256