

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

11 May 2011

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

**S/2290/10 - LONGSTANTON
11 Dwellings - 53, Woodside, Longstanton
for Mr Mike Lee, Stepford Homes (Southern) Limited**

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 18 March 2011

This application has been reported to the Planning Committee as a recommendation of approval would conflict with written representations on material planning grounds received from the Parish Council

Members will visit the site on 11th May 2011

This is a Departure application

Site and Proposal

1. The existing dwelling of 53 Woodside sits on a large plot located inside the designated Longstanton village framework. The site is excluded from the Longstanton Conservation Area, although this runs along the northeast, southwest and partially across the southeast boundaries of the site. The other boundary to the Conservation Area is to the northwest boundary of the neighbouring property at 41 Woodside. The southwest boundary of the site is adjacent to a Protected Village Amenity Area that includes the frontage trees along Thatchers Wood.
2. The full application, received on 24th December, seeks the demolition of the existing bungalow and replacement with 11 dwellings on the site. This would include the provision of four affordable units. The development would create a cul-de-sac with a turning head. Amended plans have been received dated 16th March 2011 that show revisions to the layout, the redesign of plots 5 and 6, information regarding hedge removal, and water conservation measures. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, an Ecology Survey and Code for Sustainable Homes Assessment, a Tree Report, a Sustainability Statement, an Open Space Statement, a Heritage Statement, a RECAP Waste Management Design Toolkit, and a Flood Risk Assessment.

Planning History

3. Application **S/0303/78/F** granted consent for a bungalow following the demolition of the existing dwelling on the site.

Policies

4. **Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (LDF CS) 2007: ST/6 Group Villages**
5. **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (LDF DCP) 2007: DP/1 Sustainable Development, DP/2 Design of New Development, DP/3 Development Criteria, DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments, DP/7 Development Frameworks, HG/1 Housing Density, HG/2 Housing Mix, HG/3 Affordable Housing, SF/6 Public Art and New Development, SF/10 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments, SF/11 Open Space Standards, NE/1 Energy Efficiency, NE/3 Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development, NE/6 Biodiversity, NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure, NE/12 Water Conservation, NE/15 Noise Pollution, CH/5 Conservation Areas, CH/6 Protected Village Amenity Areas & TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards.**
6. **Open Space in New Developments SPD, Trees and Development Sites SPD, Development Affecting Conservation Areas, Biodiversity SPD, District Design Guide SPD, Affordable Housing SPD & Public Art SPD.**
7. **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions:** Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.
8. **Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations:** Advises that planning obligations must be relevant to planning, necessary, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and reasonable in all other respect.

Consultations

9. **Longstanton Parish Council** recommends refusal of the scheme. They note concerns that parking would cause difficulties for refuse vehicles, that the development would conflict with the character of the Conservation Area, that the development is too large and out of character, and that the scheme is “garden grabbing”. The amended plans were not considered to overcome the objection.
10. The **Council’s Section 106 Officer** notes the recreation ground is over a kilometre from the site. Provision should be made on site for a LAP but 259 square metres of informal space is proposed instead. Given constraints of the site, this is considered reasonable. There would be a financial payment, to be paid prior to occupation of the 5th dwelling. Contributions towards community facilities, public art, Section 106 monitoring and provision of waste receptacles are also required.
11. The **Council’s Housing Development and Enabling Manager** notes the scheme would provide four affordable units, to be socially rented. Given the district need for socially rented two and three bedroom units, this proposal is acceptable. The affordable dwellings shall remain so in perpetuity. There is no requirement for the units to be made available for people with a connection to Longstanton.

12. The **County New Communities Team** seeks contributions towards pre-school need and secondary school need given the shortfall of places at Hatton Park (£9,240) and Swavesey Village College (£15,000). It is noted Cottenham Village College also has no capacity. These figures are based on a net gain of ten dwellings.
13. The **Local Highways Authority** notes they would wish to adopt the access and the shared surface should therefore be constructed with blockwork. Conditions are recommended regarding the vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays, pedestrian visibility splays, drainage of water away from the public highway and materials to be used for individual driveways. An informative regarding works to the public highway is also requested.
14. **Anglian Water** notes the foul drainage development is in the catchment of Over STW that at present has available capacity for these flows. The sewerage system also has available capacity. Surface water disposal is an issue for the Environment Agency although a condition is recommended.
15. The **Council's Trees Officer** notes the Tree report does not include tree protection details for those to be retained on site. A condition is recommended to ensure this information is provided prior to works commencing on site.
16. The **Council's Ecology Officer** notes there are a number of fruit trees to the rear of the site, the majority which would be lost as a result of the development. Orchards are a priority habitat species and the Ecology Survey makes no reference to this. These trees should be retained where possible. A scheme of ecological enhancement is proposed, with no removal of vegetation during the bird-breeding season. Further comments note the loss of the orchard is acceptable, provided the frontage land is used for further fruit tree planting. There should also be funding for the maintenance of the trees, based on a figure of £110 per trees and watering of £600 a year for 2-3 years.
17. The **Council's Landscape Officer** notes the need to retain planting across the front of the site to respect the Conservation Area. Some changes to the landscape plan are requested and can be achieved through a condition.
18. The **County Archaeology Team** notes the site has a high archaeological potential, and suggests an investigation is submitted prior to the granting of planning permission.
19. The **Council's Environmental Health Officer** requests conditions regarding the timing of use of power operated machinery, use of pile driven foundations and a lighting scheme. An informative regarding bonfires and burning of waste is also proposed.
20. Members will be updated on comments from the Conservation Officer.

Representations

21. Letters of objection have been received from the occupiers of 8 neighbouring properties and the Thatchers Wood Residents Company Ltd. The objections are based upon:
 - The principle of development in a Group Village

- Overdevelopment of the site and housing mix
- Impact upon the adjacent Conservation Area
- Impact upon the adjacent Listed Building of The Manor
- Impact upon the designated Protected Village Amenity Area
- Impact upon the street scene
- Loss of the frontage hedge, trees and an orchard
- Ecological implications and loss of habitat
- Redevelopment of brownfield land
- Archaeological implications
- Overlooking and loss of privacy to a number of neighbouring properties
- Highway safety
- Pressure on the sewage system

Planning Comments

22. The key considerations for the determination of this application are the principle of development, impact upon the adjacent Conservation Area and Listed Building, impact upon the Protected Village Amenity Area, ecological considerations, impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring dwellings, and the Section 106 package.

The Principle of Development

23. Longstanton is classified as a Group Village in the LDF CS 2007, where residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme of 8 dwellings will be permitted within village frameworks. The site would previously have been described as brownfield land, which would permit development of up to 15 dwellings in exceptional cases. However, following the recent changes to Planning Policy Statement 3, this is no longer the case. As the scheme seeks 11 dwellings (a net gain of 10), it is considered a Departure from Policy ST/6 of the LDF CS 2007. The application has been publically advertised as such.
24. Policy HG/1 of the LDF DCP 2007 seeks residential developments to achieve average net densities of 30 dwellings per hectare. The site has an area of approximately 0.43 hectares. The existing single dwelling on the site represents development at a density of 2 dwellings per hectare, whilst a scheme of 8 in line with Policy ST/6 represents 19 dwellings per hectare. The proposed scheme of 11 units would represent development of 26 dwellings per hectare. This is still below the target densities required within Policy HG/1. There is conflict between policy ST/6 and Policy HG/1 for sites of this nature, as both seek a different number of dwellings from the site. Given the services and facilities within the village, it is considered that the site has the capacity for 11 dwellings, and would not materially prejudice the settlement strategy for the district.
25. Policy HG/2 of the LDF DCP 2007 seeks residential developments to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability. In developments of 10 market dwellings, the mix should provide at least 40% one or two-bed units, with 25% of three-bed units and 25% four-bed units. The proposal provides 3 two-bed units and 4 three-bed units, and no larger units form part of the scheme. This is considered to meet the aims of Policy HG/2.

26. Policy HG/3 seeks 40% or more of dwellings to be affordable in order to meet housing need. The proposal represents a net gain of 10 dwellings, of which 4 (plots 8-11) would be affordable. These numbers are in line with the policy aims. The units comprise of 2 two-bed units and 2 three-bed units and would be rented. The Housing Development and Enabling Manager has confirmed there is the demand for such dwellings and the application is supported. Members should note the site is not an “exceptions site”, and therefore the dwellings would not be specifically for those with a local connection to Longstanton. The affordable housing would need to be tied up through a Section 106 Agreement to ensure they remain as such in perpetuity.
27. To summarise the principle of development, the proposal would represent a Departure from Policy ST/6 of the LDF CS 2007, and this is considered appropriate in this instance. The density of development is below the usually required level, the mix provides smaller housing, and the application would provide four affordable units. Members should also be aware that if only 8 dwellings (a net gain of 7) were proposed in line with ST/6, only three affordable units would be required. The Departure therefore does allow the opportunity to secure another unit.

Impact upon the Adjacent Conservation Area and Listed Building

28. As noted, the Longstanton Conservation Area runs along the front and rear boundaries of the plot, as well as a portion of the southeast boundary. The land and the neighbouring property at 41 Woodside have therefore specifically been omitted from this designation. No comments have been received from the Conservation Officer and members will be updated at the meeting. At the pre-application stage, the Conservation Officer advised that there is potential for residential development on the site providing any scheme is sympathetic to the setting of the Conservation Area.
29. The area has a green character, with a lot of hedgerows across front boundaries. This gives Woodside a rural setting, although members should note there are a number of road junctions with Woodside in the vicinity. Opposite the application site is an area of trees that front the Thatchers Wood estate. These also contribute to the verdant character. The application site does have a hedge running the majority of the frontage of the plot. By needing a vehicle access into the site and appropriate vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays, some of this hedge will need to be removed. However, the proposal includes plans to retain a firm green frontage, supplemented by planting of fruit trees by the open space area. The design also keeps dwellings away from the frontage, and plots 1 and 11 are double fronted allowing a focal point into the site. It is noted the neighbouring properties of 41 and 57 Woodside are bungalows. However, there is sufficient gap between the proposed units and these dwellings to ensure the increase in height is not prominent in the street scene. 55 Woodside to the rear is a large two-storey dwelling. Subject to comments from the Conservation Officer, the scheme is considered to be acceptable in the street scene and should not harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
30. The Manor is a grade II listed property located next to 41 Woodside. The access to the dwelling would be approximately 110m from the boundary of the application, and would not be viewed alongside the application site. Subject to comments from the Conservation Officer, it is not considered the proposal would harm the setting of this Listed Building.

Impact upon the Protected Village Amenity Area

31. The footpath to the front of the site, the road and the tree area opposite are all located within a Protected Village Amenity Area. Policy CH/6 of the LDF DCP 2007 states development would not be permitted within or adjacent to Protected Village Amenity Area if it would have an adverse impact on the character, amenity, tranquillity or function of the village. The area is again characterised by the green areas along the roads. The development would remove a section of the existing hedge, particularly southeast of the access. However, the planting proposed would retain the green front, although it is appreciated that the planting would take time to mature. Subject to a landscaping scheme, it is considered the proposals would not harm the adjacent Protected Village Amenity Area or the principles behind this designation.

Ecological Considerations

32. The application site has been cleared of vegetation prior to the submission of the application. This vegetation was not considered of any great merit in itself, and was not protected in its own right. Key to the setting of the site is the frontage hedge and the planting along the southeast boundary. The former is to be replaced while the latter is retained. Some of the habitat of the site will therefore remain.
33. In walking around the site, the Ecology Officer notes that a number of fruit trees located close to the northeast boundary would be removed to enable the location of the access and the dwellings. Orchards are a priority habitat species, and concerns regarding their loss have been noted. The applicant has therefore revised the proposed landscaping scheme to show new fruit trees to be planted on the site, including to the front and along the rear boundary. Such planting is to be welcomed, as it would mitigate the loss of the orchard on site. The Ecology Officer has requested a financial contribution to the upkeep of the fruit trees, and members will be updated on the applicants response on this matter.
34. The Ecology Officer also requests a scheme of ecological enhancement such as provision of nesting boxes. A condition can be added to any approval, and the applicant is encouraged to liaise with the Ecology Officer to create a scheme suitable for the site. The applicant has stated they would be happy to provide a scheme of nesting and bat boxes on site

Impact Upon the Amenity of the Occupiers of Neighbouring Dwellings

35. The neighbouring property to the northwest is 41 Woodside. This is a bungalow set quite close to the boundary of the site. This shared boundary is an unkept leylandii hedge that is currently significantly taller than the bungalow itself. The plan does show that works would take place to this hedge, and this would be confirmed in the landscape plan. The development proposes six dwellings on the northwest side of the cul-de-sac. This are all located more than 15m from the shared boundary. Whilst the dwellings will be visible from the rear openings of the bungalow and the rear garden, the proposal would not appear unduly overbearing. The distance also allows first floor windows serving habitable rooms in the rear elevations of the units and no overlooking or loss of privacy would result.

36. To the southeast of the site is the bungalow of 57 Woodside. This dwelling is located on the opposite side of a vehicle access that serves 55 Woodside to the rear. The southeast boundary of the application site has a large area of planting, and this would be retained. Plots 8-11 would be located 17m from the boundary of 57 Woodside at the closest. At this distance, the proposal would not be viewed as overbearing from 57 Woodside, and would not cause any overlooking to the occupiers of this property.
37. The backland plot of 55 Woodside is a large detached two-storey property. Plot 7 would be located approximately 6.5m from the shared boundary at its closest point, although the dwelling has been located so it is not parallel with the boundary. The rear elevation at first floor level would have three windows, serving a bathroom window, the landing and a bedroom. The bathroom window is the closest to the shared boundary and could cause some slight overlooking. A condition can ensure this is obscure glazed. The landing window and bedroom window again may cause some overlooking. However, given the distance and orientation of the dwelling, I do not consider any serious overlooking would result. The side elevation (north) has a bedroom window located close to the front of the dwelling. Again, given the distance, orientation and the location of the window in the room, I do not consider any serious overlooking would occur. A condition could ensure no further windows are added to the side and rear of this property.
38. Plot 6 would be located approximately 6m from the boundary with 55 Woodside and would be parallel with the boundary. This property has a blank facing elevation, and therefore no overlooking would result. A condition would be needed to ensure no first floor windows are added to this elevation. 55 Woodside has a large garden, and the proposal would be quite close. However, it is not considered that the proposal would be overbearing or cause a significant loss of light to the occupiers of 55 Woodside.

The Section 106 Package

39. The applicant is aware of the need to submit a Section 106 Agreement that would cover the retention of the affordable units in perpetuity, educational contributions, open space provision and public art provision. Negotiations have taken place between solicitors and a draft Section 106 has been produced. An area of open space is proposed to the front of the plot, which would allow the dwellings to be set back, and the green frontage retained. Members will be updated on progress on this matter. Ideally the Section 106 would be signed prior to the issue of an approved decision notice.

Other Matters

40. Policy NE/3 of the LDF DCP 2007 seeks development greater than 10 dwellings will to include technology for renewable energy to provide at least 10% of predicted energy requirements. The Sustainability Statement submitted with the application provides details as to energy and water saving methods to be used, but does not mention energy generation. A later e-mail states renewable technologies will be encouraged. A condition can ensure they take place as part of the development. Details of water conservation are shown in the Sustainability Statement and the e-mail dated 16th March 2011. Whilst this approach is encouraging, a full Water Conservation Strategy will be needed and can be conditioned in line with Policy NE/12 of the LDF DCP 2007.

41. The comments from the Local Highways Authority are noted, and the proposed conditions and informative can be added to any consent. Local concern regarding the proximity of the proposed access to that serving 55 Woodside is noted. However, it is considered there would be good separation between the two.
42. The comments from the Environmental Health Officer are noted. The conditions and informatives can be added, although detailing of pile foundations would be added as an informative rather than a condition as it is governed by Environmental Health legislation.
43. The comments from Anglian Water are noted. The site has the capacity for the increased flows, and a surface water drainage condition can be added to ensure flood risk is minimal.

Decision/Recommendation

44. Delegated Approval, subject to comments from the Conservation Officer and completion of an archaeological investigation of the site. If the scheme is approved, conditions would be required regarding the time for implementation, the approved plans, a scheme for the provision of affordable housing, public open space, public art and education contributions, vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays, pedestrian visibility splays, drainage of water from the public highway, materials to be used for the access and individual driveways, tree protection measures, surface water drainage, a scheme of ecological enhancement, a landscaping plan and implementation plan, boundary details, timing of use of power operated machinery, lighting from the proposal, removal of permitted development rights for windows to plots 6 and 7, obscuring glazing of the bathroom window to plot 7, a scheme of ecological enhancement, a scheme for renewable energy generation and a Water Conservation Strategy.
45. Informatives regarding works to the public highway, bonfires and burning of waste, and pile driven foundations can also be added.

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

- **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy.**
- **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007.**
- **Open Space in New Developments SPD, Trees and Development Sites SPD, Development Affecting Conservation Areas, Biodiversity SPD, District Design Guide SPD, Affordable Housing SPD & Public Art SPD.**
- **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions.**
- **Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations.**
- **Planning File ref: S/2290/10 and S/0303/78/F.**

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