

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

7 September 2011

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

S/1341/11 - SIX MILE BOTTOM (IN THE PARISH OF LITTLE WILBRAHAM)

**Extension to provide additional clinical facilities and accommodation for veterinary students (revised scheme) 1084msq. - Station Farm, London Road, Six Mile Bottom, Little Wilbraham, Newmarket, Cambridgeshire, CB8 0UH
for Professor & Mrs Richard White**

Recommendation: Minded to approve

Date for Determination: 29 August 2011

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because it is a departure to the development plan that is recommended for approval subject to referral to the Secretary of State.

Departure Application

Site and Proposal

1. This application is for the revision of a full planning permission granted in April 2011 (S/1530/10/F) involving the provision of additional clinical space, taking the total extension to 1084sqm. The proposed facilities will provide clinical facilities together with veterinary student accommodation. Constructed as a single storey infill between two clinical buildings, to the south and a one and a half storey extension (first floor to be residential accommodation for up to 9 students) to the west, using an area of open grass to the western corner of the site to exercise sick animals accommodated within the building. The proposed amendments involve the extension to the proposed operating theatres adjacent to the stairs, to the north, and the provision of a plant room and six additional kennels, to the east.
2. The site is located within the former Station Farm property that consists of the farm house, yard, barns and 6 acres of paddocks. The site lies within the parish of Little Wilbraham at Six Mile Bottom, 8 miles from Cambridge and 5.5m from Newmarket. The site adjoins the A1304 to the south-east which provides ready access to Newmarket and Cambridge via the A1303/A1304, and beyond via the A11/M11, and the A45. The site is accessed by a private, 60m long metalled track leading from the A1304 Newmarket Road.
3. The site buildings themselves are set back over 60m from the A1304 Newmarket Road, and are accessed via a private driveway. This services the Centre, Station Farm and the adjoining agricultural building to the west. To the east the site comprises paddock land that is used as an animal walking area. It also accommodates a 60- space car park (approved planning permission in 2010).

4. To the north of the site is the Cambridge to Ipswich rail link. This runs close to the main clinic building but is well screened by established woodland. To the south-east (A1304) the boundary is marked by a well established hedgerow, although there are views of the clinic in the background of the main farmhouse. To the west of the site is the A11 which is heavily screened by woodland.
5. The existing Dick White Referrals Ltd. is a specialist veterinary facility recently built (2003) in the style of rural agricultural buildings. This has barn-like outbuildings which are finished in black stained weatherboarding and a clay pantile roof. The mass of the buildings is generally one to one-and-a-half storeys in height with a tight grouping of the buildings.

Planning History

6. **S/0212/02/F** – Erection of temporary building for veterinary consultancy – approved.
7. **S/0622/05/F** – Extension and alterations – approved.
8. **S/0364/06/F** – Conversion and extensions to buildings to provide enhanced veterinary facilities – approved.
9. **S/1740/07/F** – Siting of four portable cabins for use as temporary consultancy rooms – approved.
10. **S/1358/09/F** – Alterations to approved scheme S/0364/06/F and retention of a new staff car park – approved.
11. **S/1361/09/F** – Temporary siting of a portable cabin as use as physio/hydrotherapy unit – approved.
12. **S/1530/10/F** - Extension to provide additional clinical facilities and veterinary student accommodation. - approved.

Planning Policy

13. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy DPD, adopted January 2007:**
None relevant
14. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD, adopted July 2007:**
 - DP/1 – Sustainable Development
 - DP/2 – Design of New Development
 - DP/3 – Development Criteria
 - DP/7 – Development Frameworks
 - ET/5 – Development for the Expansion of Firms
 - ET/1 – Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises in South Cambridgeshire
 - ET/7 – Expansion of Existing Firms
 - SF/6 – Public Art in New Development
 - NE/3 – Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development
 - NE/1 – Energy Efficiency
 - NE/12 – Water Conservation

15. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):**
Public Art SPD - Adopted January 2009
Trees & Development Sites SPD - Adopted January 2009
Biodiversity SPD - Adopted July 2009
Landscape in New Developments SPD - Adopted March 2010
District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010
16. **The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009** sets out the circumstances in which local planning authorities are to refer to the Secretary of State applications for planning permission, including those decisions which are departures from the development plan.

Consultation

17. **Little Wilbraham Parish Council** – Recommends approval.
18. **East of England Development Agency** – Has not responded.
19. **Network Rail** – Has not responded.
20. **Highway Agency** – No objection.
21. **Cambridgeshire County Council (Local Highway Authority)** – Verbally confirmed they have no objection to the proposal, as there was no significant impact on the main London Road.
22. **Environmental Protection Team** – No object subject to conditions.
23. **Environment Operations Manager** – No Comments.
24. **Ecology Officer** – No further comments.

Representations

25. **Councillor Robert Turner** – Supports the application.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

26. This application is for the provision of additional veterinary associated accommodation for a highly successful, well-established veterinary clinic and training centre, which is regarded as a “centre of excellence” in the veterinary field. The proposed application is a re-submission of an application granted planning permission in April 2011 for 1008sqm, and involves an additional 78sqm of floor space that allows the better usage of the floor space created by the first application and the effective re-location of the plant room. The main issue in determining this application are considered to be: noise/vibration within the building, and the impact of the development on highway safety, employment and the open countryside.

Noise

27. Policy NE/15 seeks to ensure that any planning application granted would not be subject to unacceptable noise levels from existing noise sources. The current proposals are located close to the A10 and the Ipswich rail link in a location that suffers noise pollution caused by traffic and trains. The issue of noise from animals within the building also needs to be considered. The applicant has provided a noise

assessment with the application, which provides information regarding the protection that could be used to ensure that students occupying the building do not suffer from an unacceptable level of noise. However, the document does not fully satisfy the requirements of PPG24, as it is not a comprehensive noise report. Following detailed discussions with the Environmental Protection Officer and the applicant's agent it has been agreed that, subject to further information being submitted which, would be controlled by a condition, noise could be kept within appropriate levels both within the building and outside.

Parking/Access

28. Planning permission was granted on 30 November 2009, for the provision of an additional car park to accommodate 60 vehicles. This proposal was supported by a detailed 'Travel Plan', which sought to reduce the number of trips generated from the site. Due to the location of the facilities the car park was considered to be essential to the effective working of the clinic. However, it is important to recognise that, although the opening times are limited (8:00 – 18:00) due to the nature of the facility, the building will operate 24 hours a day and it should be expected that vehicles may visit the site at anytime. Therefore, the benefits of a further detailed travel plan for this type of development site may be limited and difficult to assess, however, the applicant has undertaken a detailed assessment of staff needs and limited improvements have been made to staff travel.
29. Whilst this application seeks in total to create additional usable floor space of 684sqm of clinic and care facilities and 402sqm of student accommodation it is not proposed to create any additional parking on the site. The applicant identifies that currently the site employs 89 staff, 18 of which work part time or at weekends only and 3 who work from home. The rest work a shift pattern which results in no more than 50 staff being on site at any one time. The applicant does not intend to alter or increase the staff numbers as part of this application. Consequently it is anticipated that the recently constructed car park (S/1358/10/F) is of a sufficient size to accommodate the proposed increase in floor space, therefore, no additional spaces are to be created as part of this application.
30. This facility is accessed by a 60m driveway, which already has significant visibility splays either side of the junction with the main London Road. The Local Highway Authority has raised no objection to the proposals as the application does not involve any alterations to the driveway and anticipates that the car parking permission granted in 2010 would have sufficient capacity to accommodate vehicles visiting the facility. In addition, it is anticipated that the provision of the new student accommodation site will reduce the trips to the site from students lodging nearby.
31. Consequently, it is considered that the parking/access to the site is adequate to facilitate the applicants', new revised proposals.

Employment

32. Policies ET/1 and ET/5 provide clear guidance for the expansion of firms within the countryside. The Service's Economic Development Panel has evaluated the use of the premises again on the impact of development on the countryside, and whilst the location of the facility is not within the village framework it has been considered appropriate due to the nature and function of the building and its relevant importance to Cambridge and the research sector within the County. Therefore, due to the value of this business to Cambridgeshire, there are exceptional circumstances to consider the development of these facilities within this location to be acceptable.

Design of the Building

33. The style and design of the proposed extension is in keeping with the existing building's barn-like appearance. The external materials to be used are to match the existing structures. The extension is to be substantially higher at 7.7m, compared to the existing 6.4m height. This wider visual impact is significantly reduced due to the distance the buildings are from the public highway. In addition, this extension does not introduce a two-floor element into the proposal, as bedrooms applied for are located within the existing roof voids. It is proposed that there will be windows located within the roof slopes and the gables which significantly reduces the impact of the building on the locality to an acceptable level.
34. The massing of the building is concentrated within a central area, behind the existing building complex at Station Farm, which will reduce the visual impact of the development when viewed from the public highway. The substantial screening adjacent to the railway line by a line of established trees will ameliorate the impact from the public area and the significant land level differences to the rear will result in the A11 being unaffected by the development. Consequently, the development is in accordance with the aims and objectives set out in the District Design Guide 2010, and, therefore, the development is considered acceptable.

Landscaping

35. The site is generally flat in nature with the most significant landscaping being to the rear of the building. The proposals involve no significant landscaping improvements, however, they do involve works close to the east coast mainline, which should be managed to ensure that the proposals do not impact on the existing line of mature trees that protect and reduce the impact of this development from that public area. The Council's Landscape Design Officer recommended on the previous application that a condition be considered to improve the landscaping and for measures to be taken to ensure that the semi-mature trees adjacent to the boundary do not conflict with the building. The revised extensions do not impact on that recommendation. In addition, the Landscape Design Officer recommended that no tree is planted within 6m of the building. Consequently, it is considered appropriate to condition any approval for planning permission for the provision of a comprehensive landscape design which is agreed prior to development commencing on site. Therefore, subject to the relevant conditions the application is considered acceptable in this respect.

Open Countryside

36. The application site is not in the Green Belt but has been identified as a departure to the development plans, as it is contrary to DP/7 and ET/5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (2007). The impact upon the countryside is greater in this instance as there is a significant extension proposed to the building, which introduces a two-storey element to the building. It is, therefore, proposed to refer the application to the Secretary of State by virtue of the fact that the threshold for referral has been exceeded, by 84sqm.
37. It is acknowledged that in addition to the essential need for the extension, Dick White Referrals Ltd. are considered by others in the veterinary profession as a leading specialist in the field of veterinary surgery. This is substantiated by viewing a previous application (S/0364/06/F), which had over 50 letters of support from other professional institutions. It is clear that this institution provides a substantial knowledge base, which benefits the wider Cambridge area by way of knowledge

sharing – educational programmes for professional and students (extending to undergraduates and beyond). The clinic is identified as a valuable asset to the County and is considered to accord with the objectives of the Local Development Framework's Employment Policies by supporting the Cambridge Area's position as a world leader in research and technology based industries and higher education. By virtue of this fact and the character/nature of the development, it is considered that the proposals are not significantly harmful to the objectives of the development plan and approval is therefore recommended.

Waste Management

38. The applicant has confirmed that the development will not generate any additional significant level of waste, as the proposals will consolidate, re-organise and accommodate existing levels of usage more effectively within the building and are not purposely to provide an expansion of the building in output terms. Therefore, no additional volume of waste will be generated from the site than that already being produced. The application is supported by a report using the assessment guidance given in the waste toolkit's Design Standard Check List. In addition, all specialist waste is to be removed from the site using specialised contractors. Therefore, the development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the aims and objectives set out in Chapter 10 of the adopted LDF District Design Guide.

Energy Efficiency

39. The applicant has provided a detailed energy efficiency statement, which provides information that relates to a residential property and shows that 20% of the energy used on the site could be produced by using renewable technologies (air source heat pump). A detailed assessment and measurement against the size and design of this building needs to be undertaken to ensure that the required 20% efficiency is actually being achieved on this site. It is, therefore, considered appropriate to consider a condition which requires a detailed scheme for this building to be complied in accordance with Policy NE/3.

Water Conservation

40. It is important that the site considers and implements effective water conservation measures in accordance with the requirements of NE/14. The application confirms that the proposal will be built in accordance with the AECB Good Practice Standards and, therefore, will meet the levels of performance expected from such building and is considered acceptable.

Conclusion

41. This site is located outside the village development framework and in the countryside and, therefore, has been considered as a departure from the development plan. The nature and use of the site is such that it provides a valuable research and development facility for Cambridge. The existing use benefits from and is considered to be appropriate in its rural context. In addition, the design, form and ancillary works to the building do not detract from the character and nature of the rural area.
42. Therefore, having regard to applicable national and local policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that the planning application should be referred to the Secretary of State with a recommendation for approval subject to the following conditions.

Recommendation

43. Recommend to the Secretary of State APPROVAL, subject to the conditions set out below:

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development, which have not been acted upon.)
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: drawing No. 10/063/01 (Location Plan): 09:076-14 (Ground Floor Plan) 09:076-15 (First Floor Plan) 09:076-16 (Elevations) 09:076-11 (Drainage) LD11;907, LD11 907-1(Landscape).
(Reason- To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990.)
3. Prior to the commencement of the development a lighting scheme, to include details of any external lighting such as street lighting, floodlighting, security lighting, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. This information shall include a layout plan with beam orientation, full isolux contour maps and a schedule of equipment in the design (luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and luminaire profiles, angle and glare) and shall assess artificial light impact in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Engineers (2005) 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light'. The approved lighting scheme shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved detailed measures unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.
(Reason: To ensure that the site does not suffer any light pollution in accordance with Policy NE/14 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007).
4. Before development is commenced, a noise insulation scheme including consideration of alternative mechanical ventilation requirements, for protecting the proposed residential units from the A11 road and the adjacent railway line noise shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and all works which form part of the approved scheme shall be completed before any one of the permitted residential units are occupied and maintained thereafter.
(Reason: To ensure that the students occupying the residential accommodation within the building do not suffer unacceptable levels of disturbance in accordance with policy NE/15).
5. Before the use, hereby permitted, commences, the student accommodation floor and the underlying kennel accommodation shall be acoustically insulated in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Information shall also be provided as to the effective ventilation of both floors bearing in mind the requirements of the first floor as sleeping accommodation.
(Reason: To ensure that the students occupying the residential accommodation within the building do not suffer an unacceptable level of noise in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.

6. In this condition 'retained tree' means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of 5 years from [the date of the first occupation of the dwellings hereby approved].
- (a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standard.
 - (b) If any retained tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
 - (c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To protect trees which are to be retained in order to enhance the development, biodiversity and the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies DP/1 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

No demolition, site clearance or building operations shall commence until tree protection comprising weldmesh secured to standard scaffold poles driven into the ground to a height not less than 2.3 metres shall have been erected around trees to be retained on site at a distance agreed with the Local Planning Authority following BS 5837. Such fencing shall be maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority during the course of development operations. Any tree(s) removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased during the period of development operations shall be replaced in the next planting season with tree(s) of such size and species as shall have been previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

(Reason - To protect trees which are to be retained in order to enhance the development, biodiversity and the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies DP/1 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD (adopted July 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):
Public Art SPD - Adopted January 2009
Trees & Development Sites SPD - Adopted January 2009
Biodiversity SPD - Adopted July 2009
Landscape in New Developments SPD - Adopted March 2010
District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010
- The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009

- Planning File Refs. S/0212/02/F, S/0622/05/F, S/0364/06/F, S/1740/07/F, S/1358/09/F, S1361/09/F, S/1530/10/F and S/13411/11/F.
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings

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