

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee 2 November 2011  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director (Operational Services) /  
Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

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**S/1699/11 - Balsham**  
**Erection of 11 affordable dwellings and associated landscaping and car parking following the demolition of nos.22-46 Mays Avenue, Balsham for Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association**

**Recommendation: Approve Conditionally subject to completion of a S106 legal agreement**

**Date for Determination: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

**This application has been referred to the Planning Committee for determination due to the fact that the site is District Council owned and objections have been received by local residents.**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application site of approximately 0.28ha comprises an existing Council owned elderly care housing site of 14 individual single bed units. These units form an 'L' shaped block with open front and rear amenity areas laid to lawn. The block is predominantly single storey with the central corner unit being two-storey containing two flats. The block fronts Mays Avenue with pedestrian access to the rear and side. The site provides no off road car parking. The site backs onto the grounds of a Grade II Listed Building at No.67 High Street and the edge of the village Conservation Area.
2. Mays Avenue is a residential cul-de-sac comprising 51 properties in total including a wardens building associated with its elderly care housing. It is characterised by a mixture of single storey and two-storey properties set back from the roadside with landscaped verges, and on road car parking is apparent.
3. Proposals comprise the erection of 11 affordable housing units providing the following mix:
  - i) 3 x 2-bed units of shared ownership tenure at 77-78sqm;
  - ii) 2 x 3-bed units of shared ownership tenure at 87sqm;
  - iii) 2 x 2-bed apartments of affordable rent at 63-76sqm;
  - iv) 3 x 2-bed units of affordable rent at 77-78sqm;
  - v) 1 x 4-bed unit of affordable rent at 116sqm;
4. The proposed development is two-storey and will provide private car parking and gardens and will be designed to achieve a minimum level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes through the use of highly insulated structure including improved air tightness coupled with the use of photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps.

5. A Design & Access Statement accompanies the application, along with a Heritage Statement and a draft heads of term. The application also benefited from Pre-Application advice.

### **Planning History**

6. Planning Application S/0386/63/F was approved for the erection of 49 dwellings comprising houses, bungalows and aged persons flats with warden building.

### **Policies**

7. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007  
**ST/6 Group Villages**
8. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007  
**DP/1 Sustainable Development**  
**DP/2 Design of New Development**  
**DP/3 Development Criteria**  
**DP/4 Development Infrastructure**  
**DP/7 Development Frameworks**  
**CH/4 Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building**  
**CH/5 Conservation Areas**  
**HG/1 Housing Density**  
**HG/3 Affordable Housing**  
**NE/1 Energy Efficiency**  
**NE/3 Renewable Energy in New Developments**  
**NE/6 Biodiversity**  
**TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel**  
**TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards**  
**SF/10 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments**
9. South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents  
**District Design Guide**, Adopted March 2010.  
**Open Space in New Developments**, Adopted January 2009.  
**Listed Buildings: Works to or affecting the setting of**, Adopted July 2009.

### **Consultations**

10. Balsham Parish Council – Recommend approval commenting that the Parish Council is in full agreement of the affordable housing stating that the village survey carried out last year recorded 142 replies in favour of affordable housing on the site and 8 in favour of private development.
11. Local Highways Authority – Raise no objection subject to the provision of a road condition survey and demolition and construction method statement submitted and approved by way of condition prior to development commencing on site. In addition the existing footways through the site are public maintainable highway and will need to be stopped up under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The vehicle visibility splays shown upon the drawings shall be controlled by condition to be implemented in full prior to the occupation of the development.

12. Environmental Health – Raise no objections.
13. Trees & Landscaping – Raise no objections commenting that the trees identified for removal are not significant within the landscape and replacement specimens should be included within the landscape proposals.
14. Housing Enabling Officer – Fully supports the scheme as it replace the existing, undesirable unoccupied social housing with 11 new homes. The scheme will provide a mixture of shared ownership and affordable rented properties and the unit mix has been designed to accord with the current district wide demand for social housing.
15. Conservation – No comments have been received.
16. Cambridge County Council Archaeology – Recommends a programme of archaeological investigation to be undertaken by condition prior to development commencing on site.
17. Arts Development Officer – Requests that the applicant provide a scheme towards public art.
18. Anglian Water – Raise no objections subject to the provision of a condition requiring details of surface water drainage being submitted to and approved in writing prior to development commencing on site.
19. S106 Officer – Raises no objection to the draft heads of terms submitted. The District Council has discussed the principle of public art with the applicant however as this particular scheme is already subject to significant costs (i.e. the demolition of existing units), the net impact of the development is only 3 units and there is no onsite open space to locate such artworks the Council has accepted that no public art provision will be required in this instance.
20. Landscape Design – No comments have been received.

### **Representations**

21. Letters have been received from the occupiers of nos.20 (including a petition of 10 signatures) and 25 Mays Avenue outlining the following objections:
  - The site is in the middle of a sheltered housing community and the development would accommodate young people and children creating noise and disturbance;
  - There is currently no room to park in the area and the proposal would create extra noise and traffic;
  - The demolition and construction will result in disruption to the surrounding area;
  - The development would result in houses overlooking no.25 Mays Avenue;
  - Mays Avenue is overcrowded and parking from the development will overspill onto the avenue.
22. Letters of support have been received from the occupiers of no.67 High Street, 1 Linton Road, 8 The Hawthorns and 3 The Brambles quoting:

- “Whilst there are some discrepancies within the text of the application relating to our property, this does not affect the substance of the application, which in our view has paid due accuracy to the importance of our property (a grade II Listed Cottage) and the Conservation Area, to which it is located. The application is therefore supported in its current form”;
- “We are very interested in the Mays Avenue plans, affordable housing properties do not come up in Balsham very often and we are currently having to share a room in a family members house until such properties become available”.
- “There is a long waiting list of people with connections to this village and the proposal will go some way to reduce it. The Housing Associations proposed scheme looks very appropriate in the context of neighbouring development.”
- The vast majority of residents in the village who responded to the extensive consultation exercise support this application.
- The plans make the best use of the layout and space that there is at the moment and will go a long way to relieving pressure on housing stock to meet the demand in the village.

### **Planning Comments**

23. The key issues to consider in this instance are the impact of the proposal with regard to affordable housing provision, the public realm, historic environment, highway safety, car parking, residential amenity, infrastructure provision, drainage and sustainable construction.

### **Housing**

24. Balsham is a Group Village, which are generally less sustainable locations for new development than Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres. Group Villages have fewer services and facilities allowing only some of the basic day-to-day requirements of their residents to be met without the need to travel outside the village. All Group Villages have at least a primary school and limited development will help maintain remaining services and facilities and provide for affordable housing to meet local needs. As a consequence, residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village frameworks of Group Villages, as defined on the Proposals Map. Notwithstanding this, development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make the best use of a single brownfield site.
25. The proposal would result in a density of approximately 40dph for the replacement of the existing 14 single occupancy flats with 11 new dwellings. The proposed housing density is in accordance with Policy HG/1, which seeks densities of between 30-40dph and would represent the best use of a previously developed site. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the exception criteria of Core Strategy Policy ST/6 for the provision of up to 15 dwellings for the provision of 100% affordable housing.
26. The site is currently Council owned and once provided sheltered housing for the elderly. However, all but one property is now unoccupied and the existing units are no longer considered to be fit for purpose under today’s quality standards. The scheme has been subject to considerable public consultation

involving local residents, the Parish Council and the Council's Housing Enabling Officer. The proposed mix and tenure of the scheme is considered to meet with the district's housing need and as the scheme represents 100% affordable housing does not need to comply with the mix criteria of Policy HG/2. This application will be subject to a S106 legal agreement to secure the provision and terms of affordable housing as set out within the application.

27. The site is sufficiently served by public transport links and is within reasonable distance from local services and facilities. The development proposal would also suitably provide adequate private amenity space and car parking to serve both the proposed and existing dwelling. The layout of the local area is one of linear form in the main. However, there are examples of housing set back from the main avenue with internal parking areas to the rear of housing. As such, the development proposal is considered to conform to the planned layout of the surrounding area.

### **Public Realm & Historic Environment**

28. The proposal has been designed to reflect the existing pattern of development within the area and was subject to pre-application advice from the Council joint urban design team. Properties within Mays Avenue follow a loose pattern mainly fronting the linear form of the highway, with infrequent set backs, staggers and separation distances. It has been acknowledged that the development would result in the partial loss of an area of green space and the development has therefore been designed with a stagger to its frontage to maintain the legible views from east to west through Mays Avenue by retaining small sections of green space with frontage housing set back from the roadside.
29. The development is two-storey and therefore marks an increase in scale to the existing site, which is predominantly single storey. However, there is a range of two-storey properties within Mays Avenue and the development provides sufficient set back and separation distances to allow for views through the site. The surrounding development is of 1970's design and incorporates buff facing brick, white render and concrete roof tiles in the main. The proposal seeks to respond to this pallet of materials within a contemporary form that reflects the character of the surrounding area. The indicative external materials illustrate buff facing brick, smooth rendered panels and concrete interlocking roof tiles, which is sympathetic to surrounding development but with the external elevations conveying a development of its time rather than a continuation of the immediate local vernacular.
30. The indicative landscape proposals detail permeable paving for access and parking areas, with the use of multi tone and textured paving to demark parking bays. The use of pergola style carports helps break up this central parking area and define private ownership from communal areas. The soft planting seeks to maximise the scoring in relation to the code for sustainable homes and will comprise of indigenous species. The detail of both hard and soft landscaping will be agreed by way of condition.
31. Whilst the development allows for open views through the site, the scheme is mindful of the Secured by Design requirements. Therefore indicative boundary details provide low-level treatment that allow open views but convey a degree of privacy and security. The site is served by sufficient access

requirements to the west for public permeability through Mays Avenue to be retained, as the provision of close-boarded timber fences to rear gardens will require the existing right of way to the west and north of the site to be secured by gated access. The development responds well to its surroundings with dwellings fronting open spaces and footpaths providing natural surveillance and ensuring that the development does not turn its back onto the surrounding public realm by providing active frontages.

32. The site is located upon the edge of the Conservation Area and is within the setting of a Grade II Listed Building (No.67 High Street). No.67 High Street is a detached 17<sup>th</sup> Century thatched cottage, which makes a positive contribution to the High Street and the Conservation Area. This building fronts the High Street and backs onto the application site and benefits from an extensive rear garden. This property also has a standalone garage building sited within close proximity to the rear boundary abutting the application site. The site as existing is predominantly single storey and therefore the proposal will impact upon the setting of this Listed Building. Notwithstanding this, the scheme has been designed to minimise this impact by siting the nearest proposed units (4 & 5) directly behind the existing garage structure at a right angle to the curtilage of the building. Furthermore, there is existing landscaping in situ that screens views between the Listed Building and the site in part. In light of the above the development proposal is not considered to harm the setting of the adjacent Listed Building.
33. The development fronts Mays Avenue and although parallel with the village Conservation Area does not directly relate to this historic boundary nor would it be prominent in views from this designation. As such the development proposals are considered to have a neutral impact upon the character and appearance of the adjacent Conservation Area and would have an acceptable impact upon the historic environment and public realm. A condition requiring archaeological investigation prior to development commencing on site will be required to assess if the site is of archaeological importance.

### **Highway Safety & Car Parking**

34. The development proposal would provide an appropriate level of access onto Mays Avenue with adequate visibility for pedestrians with inter vehicle splays of 2.4m x 43m in both directions as shown upon drawing number BPHA.530.P01. In addition the proposal would involve improvement works to the existing bellmouth to the turning head at the end of the cul-de-sac by widening to improve access and egress for refuse vehicles. The Local Highway Authority is satisfied with the proposal in terms of highway safety and requests that a method statement including a road condition survey for the demolition and construction phases is submitted to and approved in writing prior to development commencing on site.
35. The proposal would provide off road car parking for 20 vehicles (including 5 visitor parking bays), which would equate to approximately 1.8 spaces per dwelling. This is considered to accord with the Council's maximum parking standards and would enable a satisfactory level of parking clear of the main avenue. Therefore, whilst it is acknowledged that Mays Avenue is a narrow road where on street parking is rife, the development provides an acceptable parking strategy that would not result in a detrimental impact upon the free flow, safety or amenity of the adopted highway.

36. Each dwelling would be provided with external storage within a private area for the provision of secure and covered cycle provision.

### **Residential Amenity**

37. The proposal has been designed in accordance with the guidelines of the District Design Guide SPD. As such, the proposal provides sympathetic back-to-back relationships with both existing and proposed dwellings and would not result in any loss of privacy by virtue of overlooking nor would it result in any unduly overbearing impact or loss of sunlight or daylight to surrounding properties. The closest relationship of proposed dwellings to existing dwellings are units 6-8, which are set at a right angle to nos.45-51 Mays Avenue. However, these properties mimic the two-storey flats that are in situ at present and are therefore not considered to result in any detrimental impact upon the amenity currently experienced by the occupiers of these properties. Notwithstanding the above, the permitted development rights of the scheme shall be removed, by way of condition to ensure that future extensions, alterations to roofs and outbuildings require planning permission in order to safeguard residential amenity.
38. The proposal provides each residential unit with satisfactory private amenity space including the provision of secure and covered bin storage. These amenity areas are considered satisfactory for the units which they would serve and are generally in accordance with the guidelines set out within the District Design Guide SPD. The applicant indicates that air source heat pumps will be sought to achieve a level 3 for the code for sustainable homes. As no such detail has been submitted with this application it is considered necessary to require details of plant and machinery by way of condition in order to assess any potential impact upon residential amenity.
39. Indicative lighting proposals have been provided, which illustrate thought to safe and secure access arrangements. Nevertheless, these elements of the proposal lack sufficient detail and will require schemes to be submitted by way of condition to ensure that residential amenity is safeguarded with regard to light pollution.

### **Infrastructure Provision**

40. The proposal would result in the net increase of 3 planning units. However, the size of the replacement scheme would significantly exceed that of the existing, as the replacement units are larger containing more bedrooms. As such, in order to meet the requirements of this development in respect to the increase in the capacity of occupants to the village the proposal would require the provision of an off-site contribution towards public open space within the village and community infrastructure. This has been calculated at £18,013.36 (index linked) with respect to public open space infrastructure and £720.80 with respect to community infrastructure.
41. In addition to the above the proposal would require a sum of £69.50 per dwelling to provide refuse bins and a £1,500.00 S106 Monitoring fee. The applicant has agreed to meet the above obligations by virtue of a Section 106 Legal Agreement.

## **Sustainable Development**

42. As the scheme is 100% affordable housing the development is to be built in accordance to the minimum of code 3 for sustainable homes. As such, the development would exceed the minimum building control requirements with regard to insulation, water conservation measures and the use of renewable energy technology. Notwithstanding this, it is considered necessary to secure 10% of the developments predicted energy requirements to be sought by renewable energy technology and therefore details of the extent of Photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps will be required by way of condition in order to meet the requirements of Policy NE/3.

## **Drainage**

43. Anglian Water has confirmed that the foul drainage for this area is within the catchment of the Balsham Sewage Treatment Works, which has available capacity at present with respect of wastewater treatment. The sewerage system also has capacity at present and connection to this network will require the approval of Anglian Water under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991. The surface water strategy referred to within the application is satisfactory to Anglian Water. A condition requiring a scheme for surface water drainage proposals will be required for approval, prior to development commencing on site.

## **Conclusion**

44. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that planning permission should be approved in this instance.

## **Decision**

45. Approve subject to completion of S106 Legal Agreement.

## **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: BPHA.530.P01, BPHA.530.P02, BPHA.530.P03, BPHA.530.P04, BPHA.530.P05, BPHA.530.P06 & BPHA.530.P07.**

(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

**3. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no development within Classes A, B, D, E and F of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order shall take place unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf.**



(Reason - In the interests of safeguarding the character of the area and the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties in accordance with Policies DP/2 and DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**4. During the period of demolition and construction, no power operated machinery shall be operated on the site before 0800 hours and after 1800 hours on weekdays and 1300 hours on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays and Bank Holidays, unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**

(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance for adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**5. No external lighting shall be provided or installed within the site other than in accordance with a scheme, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

(Reason - To minimise the effects of light pollution on the surrounding area in accordance with Policy NE/14 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**6. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the implementation programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**

(Reason - To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water drainage and to prevent the increased risk of flooding in accordance with Policies DP/1 and NE/11 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**7. The proposed 2.4m x 43m vehicle visibility splays shown upon drawing no. BPHA.530.P01 are to be provided in full prior to first occupation of the development, hereby permitted and permanently maintained and kept clear of obstruction above a height of 600mm thereafter.**

(Reason – In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**8. No development shall commence until a road condition survey and methodology statement of the demolition and construction of the development, hereby permitted, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

(Reason - In the interest of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**9. No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development. The details shall also include specification of all proposed trees, hedges and shrub planting, which shall include details of species, density and size of stock.**

(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**10. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.**

(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**11. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected. The boundary treatment for each dwelling shall be completed before that/the dwelling is occupied in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained.**

(Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the site does not detract from the character of the area in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**12. No development shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

(Reason - To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**13. The proposed access, turning and parking areas shall be provided before each dwelling, hereby permitted, is occupied and thereafter retained as such.**

(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**14. Details of the location and type of air source heat pump equipment including their location and outlet, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before such plant or equipment is installed; the said plant or equipment shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and with any agreed noise restrictions.**

(Reason - In order to secure a reduction in the level of noise emanating from the building in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

**15. No development shall take place until a scheme for the provision of on-site renewable energy to meet 10% or more of the projected energy requirements of the development has been submitted to and approved**

**in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved scheme.**

(Reason - To ensure an energy efficient and sustainable development in accordance with Policies NE/1 and NE/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007 and government guidance in PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development and PPS22 Renewable energy.)

**16. No development shall take place on the application site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

(Reason - To secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of the remains in accordance with Policy CH/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

### **INFORMATIVES**

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method of construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
2. During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents
- LDF Adopted Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2007)

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