

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee
AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

9 May 2012

**S/2290/10 - LONGSTANTON
10 Dwellings - 53 Woodside, Longstanton
for 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 8th 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 2010, seeks the demolition of the existing bungalow and replacement with 11 dwellings on the site. The amendment dated 14th February 2012 reduces the number of dwellings to 10. This would include the provision of four affordable units. The development would create a cul-de-sac with a turning head. 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** – Adopted January 2009, **Trees and Development Sites SPD** – Adopted January 2009, **Development Affecting Conservation Areas** - Adopted January 2009, **Biodiversity SPD** – Adopted July 2009, **District Design Guide SPD** – Adopted March 2010, **Affordable Housing SPD** - Adopted March 2010 & **Public Art SPD** - Adopted January 2009.
7. **National Planning Policy Framework:** Advises that planning obligations should only be sought where they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. It adds planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other aspects.

Consultations

8. **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.
9. The **Council’s Conservation Officer** has been involved in the negotiations on site. The amended plans, despite not including the recommended changes to the access, are considered acceptable.
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 (£8,400) and Swavesey Village College (£15,000). It is noted Cottenham Village College also has no capacity. These figures are based on the latest amended plans.
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. The reduced number of dwellings in the amendment is considered positive. A condition is recommended to ensure this information is provided prior to works commencing on site.
16. The **Council's Ecology Officer** has been involved in the negotiations. The amended plans show retention of some fruit trees, with further planting elsewhere on site. No off-site contribution towards orchards is considered necessary. A wildflower grassland below the orchard should be encouraged. The primrose frontage should be protected during construction. A scheme for bird and bat boxes is also recommended.
17. The **Council's Landscape Officer** notes the amendments to the landscape plan are an improvement, although relevant landscape and boundary conditions should be added to the consent.
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.

Representations

20. Letter of objection have been received from the occupiers of 9 neighbouring properties and the Thatchers Wood Residents Company Ltd. These letters

relate to the original and amended plans, and multiple letters have been received from some of the objectors. 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
- Design of the units
- 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

21. The key considerations for the determination of this application are the principle of development, impact upon the setting of 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

22. 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. As the scheme seeks 10 dwellings (a net gain of 9), it is considered a Departure from Policy ST/6 of the LDF CS 2007. The application has been publically advertised as such.
23. 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 amended scheme of 10 units would represent development of 23 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 10 dwellings, and therefore officers support the Departure from the Local Development Framework in this instance.
24. 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 2 two-bed units and 4 three-bed units, and no larger units form part of the scheme. One of the three-bed units directly

replaces that already on site. There are no objections to the proposed mix of dwellings, which are considered to meet the aims of Policy HG/2.

25. 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 9 dwellings, of which 4 (plots 7-10) 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" given its location within the village framework, 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.
26. 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 Setting of the Adjacent Conservation Area and Listed Building

27. 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.
28. The area has a green character, with a lot of hedgerows across front boundaries. This does give 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 green frontages. 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, with plots 1 and 10 set 10m 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.
29. The Conservation Officer has been involved in the negotiations with regards the amended plans received. The amended schemes appear to have taken into account the requests by the Conservation Officer, except the access has not been altered to show a slight bend of Y-shaped turning head, both requested to break the uniformity of the access road. Despite this omission, the Conservation Officer has confirmed the acceptability of the amended plans dated 14th February 2012.

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. The proposal 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 a 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. It is appreciated that the planting would take time to mature, but it should ensure the green frontage retention needed in the area. 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. The fruit trees to the rear of the site have been retained. The amended plans show retention of a number of these trees (which were originally all to be removed). Further fruit tree planting has also been incorporated into the design. The amendments are therefore a significant improvement. A condition can ensure bat and bird boxes are placed on site, whilst details of the fruit trees can be clarified by way of a landscape condition.

Impact upon the Amenity of the Occupiers of Neighbouring Dwellings

33. 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 shows that works would take place to this hedge, the details of which would be confirmed in the landscape plan. The development proposes five dwellings on the northwest side of the cul-de-sac. These are all located more than 15m from the shared boundary except for plot 5 set deep into the site which comes within 11.5m of 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.
34. 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 7-10 would be located between 18m and 22m from the boundary of 57 Woodside. 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.

35. The backland plot of 55 Woodside is a large detached two-storey property with a large rear garden. Plot 5 would be located 5m from the shared boundary at its nearest point. The first floor windows to the rear elevation could allow some overlooking to the rear garden area. However, the dwelling has been designed to have a bathroom and landing nearest 55 Woodside. A condition can ensure these openings are obscure glazed. A condition can also prevent openings in the side openings, which would cause more serious overlooking. This elevation is currently blank. Plot 5 is considered to have an acceptable relationship with 55 Woodside.
36. Plot 6 sits approximately 4m from the shared boundary. It has a blank facing elevation, and a condition can prevent first floor windows to prevent any potential overlooking toward 55 Woodside. No overlooking of private areas should result from the layout of the property.

The Section 106 Package

37. 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 are taken place between solicitors and a draft Section 106 has been produced. An area of open space is proposed to the rear of the site with planting areas to the front, which would allow the dwellings to be set back, and the green frontage retained. Members will be updated on any further progress on this matter. The Section 106 should be signed prior to the issue of an approved decision notice.

Other Matters

38. 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 does provide 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 do 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.
39. 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. The existing access to 55 Woodside would serve plot 6. There is an existing access to the existing dwelling at 53 Woodside, and therefore this access would not have a material change in journey numbers. It is slightly sub-standard by Woodside, but there is no justification for any upgrade given the current situation. The Parish Council's concerns that parking would cause difficulties for refuse vehicles are not supported.

40. 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.
41. The comments from Anglian Water are noted. The site does have the capacity for the increased flows, and a surface water drainage condition can be added to ensure flood risk is minimal. There is also existing capacity to deal with the additional foul water drainage.

Recommendation

42. Delegated Approval, subject to completion of an archaeological investigation of the site and the completion of the Section 106 Agreement. If the scheme is approved, conditions would be required regarding the time for implementation, the approved plans, 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 5 and 6, obscuring glazing at plot 5, a scheme of ecological enhancement, a scheme for renewable energy generation and a Water Conservation Strategy.

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.