

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

8 May 2013

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

S/0327/13/FL - MILTON

Continued use of land for a temporary period of three years for the siting of portable prefabricated buildings for mixed storage/office/light industrial/ workers accommodation purposes (retrospective application).

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 8 May 2013

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the recommendation of Milton Parish Council differs from that of the Planning Officer.

To be presented to the Committee by Ray McMurray

Site and Proposal

1. This full planning application seeks retrospective consent for three years for the retention of eight portable buildings for use as short-term workers' accommodation and office/storage/light industry purposes. The short-term accommodation is to be limited to people working in the area but who do not reside here. The agent states that it will generally be used during the working week with occupants returning home at weekends. Some units are in use purely for business storage.
2. The site is located in an area of mixed residential (including residential caravans) and business. The site area is 0.1 hectare. Vehicular access to the site is gained from Fen Road via an existing small group of industrial units at Cottage Industrial Estate.
3. The site lies within the development framework and within saved policy area CNF6. The site is adjacent to the Chesterton sidings to which site specific policy SP/17 relates. The eastern part of the site is within flood zone 2 (medium risk). The application is supported by a Planning Statement and a Flood Risk Assessment.

Planning History

4. **S/2186/02/F** - Erection of 3 Buildings for Industrial and Warehouse Uses (Classes B1(c), B2 and B8) following Demolition of Existing Buildings Approved 2003
5. **S/0880/95/LDC**- Scrap yard (Lawful Development Certificate) Approved 1995 (by Cambridgeshire County Council)
6. **S/0198/92/EU**- Scrap metal dealer's yard (Established Use Certificate) Approved 1992

Planning Policy

7. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007**

ST/2 (Housing Provision)

ST/3 (Re-Using Previously Developed Land and Buildings)

ST/6 (Group Villages)

ST/8 (Employment Provision)

DP/1 (Sustainable Development)

DP/2 (Design of New Development)

DP/3 (Development Criteria)

DP/4 (Infrastructure and New Developments)

DP/7 (Development Frameworks)

Objective HG/a To ensure the provision of a range of housing types and sizes, including affordable housing, to meet the identified needs of all sectors of the community, including Key Workers.

HG/2 (Housing Mix) 1. Residential developments will contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, to meet local needs.

ET/4 (New Employment Development in Villages)

NE/11 (Flood Risk)

NE/15 (Noise Pollution)

TR/1 (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)

TR/2 (Car and Cycle Parking Standards)

8. **LDF Site Specific Policies DPD 2010**

Adjacent to **Policy SP/17** Rail Infrastructure: Land at Chesterton Sidings is safeguarded for the development of a railway station and interchange facility.

Cambridge Science Park Railway Station: Cambridgeshire County Council is actively pursuing the development of a new railway station and public transport interchange at the existing Chesterton Sidings. The site is approximately 12 hectares in size and includes land lying within the administrative boundaries of both Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The scheme will be delivered by the County Council together with Network Rail and then operated by Network Rail and the train operators.

9. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004**

Saved Policy CNF6: The expansion of existing residential caravan sites or the sporadic siting of individual caravans will not be permitted with the exception of an area on the west side of Chesterton Fen Road up to and including the Grange Park site, where permission may be granted for private gypsy sites to meet local need so long as they are properly landscaped and drained.

Consultation by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Local Planning Authority

10. **Milton Parish Council-** Recommendation of refusal, commenting: 'The portacabins are substandard for living accommodation. No amenity block or cooking facilities provided. The area of the application was never intended for extra residential development.'

11. **Scientific Officer (Environmental Health)**- Noted that the site has a historical industrial use which has a potentially contaminative use, and that the proposal does not include any form of garden/ landscaped areas. No objection to occupation of the portable cabins for short-term periods.
12. **Local Highway Authority**- No objection from a public highway point of view.
13. **Environment Agency**- No objection in principle subject to a condition requiring the submission of details of drainage and industrial storage in order to safeguard the water environment.
14. **Anglian Water**- No comment to make.
15. The comments of the following consultees will be reported if received: SCDC Environmental Health Officer, Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire County Council, Network Rail, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue.

Representations from the Local Member, Councillor Mrs Hazel Smith

16. Cllr Mrs Smith has commented: 'I think they are substandard for living accommodation. They have no kitchens, or bedrooms, and the insulation is likely to be poor. Although the application has them as temporary mid-week hostel-type accommodation, (in association with work premises) there appears to be no amenity block or arrangement for the inhabitants to be able to cook for themselves. I fear that if they gain permission families will end up living there (though that is not a material planning consideration?). The CNF policies quoted in the application have not been saved in the LDF - I believe only CNF/6 was saved and that was then to be dropped in the local plan process that we are working on now, as it is obsolete now (as the area set aside for Traveller development has now all been developed). The area of the application site was never intended for extra residential development, and the area West of Fen Road mentioned starts further north.

'This area has generally been industrial in nature, apart from the house at the front of the site, which was replaced fairly recently. The area at the back may well be contaminated land as I think I remember a garage/breakers yard on that site. The council must have records that could verify this. Google Earth shows many many cars parked there over the last decade.'

Representations by members of the public

17. None received.

Material Planning Considerations

Principle of development

18. The site lies within the development framework. Saved Policy CNF6 derives from the Local Plan 2004 which sought to restrict any further harm to Chesterton Fen due to the restricted road access and the preponderance of bad neighbour' commercial and industrial uses. The sporadic siting of individual caravans or the expansion of caravan sites was considered likely to lead to increased traffic and a decline in the visual environment. The policy specifically exempts private gypsy sites to meet local need. The current development is not proposed to be restricted to Gypsies and so would not strictly comply with policy CNF6 if limited to a purely residential use. However the

proposed use includes commercial Class B1 and storage Class B8, which should be assessed on its merits.

19. The use of the site for this purpose for a temporary period would not prevent consideration in the future for its use for Gypsy/ Traveller accommodation, subject to environmental constraints being resolved, if this would be supported by policies in the Local Plan, when adopted.

Material harm

20. The traffic generated by the development, being cars and vans, is considered to be less harmful to road safety on Fen Road than the authorised use as a scrap yard. The Local Highway Authority has not objected to the proposal.
21. The site is in a tidy condition and is not visible from Fen Road and so does not significantly affect the character of the area.
22. The site does not provide any day room facilities, but this is not considered to be necessary due to the short-term of the intended use and occupation. The portable buildings are equipped with kitchen areas and toilets. They are spaced with six metres between them to allow for the parking of vehicles. They are not intended for permanent occupation and so are not provided with garden areas or outdoor amenity. The Scientific Officer has not objected to the use of the site for the intended purpose.

Conclusion

23. The facility is intended to serve a specific need for contracting staff working in the area. The proposed use is not considered to give rise to any material harm to the character of the area, which is of commercial uses and two dwellings. Provided the use and occupation of the site is limited to short-term occupation and/or commercial/light industrial, no significant issues of residential amenity are considered to arise.
24. The application is for a temporary period of three years. Temporary consent is considered to be justified on account of potential contamination concerns if occupied permanently, and to enable the provisions of Policy CNF6 to be reviewed in the emerging Local Plan.
25. The agent has been asked to provide further information on the extent to which occupiers of the buildings have been employed in the local area, and the typical length of stay. This information will be provided to Members in an update.

Recommendation

26. It is recommended that the Planning Committee approves the application subject to any further comments from consultees and the following Conditions;

Conditions

1. Temporary three years, thereafter all portable prefabricated buildings to be removed from the site.
2. The use shall be restricted to short-term occupation for residential and commercial/light industrial/storage purposes.
3. The number of portable prefabricated buildings on the site shall not exceed eight.

4. Parking spaces shall be retained for that purpose.
5. Scheme of pollution control, including drainage, to be submitted.
6. Restriction on hours of commercial deliveries to the site.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- LDF Site Specific Policies DPD 2010
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning file ref S/0327/13/FL

Case Officer: Ray McMurray – Principal Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713259