

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

6th April 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0255/05/F - Sawston

Erection of 16 Flats Following Demolition of Existing Dwellings, 1-25 (Odd) The Green Road for Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for determination: 12th May 2005

Site and Proposal

1. The site, which is located at the southern end of The Green Road and extends to approximately 0.28 hectares/0.7 acres, is currently occupied by an L-shaped, part single story, part two-storey building providing sheltered accommodation and a community centre. Surrounding residential development is a mix of single storey (to the west), two-storey (to the north) and three-storey (to the east). A public footpath runs along the site's eastern and southern boundaries.
2. This full application, registered on the 10th February 2005, proposes the demolition of the existing dwellings with the exception of the community centre (which is to be retained) and their replacement with two blocks of 4.8 metre high to eaves/7.4 metres high to ridge two-storey flats at right angles to each other. 15 parking spaces are proposed. The density equates to approximately 57 units to the hectare.

Planning History

3. Planning permission was granted in 1998 for the conversion of No.13 from communal facilities to a flat (**S/1226/98/F**).
4. Permission for a communal facilities building on the site/adjacent to No.23 was granted in 1998 (**S/0628/98/F**).
5. An application for a community centre on the site was withdrawn prior to determination in 1993 (**S/0533/93/F**).
6. An application for communal facilities for warden controlled scheme was approved in 1988 (**S/0004/88/F**).

Planning Policy

7. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/3** requires a high standard of design for all new development which responds to the local character of the built environment.
8. Local Plan 2004 **Policy SE2** states that residential development will be permitted on unallocated land within Sawston provided that (a) the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; (b) the development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours; (c) the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity; and (d) residential development would not conflict

with another policy of the Plan, particularly policy EM8 which relates to the loss of employment sites. It also states that development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings to the hectare unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.

9. Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG7** relates to affordable housing on sites within village frameworks.
10. Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG10** states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. It also states that the design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency.
11. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EN5** states that the District Council will require trees to be retained wherever possible in proposals for new development.

Consultation

12. **Sawston Parish Council** recommends refusal on the following grounds:
 - “Overdevelopment of site
 - Aggressive style of fencing
 - Loss of trees and green space
 - Oppressive large structure out of keeping with the surrounding.”

It also asks for a site visit.

13. **Trees & Landscape Officer** states that the proposal would compromise an element of the now established mixed species planting which provides an important visual amenity in this area and, to enable the proposal to be assessed objectively, a tree survey is required.
14. **Landscape Design Officer** states that additional planting will be required along the frontage and asks whether it is possible to break up the car park mass. She also states that the proposed close boarded fence along the rear would result in dark gardens and asks whether it could be lowered, replaced in part by trellis and/or set in as it would result in very hard boundaries to adjacent properties.
15. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** recommends conditions/informatives are attached to any approval relating to: the times during the construction period when power operated machinery shall not be operated except in accordance with agreed noise restrictions; driven pile foundations; no bonfires or burning of waste during construction except with his prior permission; and the need for a demolition notice.
16. **Local Highway Authority** raises no objections in principle but makes the following comments: the manoeuvring space between the rows of parking spaces should be a minimum of 6 metres to ensure ease of ingress and egress. It also states that a highway works Agreement with the County Council would be required to align the carriageway of The Green Road.

17. **Ramblers' Association** has some concerns in relation to the proposal. It notes that Sawston 12/13 forms the boundary of the site on two sides and is concerned that the footpath may be obstructed during the construction period. It also suggests that, once the development is complete, it would be a good opportunity for the County Council to improve the footpath signage.
18. **Environment Agency** comments that, as the proposed footprint is larger than the existing, the existing drainage infrastructure is unlikely to be adequate. It therefore recommends a Flood Risk Assessment be required.
19. **Cambs Fire & Rescue Service** states that additional water supplies for firefighting are not required.
20. The **Countryside Services Team at the County Council** was consulted but no comments had been received at the time this report was compiled.

Representations

21. The occupier of 21 Sainfoin Close objects on the grounds of the close proximity and subsequent loss of privacy to her property. She also states she trusts that the occupiers will be well supervised at all times and will not be a threat to the safety of people living in the area.
22. The occupier of 10 The Green Road objects on the following grounds: selling of land outside the Parish without the consent of the Parish Council; loss of valuable land for to the Parish where demand for housing for first time buyers and the elderly is at a premium; destruction and intrusion of a successfully run community for the elderly at The Green Road; insensitivity of the development (two-storey buildings, extensive car parking space, lack of adequate planning for access to property and impedance and disruption to the neighbourhood), loss of valuable green space, isolation and segregation of the proposed inhabitants; the development infringes an ancient right of way which predates the domesday; and views/suggestions put forward by the local community, who have wholeheartedly disapproved of the development, have not been listened to.

Planning Comments - Key Issues

23. The key planning issues in relation to this application are:
 - The impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area;
 - The impact on the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties; and
 - Affordable/social housing.
24. There is a mix of storey heights in the locality and I do not consider that two-storey buildings on this site would be out keeping with the character and appearance of the area. The simple design and fenestration of the buildings is also considered to be appropriate. Although the density may seem high (57 dwellings to the hectare), the units are all one bedroom. I do share the Landscape Design Officer's and Parish Council's concerns in relation to the impact of the proposed rear boundary fence and have asked the agent to reconsider the proposed rear boundary treatment. I have also requested a tree survey with a view to ensuring that the parking layout takes account of the existing trees and the opportunities to enhance the appearance of this area by way of appropriate new planting. I consider that the number of parking spaces proposed is appropriate.

25. There will be some additional overlooking of neighbouring properties and the bungalows in Sunderland Avenue and Vicarage Avenue in particular. However, consideration has been given to minimising this impact with only a total of four bedroom windows and four bathroom windows in the rear elevations of each building. In view of this, and the distances involved between the proposed windows and the rear elevations of the neighbouring properties (25-35 metres), I do not consider that this impact is reason for refusal.
26. The existing sheltered units are not 'affordable' as defined in Local Plan Policy HG7 but are a form of 'social housing' administered by the District Council. It is understood that the proposed units would provide for a particular housing need, namely supported housing for fourteen people with mental health needs. It would be important to ensure that the units continue to provide 'social housing' in perpetuity. In this instance, this social housing might include the proposed use, affordable housing as defined in the Local Plan, accommodation for the frail and elderly or other form of social housing approved by the District Council. This would normally be secured by means of a S.106 Agreement. However, in this instance, as the District Council is the owner of the site and the District Council cannot enter into a legal agreement with itself, this should be secured by means of the deed of transfer if/when the land is transferred.

Recommendation

27. Subject to the receipt of satisfactory amended plans and information to address the comments of the Environment Agency, Local Highway Authority, Trees & Landscape Officer and Landscape Design Officer:

Delegated approval

1. Standard Condition A - Time limited permission (Reason A);
2. Sc5a - Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5a);
3. Sc51 - Landscaping (Rc51);
4. Sc52 - Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
5. Sc56 - Protection of trees during course of development (Rc56);
6. Sc5f - Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas (Reason - To minimise disturbance to adjoining residents);
7. During construction, ... Sc26 (0800, 0800, 1800, 1300) - Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery (Rc26)

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P1/3**
(Sustainable Design in Built Development)

- **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE2** (Development in Rural Growth Settlements), **HG7** (Affordable Housing), **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design) and **EN5** (Landscaping)
2. The development proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
- Character and appearance of the area
 - Residential amenity
 - Public Rights of Way
 - Impact on community

Informatives

Should driven pile foundations be proposed, before development commences, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations should be submitted to and agreed by the District Council's Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.

During demolition and construction, there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the District Council's Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

Before the existing property is demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from the District Council's Building Control Department establishing the way in which the property will be dismantled, including any asbestos present, the removal of waste, minimisation of dust, capping of drains and establishing hours of working operation.

A Highway Works Agreement with the County Council would be required to align the carriageway of The Green Road.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning file Ref: S/0255/05/F, S/1226/98/F, S/0628/98/F, S/0533/93/F and S/0004/88/F

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