

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

13th May 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0467/05/RM - Duxford

4 Houses and Garages on Land off Moorfield Road for Rusfer Properties Ltd

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for determination: 4th May 2005

Site and Proposal

1. The application relates to a 0.25 hectares/0.6 acres (excluding the access) site which has now been cleared but was previously occupied by a storage building and hardstanding associated with the turf farm business which was being run from the site. A public footpath runs east-west to the north of the site with fields to the north beyond. A field extends to the south and west. Residential properties in The Firs, which share the existing access to the site from Moorfield Road, are located to the east. The site is bounded by close boarded fencing on the east, south and west sides. A chain linked fence and planting marks the northern boundary.
2. This reserved matters application, registered on the 9th March 2005, proposes the erection of 4 no. 5-bedroom detached houses, 2 of which would have detached double garages with the other 2 having integral double garages, with ridge heights ranging from 7.3m to 9m and eaves heights ranging from 4.2m to 5.5m. Siting, design and means of access forms part of the application. Landscaping would still need to be agreed. Access would be achieved by extending the existing access off Moorfield Road into the site. The density equates to 16 dwellings to the hectare.

Planning History

3. Outline planning permission to erect 4 dwellings and garages on this site was granted in 2004 under reference **S/1410/03/O** following the completion of a S.106 Agreement requiring the transferral of an area of land off Lacey's Way to a Registered Social Landlord before any of the dwellings on this site are occupied. Outline and reserved matters consents for the erection of 6 affordable dwellings on the Lacey's Way site have been granted under references **S/1409/03/O** and **S/1650/04/RM** respectively and development has commenced.
4. Planning permission was granted in 2000 to use the previous buildings on the site for B1 and/or B8 use (**S/1830/00/F**).
5. Outline planning permission for residential development on the site and the adjacent field was refused partly because most of the site was outside the village framework (**S/2276/89/O**). A previous application for residential development on this land was withdrawn (**S/0595/89/O**).
6. Permission for a materials store for the turfing business was refused in 1986 (**S/0644/86/F**). A subsequent application for materials and equipment store was approved under reference **S/1379/86/F**.

7. Planning permission for the erection of garages and workshop for repair of horticultural machinery was granted in 1977 under reference **S/1192/77/F**.
8. Permission was granted in 1977 for demolition of office/garage and erection of office/machine store (**S/1660/76/F**).

Planning Policy

9. 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.
10. Local Plan 2004 **Policy SE4** states that residential development up to a maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings (and, exceptionally, up to 15 dwellings if this would make the best use of a brownfield site) will be permitted within the village framework of Duxford 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 all developments should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability.
11. Local Plan 2004 **Policy SE9** states that development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the countryside.
12. 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.

Consultation

13. **Duxford Parish Council** recommends approval with the following provisions:
 - “Concern was raised at the traffic flow where the junction of the existing access road meets the slip road to Nos. 1, 2 and 3 The Firs;
 - The Council feel that the main access road from Moorfield Road should be brought up to adoptable standard to accommodate service and emergency vehicles;
 - The Council feel that the installation of an electric gate is not appropriate in a small village environment and would be seen to ‘isolate’ the new residents from the rest of the community. The question of access by emergency vehicles was also a concern.”
14. **Landscape Design Officer** makes the following comments: given that this is an edge of village site, greater space should be afforded to boundary areas to achieve practical appropriate planting; boundary fencing type will be important; can road be aligned so as not to swing towards southern boundary? No details of planting are included but, given extent of hard driveways proposed, some trees would be

expected; the dwellings on plots 1 and 2 are too close to boundaries and, ideally, the dwelling on plot 3 would be eased away from the boundary; and, given the small gardens proposed, there would be great pressure by residents to remove planting to achieve space for sheds/swings etc.

15. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections but refers to conditions attached to the outline permission which would need to be complied with.
16. The **Trees & Landscape Officer** and **Cambs Fire and Rescue Service** were consulted but no comments had been received at the time this report was compiled. Any comments received will be reported verbally.

Representations

17. The occupier of No. 1 The Firs states that she has no objections to the properties but is concerned about the road safety element of the access road given that the access to the site and the access to The Firs are blind to each other at the point of convergence.
18. She also asks what is proposed with regard to the making up of the access road from Moorfield Road and states that, like her and other residents of The Firs, residents of the new dwellings would have to wheel their green and black bins down to Moorfield Road each week for emptying.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

19. The key issues in relation to this application are:
 - a. Whether the development respects the character and appearance of this part of the village and would be assimilated into the surrounding countryside; and
 - b. Impact on neighbours.
20. The principle of erecting four dwellings on the site has already been established by the granting of the outline permission. Permission was granted for only four dwellings as visibility from the access onto Moorfield Road is restricted and the Local Highway Authority would not support an application for more than four dwellings.
21. Due to the proximity of the dwellings (particularly the dwellings on plots 1 and 2) and the access road to the site boundaries, there would be insufficient space for the boundary planting considered essential on this edge of village site and likely pressure from future residents to remove any landscaping that was planted. Furthermore, due to the height and bulk of the proposed dwellings combined with the lack of space for the necessary boundary planting, the development would not provide for the necessary soft edge to the village and would not be satisfactorily integrated with the adjoining landscape. The designs of the dwellings and the lack of cohesion between them would also result in a development that would not reflect the character of dwellings in this part of the village and, in relation to the dwelling on plot 4 in particular, is not of the necessary high standard. It is acknowledged that smaller units are being erected on the linked site off Lacey's Way and, in view of the relatively low density, I would not expect the dwellings on this site to be small. However, I would still expect some variety in terms of dwelling size. The proposed dwellings are all 5-bedroom and would provide a similar amount of accommodation. In my opinion, for these reasons, the application should be refused.

22. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in other respects. There would be no serious impact on the amenity of neighbours through overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing. The proposed access arrangement is considered to be acceptable in relation to highway safety. Whilst I appreciate the concerns of the occupier of No. 1 The Firs in relation to the convergence of the access to this site and the access to The Firs, this arrangement is existing and the number of vehicular movements generated by the proposed development is likely to be similar to the number of movements generated by the turf business which, until recently, was run from the site.
23. None of the dwellings are required to be affordable as the development of this site has been tied to the development of 6 affordable dwellings off Lacey's Way by means of a legal agreement which required the Lacey's Way site (which was in the same ownership as this site) to be transferred to a Registered Social landlord before any of the dwellings on this site are occupied.

Recommendation

24. Refusal of reserved matters (siting, design and means of access) pursuant to outline planning permission dated 19th July 2004, reference S/1410/03/O for the following reason:

Due to the proximity of the dwellings (and the dwellings on plots 1 and 2 in particular) and the access road to the site boundaries, there would be insufficient space for the boundary planting considered essential on this edge of village site and likely pressure from future residents to remove any landscaping that was planted. Furthermore, due to the height and bulk of the proposed dwellings combined with the lack of space for the necessary boundary planting, the development would not provide for the necessary soft edge to the village and would not be satisfactorily integrated with the adjoining landscape. The designs of the dwellings and the lack of cohesion between them would also result in a development that would not reflect the character of dwellings in this part of the village and, in relation to the dwelling on plot 4 in particular, is not of the necessary high standard. By proposing all 5-bedroom dwellings of similar size, the development would also not provide the necessary mix of dwelling sizes.

25. The proposal is therefore contrary to: Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 Policy P1/3 which requires a high standard of design for all new development which responds to the local character of the built environment and is integrated with adjoining landscapes; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy SE4 which requires residential development in the village to be sensitive to the character of the village; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy SE9 which states that development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the countryside; and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy HG10 which states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability and requires the design and layout of schemes to be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape and to achieve high quality design and distinctiveness.

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/0467/05/RM, S/1650/04/RM, S/1410/03/O, S/1409/03/O, S/1830/00/F, S/2276/89/O, S/0595/89/O, S/1379/86/F, S/0644/86/F, S/1192/77/F and S/1660/76/F.

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