

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee      3<sup>rd</sup> August 2005  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/2408/04/F - Elsworth**  
**Erection of 12 Houses Following Demolition of 6 Houses, 9-11 Boxworth Road and 2-8 Paddock Row for Circle 33 Housing Group**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for Determination - 21<sup>st</sup> January 2005**

### Adjoining Conservation Area

#### Site and Proposal

1. The application, received 26<sup>th</sup> November 2004 and amended most recently on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2005, proposes the erection of 12 houses following the demolition of 3 pairs of semi-detached Airey houses on a site of 0.3 hectares located in the centre of the village north of Boxworth Road and east of Paddock Row. The density is 40 dph. The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
2. The mix comprises one 1 bed, two 2-bed, eight 3-bed and one 4-bed house.
3. The site adjoins but is outside the Conservation Area. The frontage of the site is within the medium risk flood zone 2. The site rises from The Brook and Paddock Row. There are a number of trees on the south west, south and east boundaries of the site. Dwellings largely 2 storey, surround the site, although there are bungalows on the opposite side of Paddock Row.
4. All the houses would be affordable (either shared equity or for rent) and such terms and nomination rights would be controlled under the ground lease.

#### Planning History

5. No relevant history has been identified.

#### Planning Policy

6. 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.
7. **Policy P5/5** allows for small-scale housing developments in villages subject to a number of criteria.
8. 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 Elsworth 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) 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.

9. 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.

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. The District Council will support the preparation of Village Design Statements to secure these aims.

### **Consultation**

10. **Elsworth Parish Council.** The Parish Council has asked for assurances that the redevelopment will not add to the flood risk of other houses in the village and in particular those flooded in 2001. Despite two meetings and specific requests nothing has been said by the architects or SCDC to indicate that this issue has been addressed.
11. The Parish Council is satisfied that the amendments have addressed previous concerns regarding cladding, height of buildings and paving but it comments:
- a) The shape of windows does not reflect the scale of the buildings; windows should not be pvc;
  - b) There should not be vehicular access from the proposed car park direct to Boxworth road in front of No. 13;
  - c) The Parish wishes to be consulted upon the choice of external materials;
  - d) There is concern as to what will happen to the existing dwelling at No. 10 Paddock Row (this is outside the site);
  - e) All cables and wires should be underground;
  - f) Ground surfaces should not create water run-off into The Brook.
12. Essentially the Parish Council is pleased that the amended scheme is a big improvement on the original submission and it has welcomed the improved consultation and discussion between the architects and the Council.
13. **Local Highway Authority** has no objections. It notes that a 6 metre wide access road is acceptable, although a 5 metre width would be acceptable. Radius kerbing should not be used. A standard access crossing will be quite acceptable and suitable to serve the parking court.
14. **Conservation Manager** comments:
- “The latest revisions to the design include some positive enhancements. These include:
- a. The provision of roof vents that are a contemporary re-interpretation of a chimney stack.
  - b. The introduction of a wide frontage dwelling adjacent to No. 10 will improve the integration of the new housing with the existing surrounding housing, keeping a similar ridgeline etc.

The revision also includes changes to the fenestration and the introduction of render in place of timber cladding to some blocks. These two changes are to alleviate some of the concerns expressed by the Parish Council. I was not particularly concerned over either the fenestration or the timber cladding, but do not wish to object to the revised elevational treatment. However, I would note that the introduction of a render finish will also require movement joints and I would recommend that in the event of the scheme being approved, a condition should be added to agree the location of all movement joints before work commences - in that movement joints can be visually intrusive in render finishes.

15. The colour of the render will also need to be agreed in advance and be considered alongside the proposed brickwork. I would also wish to see the windows in the rendered dwellings painted while those in the timber clad dwellings should be stained.
16. I am satisfied that the scheme will now not adversely impact on the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area. No objections.”
17. The **Ecology Officer** comments: “During a brief visit it was found that the buildings proposed for demolition have 2 sparrow nest and 1 starling nest. Both of these species are on the RSPB’s Red List due to their rapid decline. The minimum that should be done is to provide sparrow and starling nest boxes on each of the new buildings. The best that could be done would be to provide suitable nest boxes on retained properties in the area that are within the Councils control.
18. I cannot rule out the presence of bats. However, the roofs were in relatively good condition and the concrete rendering/slabs fit together quite tightly thus minimising crevices. A dilapidated garden pond is present - would we create a new pond in the garden?”
19. Two conditions are recommended: One to preclude the demolition of buildings in the bird breeding season; and the other requiring a scheme of nest boxes.
20. The **Trees and Woodlands Officer** has no objections.
21. The **Landscape Design Officer** comments that some of the planting indicated may be impractical. Details of tree pits are required. No details of boundary treatment submitted. The issues can be the subject of planning conditions.
22. **Environment Agency** comments that the Flood Risk Assessment (RA) would appear satisfactory although surface water drainage remains outstanding.
23. The **Building Inspector** comments that the FRA covers all aspects. No storm water proposals have yet been received. No Building Regulations application has yet been received.
24. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** comments that the exposed side elevations of plots 4 and 11 (now 3 and 10) should benefit from areas of clearly identifiable defensible space to protect against damage or disturbance from other users of the open space afforded by the car parking area.
25. The parking area and public footpaths should be provided with lighting by means of column mounted white downlighters.
26. **Fire and Rescue Service** comments that additional water supplies for fire fighting are not required.

27. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** requests a condition be imposed to control hours of working during the construction period. An informative should be added in respect to driven pile foundations.
28. **County Archaeology Officer** recommends a condition be imposed to require a programme of archaeological investigation given that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential.

### **Representations**

29. The occupiers of 16 Paddock Row object to the removal of a line of trees and the erection of houses immediately to the rear of their garden. These will overlook their house and garden, causing loss of privacy.

### **Planning Comments - Key Issues**

30. The redevelopment of this site with a net gain of 6 houses accords in principle with the settlement policies of the Local Plan 2004.
31. A mix of dwellings is proposed and the density of the development makes the best use of the site without compromising the quality of the scheme or harming the appearance and character of the adjoining Conservation Area.
32. Eighteen car parking spaces are proposed in the central car parking area. This achieves an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. Members may consider that up to a maximum of 2 spaces per 3 or more bedroom house should be required, together with short term parking for visitors and service vehicles, at a standard of 0.25 spaces per dwelling provided with 2 spaces. This would equate to a total provision of 24 spaces. However, such provision would have a negative impact upon the design of the scheme and would almost certainly result in a reduction in the number of houses in the scheme.
33. A number of matters raised by consultees can be reserved by conditions, particularly landscaping, tree protection, external materials, including windows, access details, hard surface materials, surface water drainage, undergrounding of cables and wires, ecology, lighting of footpaths and parking area, archaeology, construction hours and the provision of parking before the occupation of the houses.
34. The house at 16 Paddock Row is located some 25 metres north of the boundary of the site. Its rear garden faces south and adjoins the boundary of plots 4 and 5. The houses on plots 4 and 5 will be 18.5 metres and 23.5 metres respectively south of that boundary. Each has one bedroom window in the rear first floor elevation facing north. But, given the adequate distance that is proposed to the north boundary of the site and the distance of No. 16 from the site boundary, I consider that the proposal will not overlook that property or cause loss of privacy.
35. The trees to be removed are noted in the tree schedule as either ash or "unknown" of heights and spread of 6-8 metres. One is a holly, 10 metres high. The Trees and Woodlands Officer does not object to their loss. The better quality trees are located in the southern half of the site.
36. The FRA recommends minimum finished floor levels of 22.8 m AOD. This should be bettered because the approximate site level at the Paddock Row frontage is 23.5 AOD. It recommends that runoff from the site to the watercourse shall be restricted to

the existing runoff for an equivalent area of roof/hardstanding on the present development (16.2% of the site area). Any excess surface water run off is to be detained on site and released within the permitted discharge rate.

37. I am satisfied that, subject to the imposition of conditions (see para. 33 above), the scheme is acceptable

### **Recommendation**

38. It is recommended that the application is approved, subject to conditions relating to:

1. External materials
2. Window materials
3. Landscaping, including boundary and tree pit detail
4. Tree protection
5. Access details
6. Hard surface materials
7. Surface water drainage
8. No overhead wires or cables
9. No demolition during the bird breeding season
10. Provision of nest boxes
11. Lighting of car parking areas and footpath
12. Archaeological investigation
13. Restriction on construction hours
14. Provision of parking before occupation of the houses
15. Restriction on vehicular access from the east boundary of the site.

### **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) and **P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas);
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE4** (Group Villages); and **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design)
2. The proposal is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
  - Impact on the Conservation Area
  - Flooding
  - Design
  - Overlooking of neighbouring properties

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

- County Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning Application File: S/2408/04/F

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