

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 5th October 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0691/03/RM - Girton

Erection of 150 Dwellings (Including 53 Affordable Dwellings) Land off Wellbrook Way R/O Thornton Road and Thornton Way for George Wimpey, South Midlands

Recommendation: Approval of details of open space

Update: Public Open Space

1. Reserved matter consent was granted 1st July 2004 (Committee 5th November 2003 item 24) for 150 dwellings on a 3.81 ha (9.4 acre) site which runs to the rear of Thornton Road and Thornton Way with a single access point via Wellbrook Way onto Girton Road near the A14 bridge. The site forms approximately half of a larger 9.5ha (23.5 acre) site. This first phase is positioned furthest away from the access at the south eastern end and includes a wooded area that backs onto Thornton Way properties. Over 50 of the houses have now been built/under construction with approximately 50% of these occupied.
2. The reserved matter planning consent included the following conditions:

Condition 9
3. "No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing a habitat Management Plan.

The plan shall include:

- i) Description and evaluation of the features to be managed;
- ii) A description and evaluation of species of local importance (protected and Biodiversity Action Plan species.)
- iii) Current and future ecological constraints on site that may influence management;
- iv) Aims and objectives of management;
- v) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives;
- vi) Preparation of a work schedule (including key annual targets, an annual work plan and the means by which the plan will be rolled forward annually);
- viii) Personnel or body responsible for implementation of the plan;
- ix) Future monitoring measures and contingency actions.

The plan shall be carried out as approved, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (Reason - To promote an improved biodiversity.)"

Condition 13

4. No dwellings shall be occupied until revised plans showing the position and depth of the balancing pond in the south eastern corner of the site have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. (Reason - To ensure protection of as many quality trees as possible.)

Condition 14

5. “No more than 50 dwellings shall be occupied until the LAPs (Local Areas for Play) have been laid out in accordance with (No 262-SP-01 Rev k) and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than as a play area. (Reason - In the interests of amenity and to ensure the provision of a play area to enhance the quality of the development.)”

Condition 15

6. “No dwelling shall be occupied until details of the footpath proposed in the outer north east landscape buffer have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall include position of trees and hedgerow/shrubs to be retained, details of construction together with details of an extension to the footway to provide appropriate access to the open space in the south eastern corner of the site. The details of the scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the 50th dwelling. (Reason - To ensure the proposed footpath is provided for the future enjoyment of local residents and that its construction does not damage the adjacent hedgerow.)”

Wimpey's Landscape Management Plan

7. Wimpey's consultants, James Blake Associates, submitted a proposed Management Plan August 2004. Over the last year a number of varying layout plans and associated versions of the Management Plan have been submitted and discussed in an attempt to arrive at a plan that meets the requirements of the Parish Council, the Environment Agency, this Council's Trees, Landscape Design and Ecology Officers to minimise the impact on this pleasant wooded area whilst still providing the required balancing pond.
8. The most recent version of this plan dated 7th July 2005 shows a balancing pond with a maximum depth of 2.0m positioned close to the proposed pumping station. The position of the pumping station has been agreed. The positioning of the balancing pond close to the pumping station is considered by officers the most appropriate solution which minimises the visual impact and leaves as much of the wooded area undisturbed. The two functions are otherwise unrelated.
9. **Girton Parish Council** has commented:

“First we are dismayed that the depth of the balancing pond has not been reduced, especially as this will mean that the pond will be waterlogged as the ditch running along the border of the site adjacent of the gardens of Thornton Way has water in it throughout the year. The creation of a standing pond of 2 metres depth is a matter of great concern as a hazard, and it certainly diminishes this open space as an open public amenity as originally planned. We therefore feel our original objections have not been adequately addressed.
10. They are currently looking at the proposed Management Plan for the open spaces at the development.”

The Ecology Officer has commented:

11. “Further to our chat, I can confirm that following consideration of the latest plan I am prepared to accept the proposed layout on the basis of it being the most sensible compromise on the retention of woodland, scrub and grassland habitats. We will need reassurance that the wildflower grassland areas will be properly sown and initially managed in order to create the desired meadow effect. From an ecological point of view the provision of a deeper area that may retain water will diversify the

range of habitats. However, given the fact that the pond is primarily acting as a drainage function I would wish to be able to comment further on the design of the outflow once detail is provided. The outflow pipes should not flush out all aquatic life every time a storm event occurs. The pipes should not contain gullies pots that would trap and kill small animals. The provision of a detailed Management Plan can now commence given the fact that the final layout of the area is settled. The Management Plan is required in fulfilment of the condition and must include all areas of semi-natural habitat.”

12. **The Landscape Design Officer** is happy with the plan but has requested a feature tree be added at the end of the avenue

Planning Comments

13. This plan has been drawn up following meetings with the developers, the Environment Agency, and your officers, and is seen very much as a compromise to accommodate the necessary balancing pond. In order that the pond provides the required attenuating function the 2 metre depth must be well below the outlet to allow an agreed capacity of water retention. Both the Councils Ecology Officer and Trees and Woodlands Officer have indicated their agreement to the plan and to the Management Statement which accompanies it. Whilst the concern of the Parish Council is appreciated and that it would have been preferable not to have had to accommodate a balancing pond within this area it is a necessary requirement of this development and has been shown on the plans from the start of the planning application and was part of the plans considered by the call in Public Inquiry in September 2002. The current plan is considered by officers to be an acceptable compromise. The Ecology Officer is happy with the Management Plan.

Recommendation

14. That the District Council raises no objections to the plan for the open space at the south eastern end of the site but that further negotiations are undertaken to arrive at an acceptable Management Plan.
15. Members authorise breach of condition notices in respect of Conditions 9, 13 and 15 of Planning Consent S/0691/03/RM should more than 50 dwellings be occupied.

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:**
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Planning file Ref: S/0691/03/RM

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