

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**EXTRACT FROM REPORT TO DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION CONTROL
COMMITTEE**

2nd April 2003

**6. S/6184/03/F CAMBOURNE
23 DWELLINGS, "HODGKINSON'S LAND", CROW DENE IN THE PARISH OF
BOURN**

SITE AND PROPOSAL

The site, which comprises 0.67 hectares (1.65 acres), is located in the far northern part of Cambourne, and abuts the structural landscaping which defines the boundary of Cambourne. The site shares an access road with Bovis site GC29, which is currently the subject of a planning application, and the caravan storage compound, which is also currently the subject of a planning application and is also on this month's Committee.

The application, received on 24th January 2003, proposes 23 dwellings. These have been designed to provide a variety of styles and types, ranging from 1 ½ storey 'barn conversions' to a 2 ½ storey 'farmhouse', together with other cottages which have a distinct 'rural' feel. The housing in this part of Cambourne has been designed to reflect the design requirements of the design brief, which indicates an area that should be a high density interpretation of a farmyard.

The houses provided would be 3 x 2-bed flats over carports, 14 x 3-bed houses, 5 x 4-bed houses and a 5-bed farmhouse.

7 of the proposed houses are to be social housing.

PLANNING HISTORY

This site is the rear garden to the cottage known as Crow Dene Nurseries. This garden is currently licensed for use as a site for touring caravans. The curtilage of this property was not included in the Outline Planning Permission for Cambourne ref. S/137192/0. This area was also some distance away from the built up areas of Cambourne and its use would presumably have stayed the same.

During the course of the development of Cambourne however, the masterplan has evolved. One of the issues that affected this particular site was the fact that the settlement centre car park moved northwards to allow for a larger supermarket and car park in the settlement centre. This then meant that the residential land in this area (sites GC28,29,30 and 31) also moved northwards and "Hogkinson's" land then found itself adjacent to these sites.

This site has now come forward as an unallocated site within Cambourne, and shares an access with the housing allocation GC29.

The application was considered by the Cambourne Design and Environment Group (DEG) meeting on 23rd January 2003, and was accepted by all parties.

POLICY

Local Plan 2 (as modified) Policies Cambourne 1 and 2 require development at Cambourne to accord with the Masterplan, Design Guide, and the themes embraced by Government guidance relating to the creation of sustainable residential communities.

Cambourne has also been designated as a Rural Growth Settlement (RGS) in policy SE3. This means that residential development and redevelopment will be permitted on unallocated land within the village framework of an RGS provided that:

1. the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village;

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2. the development will be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours;
3. the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity
4. residential development would not conflict with another policy of the plan, particularly policy EM9.

Development should also provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability, and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare (dph) unless there are strong design grounds for doing so.

The site has now come forward as an unallocated site within Cambourne that has now been included in the masterplan.

For the benefit of members of the Committee, there are no other unallocated sites at Cambourne suitable for housing.

Policy HG9 of Local Plan No 2 requires provision of approximately 30% affordable housing in development of more than 10 dwellings in villages in excess of 3000 population.

CONSULTATIONS

Caxton Parish Council recommends refusal. It comments that:

“The land was not included in the Masterplan (has it been acquired since?)

Poor design. The appearance of the development is not in keeping with a rural village environment.

The largest properties have access only through a garden and in through the French windows.

Inadequate number of parking spaces.”

The comments of Bourn Parish Council are awaited.

The Cambourne Management Liaison Committee (MLC) – a forerunner of the future Parish Council recommends refusal. It comments that: “Development of land outside excluded from the current permission for Cambourne and the s106 agreement.”

Increase the already agreed number of dwellings for Cambourne.

Lack of additional community benefit.

No additional infrastructure.

Dwellings will have unnecessary disturbance from movements to and from the proposed adjacent trailer park which is a safety issue.

Dense housing area on the perimeter of Cambourne and proximity to the A428.” The Environment

Agency has no objection in principle.

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The Council's Ecologist has suggested locations for bat and bird boxes.

The Trees and Landscape Officer has commented that plot 23 is too close to existing trees and hedgerows, and should be moved slightly further away.

The County Archaeologist has commented that this site is in an area of high archaeological potential, and a programme of archaeological investigation should take place before any development begins.

The County Highways Officer has been unable to comment fully because the layout plan has been hand drawn, and he feels that he cannot accurately measure distances. At the DEG he made some minor comments relating to widening the road serving plots 12-16 where it narrowed under the flying link adjacent to plot 10. He has however indicated no cause for concern with the scheme.

The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has commented that some of the houses (plots 1-3 and 12-16) need defensible space in front of their houses to add to their security, and that there is no detail on lighting to the parking areas.

The Council's Consultant Architect is generally pleased with the scheme, but asks for some minor changes in detail.

REPRESENTATIONS

A resident of Cambourne, Roger Hume, who lives at 13 Willow Lane, Cambourne, has objected to the proposal. He states that the proposal should be rejected as it is dependent on the need to provide access to the proposed trailer compound, and as he also objects to the trailer compound, then this housing development should be turned down until the trailer compound issue is addressed.

PLANNING COMMENTS.

The application accords with the design principles set out in a briefing plan discussed at the DEG on 21~ November 2002. The scheme was discussed at the DEG on 18 January 2003 the Group considered that the scheme was acceptable and gave the scheme support subject to matters of detailing.

Although outside of the area given planning permission for Cambourne, this site has now come forward as an unallocated site within Cambourne now included in the masterplan, and has following a similar issue with the addition of unallocated land as housing onto part of the neighbouring site GC30. Because it is an unallocated site, part of the scheme (7 units) will consist of social rented and shared equity housing, and a financial contribution towards educational provision will be required.

In response to Caxton Parish Council's concerns, I respond as follows:

1. The issue of the land not being in the original masterplan is immaterial, as the masterplan has evolved to include this area.
2. I also strongly disagree with their assertion that this scheme is poorly designed and is not in keeping with a rural, village environment. This scheme is designed around the concept of a farmhouse, with farm cottages and converted barn and stable outbuildings, a very rural concept I would suggest. The briefing plan clearly suggested this kind of layout. The developer has created house types that address this issue very well, not slavishly following the architecture, but interpreting it.

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3. With regard to some of the properties only having accesses from their rear, again this is because the scheme is reflecting a complex of farm buildings. In many schemes, such as at Boxworth and Dry Drayton, the 'barn conversion' does not have front doors onto the street, but has rear accesses. These particular houses are designed to have fairly austere street frontages, but let in lots of light in the southern elevations, facing their gardens.
4. I also consider that the scheme has an adequate number of car parking spaces, carefully designed as for example, car ports, so that they will be used for parking cars. One of the problems in some parts of Cambourne is that parking areas are not being used for parking, and hence cars are spilling onto the street. Here the parking has been designed so that it will be used.

In response to the comments of the MLC, I have already said that the site has come forward on the last remaining 'unallocated site' suitable for housing in Cambourne, and as such follows the Local Plan. The developer is required to provide social housing and educational contributions. The scheme is well designed in my opinion, and will not be unduly affected by traffic movements from the proposed caravan / trailer park compound.

In response to the concerns of the resident who has written in to object, I reject his concerns. Each scheme is considered on its merits, and the issue of whether the trailer storage compound is given planning permission is not necessarily relevant to this application.

In summary this scheme presents in my opinion an excellent design that reflects the briefing plan and also creates an interesting area interpreting a farmyard complex. There are still some matters to be addressed which I have already raised with the applicant. These relate to mix, energy efficiency, materials, window detailing, chimneys, boundary treatment, ecology, landscaping and lighting.

RECOMMENDATION

1. A Section 106 Agreement be secured to ensure the implementation of affordable housing (7 units) and an education contribution.
2. Subject to completion of the Section 106 Agreement, delegated powers of approval are sought, subject to the receipt of amended plans to address issues including mix, energy efficiency, materials, window detailing, chimneys, boundary treatment, ecology, landscaping and lighting.

