
DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION – ERECTION OF 20 HOUSES AND 9 FLATS WITH ASSOCIATED WORKS AND LANDSCAPING, INFORMAL OPEN SPACE, NORTH WEST OF 5 MAYFIELD ROAD, HUNTINGDON

Report by the Development Control Manager

Case No: 0802728FUL
(FULL PLANNING APPLICATION)
Applicant: CIRCLE ANGLIA
Grid Ref: 524958 272479
Date of Registration: 16.09.2008
Parish: HUNTINGDON

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The site relates to an existing area of open space fronting onto Mayfield Road. To the north west of the site there is an existing hedgerow and to the western end of the site is an existing bridleway, American Lane. To the south east of the site there is an existing care home, currently under construction, the St Johns Ambulance HQ lies to the west of the site, to the north west there is an existing school. The Mayfield Road area is characterised by predominantly single storey dwellings to the east, whilst to the north east there are two storey dwellings.
- 1.2 The application proposes the erection of 20 new dwellings and 9 flats built to Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. All 29 would be affordable. The flats proposed would be contained within one staggered block, each block containing three flats in each section, resulting in a 3 storey building located to the northern end of the site. One row of 12 terrace dwellings is proposed adjacent the boundary to Hunters Down and fronting the area of open space. A second row of terrace dwellings are to be sited adjacent the area of open space and parallel to the bridleway and two detached dwellings are proposed to front onto American Lane.
- 1.3 To ensure compliance with the requirement to reach Code Level 5, PV and solar thermal technology are to be provided on all of the roofs of the two storey dwellings and two of the three roofs to the flats. In addition further sustainable elements include more water efficient appliances and rain water recycling, as well as Sedum Green roofs for all roofs facing the public open space, helping reduce surface water drainage and help increase biodiversity.
- 1.4 The attached annotated site layout plan clarifies the nature of the site and its relationship with its surroundings.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS1: “Delivering Sustainable Development” (2005)** contains advice on the operation of the plan-led system.
- 2.2 **Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 (2007)** sets out how planning, in providing for the new homes, jobs and infrastructure needed by communities, should help shape places with lower carbon emissions and resilient to the climate change now accepted as inevitable.
- 2.3 **PPS3: “Housing” (2006)** sets out how the planning system supports the growth in housing completions needed in England.
- 2.4 **PPS9: “Biological and Geological Conservation” (2005)** sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.
- 2.5 **PPG13: “Transport” (2001)** provides guidance in relation to transport and particularly the integration of planning and transport.
- 2.6 **PPG16: “Archaeology and Planning” (1990)** sets out the Secretary of State's policy on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded both in an urban setting and in the countryside.
- 2.7 **PPG17: “Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation” (2002)** sets out the policies needed to be taken into account by regional planning bodies in the preparation of Regional Planning Guidance (or any successor) and by local planning authorities in the preparation of development plans (or their successors); they may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications.
- 2.8 **PPS22: “Renewable Energy” (2004)** sets out the Government's policies for renewable energy, which planning authorities should have regard to when preparing local development documents and when taking planning decisions.
- 2.9 **PPS23: “Planning and Pollution Control” (2004)** is intended to complement the new pollution control framework under the Pollution Prevention and Control Act 1999 and the PPC Regulations 2000.

For full details visit the government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> and follow the links to planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Policy.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

Further information on the role of planning policies in deciding planning applications can also be found at the following website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk> then follow links Planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Information and Guidance,

Planning Guidance and Advice and then Creating and Better Place to Live

3.1 **East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008)**

Policies viewable at <http://www.go-east.gov.uk> then follow links to Planning, Regional Planning then Related Documents

- ◆ **SS1:** “Achieving Sustainable Development” – the strategy seeks to bring about sustainable development by applying: the guiding principles of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy 2005 and the elements contributing to the creation of sustainable communities described in Sustainable Communities: Homes for All.
- ◆ **SS4:** “Towns other than Key Centres and Rural Areas” – Local Development Documents should define the approach to development in towns. Such towns include selected Market Towns and others with potential to increase their social and economic sustainability.
- ◆ **H1:** “Regional Housing Provision 2001 to 2021” – Local Planning Authorities should facilitate the delivery of district housing allocations – 11,200 for Huntingdonshire.
- ◆ **H2:** “Affordable Housing” – Development Plan Documents should set appropriate targets. At the regional level, delivery should be monitored against a target for some 35% of housing coming forward through planning permissions granted after the publication of the RSS.
- ◆ **T4:** “Urban Transport” – Local Transport Plans for appropriate Market Towns should identify ways to bring about a shift away from car use to public transport, walking and cycling.
- ◆ **ENV7:** “Quality in the Built Environment” - requires new development to be of high quality which complements the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area and promotes urban renaissance and regeneration.
- ◆ **ENG1:** Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance” – for new developments of 10+ dwellings or 1000sqm non residential development a minimum of 10% of their energy should be from decentralised and renewable or low carbon resources unless not feasible or viable.

3.2 **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003)**

Saved policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> follow the links to environment, planning, planning

- ◆ **P6/1** – Development Related Provision – development will only be permitted where the additional infrastructure and community requirements generated by the proposal can be secured.
- ◆ **P9/8** – Infrastructure Provision – a comprehensive approach towards securing infrastructure needs to support the

development strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region. The programme will encompass: transport; affordable and key worker housing; education; health care; other community facilities; environmental improvements and provision of open space; waste management; water, flood control and drainage and other utilities and telecommunications.

3.3 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995)**

Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95

- ◆ **T18:** “Access requirements for new development” states development should be accessed by a highway of acceptable design and appropriate construction.
- ◆ **R3:** “Recreation and Leisure Provision” – sets on the minimum standard requirements for the provision of recreation open space – Settlements with populations in excess of 1000 persons to be based on the standard of 2.43 hectares (6 acres) per 1000 population.
- ◆ **R7:** “Land and Facilities” – For new residential development of 10 dwellings or more (or 0.4 ha) should normally make provision for children’s casual and equipped play space.
- ◆ **R8:** “Land and Facilities” – consideration will be given to the acceptance of contributions from developers towards improving recreational facilities in the vicinity of the site to off set recreational requirements sets out in R7.
- ◆ **R11:** “Land and Facilities” – In some non-residential schemes, where it is appropriate to seek leisure and recreational provision, developers will be required to make on-site provision or contribute financially to the programme of recreation facilities and maintenance.
- ◆ **R12:** “Land and Facilities” – the provision of children’s play areas in housing estate developments will normally be sought. This provision should be enclosed, useable, safe, adequately equipped and appropriately located
- ◆ **R17:** “Other Provision” – regard will be given to R1 and the standards set out in R3 and other policies of the Local Plan in determining whether alternative developments should be permitted on existing or proposed recreation or amenity areas including school playing fields.
- ◆ **En12:** “Archaeological Implications” – permission on sites of archaeological interest may be conditional on the implementation of a scheme of archaeological recording prior to development commencing.
- ◆ **En13:** “Archaeological Implications” – in areas of archaeological potential, planning applications may be required to be accompanied by the results of an archaeological field evaluation or desk-based assessment.
- ◆ **En14:** “Open Spaces, Frontage and Gaps in the Built up Framework or immediately adjacent” - development will not normally be allowed.

- ◆ **En15:** “Open Spaces and Gaps for Protection” – as defined on the inset map, development that impairs their open nature will not normally be allowed.
- ◆ **En18:** “Protection of countryside features” – Offers protection for important site features including trees, woodlands, hedges and meadowland.
- ◆ **En20:** Landscaping Scheme. - Wherever appropriate a development will be subject to the conditions requiring the execution of a landscaping scheme.
- ◆ **CS8:** “Water” – satisfactory arrangements for the availability of water supply, sewerage and sewage disposal facilities, surface water run-off facilities and provision for land drainage will be required.

3.4 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002)**

Saved policies from the Huntingdon Local Plan Alterations 2002 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002)

- ◆ **STR1** - District Hierarchy - Outlines the settlement hierarchy. Market Towns and the rural growth village of Yaxley where housing development up to and including estate scale may proceed.
- ◆ **STR2** - Provides definitions for housing development – Housing estate: development entailing the construction of more than 9 dwellings.
- ◆ **STR3** - Market Towns – are Huntingdon; Godmanchester; St Neots; St Ives; Ramsey and Bury
- ◆ **HL5** - Quality and Density of Development - sets out the criteria to take into account in assessing whether a proposal represents a good design and layout.
- ◆ **HL6** – Housing Density - indicates that housing development shall be at a density of 30-50 dwellings per hectare
- ◆ **HL10** - Housing Provision – in the district should reflect the full range of the local community’s needs by ensuring a choice in new housing.
- ◆ **OB1** – Nature and Scale of Obligations – will relate to the size of development and the impact on physical infrastructure, social and community facilities and services.
- ◆ **OB2** - Maintenance of Open Space – contributions may be sought for the maintenance of small areas of open space, children’s play space and recreational facilities, woodland or landscaping to benefit the development.

3.5 **Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning, then Planning then Planning+Policy then Informal policy statements where there is a link to Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007

- ◆ **G1** – Open Space and Recreational Land – development proposals should not entail the whole or partial loss of open space within the settlements, or of outdoor recreation facilities or allotments.
- ◆ **G2** – Landscape Character - development proposals should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape
- ◆ **G3** – Trees, hedgerows and Other Environmental Features - development proposals should minimise risk of harm to trees, hedgerows or other environmental features of visual, historic or nature conservation value.
- ◆ **B1** – Design Quality - developments should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of layout, form and contribution to the character of the area.
- ◆ **B2** – Street scene – development proposals should make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of streets and public spaces.
- ◆ **B3** – Accessibility, Adaptability and Security – the location and design of new development should enable ease of access, have convenient and appropriate facilities and minimise the extent to which users feel at risk of crime.
- ◆ **B4** – Amenity - developments should not have an unacceptable impact upon amenity of existing or future occupiers.
- ◆ **B5** – Energy and Water use – developments should aim to maximise the level of energy efficiency through sustainable design and construction.
- ◆ **H2** – Housing Density - lists the minimum density standards housing developments should achieve. Within or adjacent to market towns: 40-75 dwellings per hectare.
- ◆ **H3** – Mix of Dwelling Sizes – major housing development should incorporate accommodation suitable for a range of household sizes and types, which meets the local community’s needs.
- ◆ **T1** – Transport Impacts - development proposals should be capable of being served by safe convenient access to the transport network and should not give rise to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the local transport network.
- ◆ **T2** – Car and Cycle Parking - development proposals should limit car parking and provide cycle parking facilities to the levels set out in the Council’s parking standards.
- ◆ **T3** – Rights of Way and Other Public Routes - Lists the criteria which should be considered in relation to Rights of Way.

3.6 **Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework submission Core Strategy 2008**

Policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework submission Core Strategy 2008 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning then click on Planning and then click on Planning Policy where there is a link to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

- ◆ **CS1:** “Sustainable development in Huntingdonshire” – all developments will contribute to the pursuit of sustainable

development, having regard to social, environmental and economic issues. All aspects will be considered including design, implementation and function of development.

- ◆ **CS3:** “The Settlement Hierarchy” – Identifies Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and Bury as Market Towns in which development schemes of all scales may be appropriate in built up areas.
- ◆ **CS4:** “Affordable Housing in Development” – 40% of all housing proposed on proposals of 15 or more homes or 0.5ha, or more in all parts of the District.

- 3.7 **Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007)**
- 3.8 **Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2007)**
- 3.9 **External Artificial Lighting SPG**
- 3.10 **Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing (SPD – Nov 2007)** – requires 40% or more of the total number of dwellings to be provided on a site of 15 or more dwellings (or 0.5ha) within a settlement above 3000 population in the Cambridge Sub-Region to be affordable.
- 3.11 **Design Brief July 2008 Mayfield Road**
- 3.12 **Market Housing Mix 2004**
- 3.13 **Huntingdonshire District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit 2006**
- 3.14 **‘Growing Awareness – A Plan for Our Environment’ – adopted by the Council in April 2008** and provides a framework for action over five years for tackling the three main environmental challenges of tackling climate change, using resources efficiently and protecting and improving the environment. Progress against targets will be reported and published annually and will be used to inform the development of the following years action plan.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 None relevant

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 **Town Council – OBJECTION (copy attached).** Following the receipt of amended plans the Panel still consider the proposal will overdevelop the site. The scale is entirely out of keeping with existing surrounding properties and will therefore have an adverse effect on the area.
- 5.2 **CCC Education** – no contribution required due to the 100% affordable nature of the proposed development.

- 5.3 **CCC Archaeology** – area of high archaeological potential, the northern half of the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation which can be secured through an appropriately worded condition and should be carried out prior to the commencement of development.
- 5.4 **CCC Highways – NO OBJECTION**, subject to conditions on access, visibility splays, provision of adequate space for turning/parking and temporary facilities for construction traffic. At present the access and road arrangement may not be suitable for adoption. Should the applicant wish the road to be adopted further details would be required regarding construction, materials to be used and demonstration of turning facilities
- 5.5 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer – NO OBJECTION**
- 5.6 **Environmental Health** – A phase II investigation required to ensure no land contamination.
- 5.7 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue** – adequate provision for fire hydrants required.
- 5.8 **Cambridgeshire County Council, Countryside Access Team – NO OBJECTION**, the development appears to be a sufficient distance from the bridleway. Planning informatives, relating to the bridleway should be added if the application should be approved

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 Notification letters were sent to 1167 dwellings:

13 letters of OBJECTION, summarised below:

- ◆ whether there shall be sufficient school places for children;
- ◆ concern over the construction materials to be used for the dwelling;
- ◆ concern over noise;
- ◆ concern over loss of green space for local residents;
- ◆ vehicular access too close to junction;
- ◆ insufficient parking would add to problems along Mayfield Road, particularly during term time;
- ◆ open space is inadequate and too heavily landscaped;
- ◆ variety of architectural styles in the vicinity, design not in keeping;
- ◆ adversely affect pedestrian and vehicular traffic taking and collecting school children;
- ◆ development leaves the possibility of access to the field to the rear;
- ◆ concern over the traffic generation and details submitted;
- ◆ report incorrectly refers to the St Johns ambulance centre as a hall;
- ◆ possibility of the gym being extended;

- ◆ Mayfield Road is a fire route from the fire station and also becomes a rat run;
- ◆ if approved then a lay by should be constructed on the west side of Mayfield Road;
- ◆ Hunters Down contractors are using Mayfield road as a car park;
- ◆ concern over congestion during build;
- ◆ there are already a large number of accesses on to Mayfield Road;
- ◆ Mayfield Road has reached saturation point ;
- ◆ the area is designated as open space for protection;
- ◆ occupiers of the care home will have to put up with more noise;
- ◆ High density development is inappropriate for the area adjoining a bungalow estate;
- ◆ Not very eco friendly to cover another field with concrete;
- ◆ Is it necessary under the current housing climate;
- ◆ Affordable houses remain empty at Sapley Road;
- ◆ flats are not a solution to housing problems they are the housing problems of the future;
- ◆ concern over the potential development at the Whaddons and Thonglsey;
- ◆ existing traffic from surrounding residential areas make Desborough Road a rat run;
- ◆ suggest the use of Land in California Road for development;
- ◆ concern over where children shall play after French's Field is consumed;
- ◆ younger age group would not be compatible with those residents in Hunters Down;
- ◆ Area is a high crime zone and request that CCTV coverage should cover the school grounds;
- ◆ Hartford Infant and Juniors School;
- ◆ Previous letter did not address concerns;
- ◆ See the car parking facilities in front of the properties as a positive outcome and shall hopefully alleviate the issue of residents parking on Mayfield Road;
- ◆ Infant school remains oversubscribed, the School Travel Plan has been updated and catchment area agreed; and,
- ◆ Suggest the Local Planning Authority consider potential solutions regarding traffic issues

NO OBJECTION - 48 Desborough Road, summarised below:

- ◆ Good that the Council is providing an exemplar scheme, whilst not conventional in appearance this shall in time help the Governments target for this form of development.

Late representations

- ◆ **TWO OBJECTIONS** received prior to the Development Control Panel, one letter from an original objector and one new objection with the following concerns:

- ◆ Concern that the public have not been made fully aware that this land is designated open space;
- ◆ Land should remain as open space, planners should not decide how much open space is available for the area;
- ◆ Usable open space is very limited;
- ◆ Following amended plans, these revisions do not overcome concerns, which are loss of green area, the amount of traffic passing the school and extra traffic in a residential area and so close to the school.
- ◆ **THREE** letters of **OBJECTION**, received after Development Control Panel, one objector has already commented on the application
- ◆ Concerns are as above, object to the use of the land for housing, should be kept as open space, more than enough space has been lost/shall be developed and the public should have been made more aware that this area is designated open space;
- ◆ Further concerns relate to the reference of Riverside as The open space as this is across a busy road, for the most part it is a wildlife area and not suitable for children to use

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

7.1 The main issues to consider are detailed below:

- ◆ the principle of the development
- ◆ the housing mix
- ◆ the design, layout and landscaping of the scheme
- ◆ the access arrangement and impact on highway safety
- ◆ the proposed renewables for the development
- ◆ impact on residential amenity
- ◆ proposed refuse arrangements
- ◆ the issue of contamination
- ◆ potential S106 contributions

The Nature of the Development Proposed

- 7.2 The site is designated as an area of open space for protection within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995.
- 7.3 The proposal seeks to redevelop this open space for protection with an affordable residential development, as such this application represents a formal significant departure from the adopted Development Plan (Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995).
- 7.4 PPG17 requires Local Authorities to undertake an audit of open space, sports and recreational land and an assessment of existing and future need. That guidance outlines that not all open spaces are of equal merit and it is possible that some may be available for alternative uses.
- 7.5 In 2006 the District Council commissioned an open space, sport and recreation needs assessment across the district. As part of this

assessment it was identified that there are approximately 16.67 hectares of surplus amenity greenspace within Huntingdon and Godmanchester, compared to a surplus of 1.24 hectares of natural and semi natural open space and a deficit of 14.57 hectares of parks and gardens. The assessment identifies that there appears to be adequate access to informal space within Huntingdon. In addition to this area of open space, within the locality alternative open space is located at the Riverside Park and French's Field, sited adjacent the site, to the south west.

- 7.6 The 2006 study identified that there is an overall surplus of amenity space within Huntingdon. Taking this into consideration, combined with the sustainable location of this site, in that it is relatively close proximity to the town centre and accessible by other modes of transport, this site could be appropriate for the development of an exemplar affordable housing scheme. It is considered that the partial development of this site, for affordable housing would outweigh the loss of part of this open space having regard to the benefit for the wider community.
- 7.7 In order to understand the reasoning behind this application, it is necessary to provide some background to the submission of this application and the desire to provide an exemplar affordable housing scheme which reaches Code Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 7.8 The Code for Sustainable Homes became mandatory as of the 1st May 2006 and each new home built after this period of time shall therefore be assessed against the code. To support its' recently adopted Environment Strategy the Council considers that it can deliver an exemplar high quality eco-friendly affordable housing scheme on land within its ownership. There is a clear demonstrable need for more affordable housing within the district, and this proposal seeks to demonstrate how high quality, highly sustainable, affordable housing can be provided.
- 7.9 The following section provides a background to the Code for Sustainable Homes. The Code assesses nine design categories, each containing a sub-category and is defined as 'an environmental assessment rating method for new homes in England':
- ◆ Energy and CO2 Emissions: including building materials, cycle storage etc.
 - ◆ Pollution
 - ◆ Water (internal and external usage)
 - ◆ Health and Wellbeing: including private space, sound insulation etc.
 - ◆ Materials
 - ◆ Management; including security, construction processes etc.
 - ◆ Surface Water Run-off
 - ◆ Ecology
 - ◆ Waste

- 7.10 Within each category there are a number of environmental issues which have the potential to impact on the environment. Within each category there is a performance indicator, which is above that standard needed to satisfy Building Regulation. The Codes assesses environmental performance in a two stage process (Design and Post construction). There are six levels to the code which are depicted by stars from 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest rating. Each category is awarded a certain number of credits, for example pollution has four credits, each particularly category is then weighted. The total percentage scores are then calculated and assessed against the Code rating 1 -6. This proposal seeks to achieve Code Level 5. The attached explanatory leaflet sets out the requirements of the Code.

Design Brief

- 7.11 The Council adopted a design brief for this site in July 2008 following consultation with the local community. During this consultation period the brief was amended to take account of comments and suggestions received. The adopted Design Brief indicates where development should be located and how much open space should be retained. It was a requirement of the brief that 30% of the site was retained as open space. Guidance has also been provided on links across the site, key frontages, landscaping, potential heights for the development and parking ratios for the site.
- 7.12 The Design Brief was adopted with the requirement that any development would be specifically for affordable homes that would achieve Code Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.

Proposal

- 7.13 The dwellings proposed are of a contemporary design, partly due to the materials to be used in the construction of the buildings and to ensure the development obtains Code Level 5. It is intended that the buildings shall have an external appearance of timber and rendered panels. Sedum roofs would be included on those dwellings fronting into the site. The development also seeks to include solar panels and photovoltaics on the roofs of the dwelling houses and two of the three flat blocks.

Access, pedestrian and cycle links

- 7.14 Only one vehicular access is proposed and this is to the southern end of the site. It is envisaged that this shall create a 'Homezone' with a shared surface within the site. In terms of pedestrian and cycle links, three links shall be provided across the site connecting to the existing bridleway. A link is provided through the site to the south from Hardy Close and provides for natural surveillance. The second internal access point is gated, sited adjacent the flats. The last link provides a connection to the rear access of the flats. The provision of these links allows for permeability through the site and leads to the existing bridleway.

Housing Mix of the development

- 7.15 The Housing Mix SPG requires that a development of a housing group or housing estate should provide not less than 40% of all properties with one or two bedroom and not less than 60% of all properties with one, two or three bedrooms. The proposed development provides approximately 86% of all the properties with either one, two or three bedrooms. The housing mix provided is considered acceptable.
- 7.16 The Government is committed to providing high quality housing for people who are unable to access or afford market housing. The proposal seeks to assist in delivering more affordable housing into Huntingdon, where there is a clear need for this form of housing.

Density

- 7.17 The proposed development equates to approximately 37 dwellings per hectare, Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 requires 40-75 dwellings per hectare where the site is within or adjacent to a market town. Although a minimum net density of 30 dwellings per hectare, in accordance with PPS3, should be sought for housing development. Taking into account the existing character of the area and the essential requirement of the Design Brief to retain a third of the site as open space, the density proposed is considered acceptable.

Character of the area

- 7.18 The area surrounding the site is of mixed development, including residential units, educational establishments, shops and the St Johns ambulance centre. The residential dwellings range from single storey dwellings to the east, two storey nursing home currently still being developed, two storey dwellings and a seven storey residential block (Suffolk House), to the north east and adjacent the existing parade of shops. To the north west and west of the site lies an existing right of way, a bridleway, leading to Hartford Road. There is no specific architectural style for those dwellings in the vicinity of the site and it may be said that the existing development is of its time.

General layout

- 7.19 The development encompasses two and three storey units, a broad verge of open space shall be retained adjacent Mayfield Road with plot 1 being set approximately 11 metres from Mayfield Road and the flats being set approximately 9 metres from Mayfield Road. This seeks to maintain the current openness of this area, whilst complementing and enhancing the development.
- 7.20 The development has ensured that active frontages are provided along the bridleway with the addition of landscaping which creates sufficient defensible space and softens the boundary to the bridleway.

- 7.21 The units have been orientated to ensure that they maximise the benefits from the natural daylight. Passive design has been used to reduce energy demand for heating, lighting and cooling. Where possible, homes have a southerly aspect to maximise solar energy in winter, with appropriate ventilation, shading and glazing to prevent overheating in the summer.

Detailed design issues

- 7.22 The proposed southern terrace back on to the Hunters Down residential care home. This row consists of 12 dwellings, which have been split up into shorter terraces and provides a varied setback and frontage. Plot 1 fronts both Mayfield Road and the access into the site and as such forms a focal point of the scheme. This unit is also the only building on the site which is located adjacent an existing residential property and as such it is important that there is sufficient separation distance between these properties. The proposed dwelling is located approximately 12.8 metres from corner to corner.
- 7.23 The dwelling has been designed with its own separate rear garden access and represents a bespoke design given its sensitive location. In addition the design of the dwelling has taken into consideration the proximity and orientation of the existing single storey dwelling No. 5 Mayfield Road. The closest window at the first floor to the southern elevation to No. 5 shall be obscurely glazed. Given the siting of the dwelling and detailed design of the dwelling, it is not considered that this would result in an unduly detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring property, at No. 5, by overlooking or overshadowing.
- 7.24 Plots 1 to 12 frame the terrace development, with plots 6 and 7 also protruding beyond the remaining properties and aligned with the access road to the flats. Plots 2-5 and 8-11 are served by a single rear access point, located underneath the first floor accommodation of plots 6 and 7, this passage way is delineated by a separate pathway. Car parking is provided to the front of the dwellings. Each plot has sufficient space for wheelie bin storage and there are also short stay cycle parking available to the front.
- 7.25 Plots 14-19 also form a row of dwellings sited adjacent the open space and parallel to the bridleway. Short stay cycle parking is provided to the front of the dwelling and parking for plots 15-19 have been provided in front of the dwellings. Parking for plot 14 has been provided within the rear curtilage and is gated. Access to the rear gardens is provided to the rear of Nos. 14 and 19 respectively and serves 2 to three units.
- 7.26 Plots 13 and 20 are detached units sited to the rear of No. 14 and No 19 respectively. Plots 12 and 13 are approximately 10 metres apart, although to ensure overlooking is minimised the windows have not been positioned in a direct line. Plots 12,13 and 20 have all been designed so that the roof slopes over the main dwelling fronting the bridleway and as such assists in reducing any potential impact on the bridleway.

Flats

- 7.27 The proposed flats have been staggered and are 3 storeys in height. The design of the building has provides interest to its form and assists in breaking up the mass of the building. The principle frontage of the building faces into the site; however the building also has an active frontage on all elevations. The stairs have been sited to the northern elevation, however the window detailed has been staggered to provide some detailing and variety to this elevation. The elevation to the east and facing on to the bridleway has been designed to include window boxes and provide interest to this elevation.
- 7.28 Of the three roof slopes two shall hold photovoltaics and solar panels. The principle elevation faces south and shall allow for solar gain to the units. Sliding sunscreens are also proposed to provide shade when necessary. The first and second floors of the flats contain corner sun spaces, this project beyond the elevation of the flats and provide visual interest to the building. To the west there are also similar details and features to the building.
- 7.29 The proposed flat block has been sited on an area of land elevated above the remainder of the site. This being said the cross sectional drawing provided indicates that the proposal, compared with its surroundings would not look out of place. The maximum height of the roof measures approximately 11 metres to the ridge and this limitation has helped reduce any potential impact on the surroundings.
- 7.30 Having regard to the existing built form, the proposed flat block creates an attractive development, helping to reinforce the diversity and distinctiveness of development in the locality and shall complement its surroundings. The development provides for an efficient use of land and given the existing variety of development in the area is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.31 The overall development is considered to be attractive with simple openings and attractive contemporary elevations. The roof design has been largely dictated to take advantage of solar energy and solar gain, through the use of photovoltaics and solar panels. A small roof slope for units 1-12 and 14-19 shall front the Homezone and these areas shall be covered with sedum. The ridge of the dwellings has been off centred to accommodate a vertical light well under the ridge and the proposed sedum roof, to allow light into the centre of the dwelling.
- 7.32 Plots 1, 6, 7, 12, 13 and 20 all provide for two parking spaces under first floor accommodation. This accommodation has been recessed from the frontage of the dwelling and provides further articulation to this scheme.
- 7.33 The proposed development is easily accessible and well connected to public transport. The design of the development has taken into account the surrounding area and whilst part of the site is to be developed an 8 metre verge of open space shall be retained and a

further area of open space shall be provided to serve the proposed development, as well as the surrounding community.

- 7.34 Although some residents have raised concerns over the design and construction of the buildings, these details are considered acceptable. The reason for the contemporary design is in order to ensure that the development is an exemplar form of sustainable development and ensures Code Level 5, of the Code for Sustainable Homes is achieved.

Renewable policy

- 7.35 Planning policy seeks to incorporate renewable energy proposals within new developments, subject to there not being any adverse impact on the surrounding area. As part of the scheme it is necessary that the technology generates at least 10% of the developments total energy demand, in accordance with policy ENG1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy and B5 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement. In order to achieve this, the applicant seeks to include a number of photovoltaics and solar thermal panels throughout the development. This is also an essential requirement for attaining Code Level 5 for the Code for Sustainable Homes.
- 7.36 In order to achieve Code Level 5 the development is required to demonstrate a 100% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions, this development therefore incorporates a 25% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by reducing the need for energy, a 10% reduction through the use of solar water heating and a 65% reduction through the use of solar photovoltaic roof panels. This development therefore seeks to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and shall also assist in significantly reducing heating costs for future occupiers.
- 7.37 Whilst originally the proposal sought to include a biomass boiler and the buildings were to be constructed from ModCell, the applicant has reviewed this situation and concluded that the use of photovoltaics and solar panels would be more effective. There are no objections to this alteration as it is considered that this allows greater possibilities for these methods to be replicated elsewhere.

Landscaping

- 7.38 The landscaping scheme seeks to achieve a high quality development which creates a sense of place and community. The proposal whilst developing part of the site also seeks to retain approximately 30%, as open space and provides the opportunity to improve this existing open space with improved landscaping. The existing hedgerow to the north western area of the site is to be retained, as part of the development; it is the only significant natural feature on the site. The proposed landscaping scheme is broadly acceptable, although there are some minor details which shall need amending and it is considered that this can be dealt with by way of condition. The scheme offers high quality hard landscaping that helps enhance the appearance of the overall development.

Parking

- 7.39 The development, in line with the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement is required to provide a maximum of 2 car space per dwelling and 1 car space per 4 units for visitors, as the site is located outside the town centre. The development provides for 1.8 spaces per unit, this level of parking is considered to be acceptable given the location of the proposed development. The applicant also seeks to provide 3 disabled spaces.
- 7.40 Aside from the parking providing within the curtilage of the dwelling, the proposal seeks to minimise the impact of the proposed parking on the development. Parking for the flats is provided in a courtyard area to the south east of the flat block, additional landscaping is proposed around this area to soften this landscaped area. Parking for plots 15-19 are provided in front of these dwellings, with additional parking sited parallel and adjacent the open space with the remaining parking sited adjacent plots 1-6 and surrounded by the open space. The proposed parking has been well integrated into the development and has sought to ensure that the provision of car parking is not visually obtrusive.

Cycle Parking

- 7.41 All units benefit from secure cycle storage, either to the front of the units or within the curtilage. This forms part of the requirements to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes. The proposed links to the existing public right of way should also assist in promoting cycling and walking, providing easy access to existing access links.

Highways and Transport Statement

- 7.42 Whilst noting that there are some typographical errors in the statement, for instance the reference to the development consisting of 30 dwellings and not 29 and St Johns Ambulance HQ is erroneously referred to as a hall. This does not alter the conclusion of the statement significantly. Having consulted with the Highways Authority no objections have been raised to the transport statement and traffic survey submitted.
- 7.43 Although neighbours have raised concerns over traffic generation, it is not considered that this development would have a detrimental impact on highway safety. It is noted that permission exists for an extension to the Olympic gym, as well as extension being underway at the St Johns Ambulance site, however this does not override the fact that this development is not considered to be detrimental to highway safety.
- 7.44 Whilst cars may already park along Mayfield Road, this is an existing situation which cannot be rectified by this current application.

Public right of way

- 7.45 The dwellings have been sited to ensure that there is adequate space between the proposed dwellings and the existing right of way. A distance of approximately 5 metres, of verge, from the right of way, which measures approximately 8 metres in width. Given the separation distance between the proposed development and existing right of way, this is considered a sufficient distance to ensure this right of way is not adversely affected by the development. The County Council Countryside Services Team have raised no objections to the development and requested that informatives (relating to the right of way) are added, should the application be approved.

Ecology

- 7.46 The assessment indicates that all habitats and plant communities recorded on and adjacent the site are common and widespread. It identified that habitats on the site have the potential to support nesting birds there is however some potential for bats to roost in the adjacent hedgerow. It is therefore considered that should the development commence this factors are taken into consideration by the developer. The development of this site does however offer the opportunity to enhance this existing area and enhance biodiversity.

Amenity

- 7.47 As previously stated, the scheme has been designed to take into account the existing residential property at No. 5 Mayfield Road and as such all windows have been sited so not to look towards this existing property.
- 7.48 To the south east of the site lies a residential care home, currently under construction, the minimum distance to the common boundary and rear elevation of the proposed dwellings measures approximately 9.2 metres. The care home is then set approximately 7.4 metres from the common boundary to the rear elevation. The total depth from the rear elevation of both buildings is approximately 18 metres. This is considered to be a sufficient distance to ensure that this would not result in undue overlooking or overshadowing to either occupier.

Refuse collection

- 7.49 It is considered that there is sufficient manoeuvring space within the site for refuse vehicles, as well as adequate storage area.

Contamination

- 7.50 The site lies in area previously used as a gravel pit (the southern section). The desktop study submitted with the application indicates that a further investigation should be undertaken to characterise the physical and chemical nature of the underlying soils. In light of this it is recommended that a condition is imposed requiring further information.

Archaeology

- 7.51 Comments received from the County Council indicate that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential. It is considered that archaeological remains survive on the northern half of the site and that the proposed development would severely damage or destroy these remains. In light of this it is recommended that the northern half of the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation. It is recommended that a condition is imposed to ensure this takes place.

Fire and Rescue

- 7.52 The proposed development should secure adequate fire hydrants; this can be dealt with by way of condition.

Section 106 Contributions

- 7.53 Whilst contributions could normally be sought for open space and the Market Town Transport Strategy, it is considered that given that the land is being given for free, by the District Council, this would not merit these required contributions. S106 contributions are normally taken off the land value, however there is in effect no value to this land and so contributions cannot be deducted from this value. The need for affordable housing within the area and the desire to provide an exemplar sustainable development outweighs any financial benefit requested by consultees. In this instance it is considered acceptable that this development does not provide for any additional financial contributions.

Affordable Housing

- 7.54 The entire development shall be affordable housing. As the District Council is both the Landowner and Local Planning Authority, this is most appropriately secured through the land transfer rather than the planning process.

Other Matters

- 7.55 One letter of support has been received regarding the proposed development.
- 7.56 Most of the adverse comments received have been addressed above.
- 7.57 Some concern has been raised that a younger age group may not be compatible with those residents in Hunters Down, as well as concern over noise. This application however seeks residential development within an existing residential area, whilst the future occupiers of any development would not be known it is not envisaged that a mixed community would be detrimental to the area, this would only seek to create a more diverse community. It is not considered that any noise generated from a residential development would be detrimental to the surroundings.

- 7.58 Whilst the development seeks a block of flats, this is not considered to cause 'housing problems'. It is appreciated that it may be the personal opinion of some people that this will lead to housing problems in the future. There is a need to provide for higher density development, which this application strives to achieve, in line with government guidance; as such this form of development is considered a suitable way to assist in meeting the need for housing.
- 7.59 Further concern has been raised over the need for this development, given that affordable housing remains empty elsewhere. Whilst this may be the case in the short term, these units if vacant would only be due to maintenance requirements and not because there is not a need for housing.
- 7.60 Concerns have also been raised by Spring Common School relating to the potential increase in traffic and the request for appropriate traffic calming measures. The issue over traffic increase has already been considered, this scheme would not warrant the provision of traffic calming, and this is matter that would need to be considered by the Highways Authority. The request for CCTV is also noted; however this cannot be justified or required as part of this application.

Conclusion

- 7.61 The proposed development would bring forward an exemplar form of sustainable residential development.
- 7.62 The proposal whilst partially developing an area of open space is not considered to adversely affect the character of the existing area. The development, whilst of a contemporary nature is considered to be of a high quality design, with well planned public spaces and makes a more efficient use of land. The development has been effectively integrated into the existing urban environment and creates a local distinctiveness, through good architecture and landscaping.
- 7.63 Having considered the balance of the arguments put forward and taken into account the relevant material considerations, the Panel

8. RECOMMEND

- i. **THAT, subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services, to include those listed below, the application be supported;**
- ii. **THAT, if the application is supported by the Council, the Government Office for the Eastern Region be requested to consider whether they wish to call in the proposal; and**
- iii. **THAT, in the event that the proposal is not called in by the Government Office, the application be APPROVED.**


Conditions:

02003	Time Limit (3yrs)
05004	Notwithstanding submitted material details required
Nonstand	Soft and hard landscape details
06011	Soft landscape
06012	Hard and soft landscape implementation
06003	Implementation - replacements
06016	Landscape management plan
06019	Protection of trees and hedges during works
Nonstand	Boundary treatment
09001	Lighting scheme before installation
Nonstand	Archaeology
13003	Permitted Development (Extensions)
Nonstand	Removal of windows permitted development
17001	Levels Building/Site
Nonstand	Contamination
Nonstand	Fire hydrants
Nonstand	Visibilty
Nonstand	Access
Nonstand	Solar thermal and photovoltaics
Nonstand	Code level 5 – sustainable homes
Nonstand	In accordance with sustainability statement
Nonstand	Sustainable drainage

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Planning Application File Reference: 0802728FUL
East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008)
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003
Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995

Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration, 2002
Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007
Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy
2008
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007)
Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2007)
External Artificial Lighting SPG
Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing (SPD – Nov 2007)
Design Brief July 2008 Mayfield Road
Market Housing Mix 2004
Huntingdonshire District Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs
Assessment and Audit 2006
'Growing Awareness – A Plan for Our Environment'

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