

Case No: 0803231FUL (FULL PLANNING APPLICATION)
Proposal: ERECTION OF 3 TOWNHOUSES AND 5 APARTMENTS
Location: LAND REAR OF 12 TO 22 MILL HILL ROAD, EATON FORD
Applicant: AJB HOMES LTD
Grid Ref: 517658 260265
Date of Registration: 19.11.2008
Parish: ST NEOTS

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 This site was last used for motor vehicle repairs and the existing buildings on the site are currently vacant. The site is 0.11 hectare in size; or approximately 50 metres x 18.5 metres. It is surrounded by residential development on all sides and accessed by a narrow vehicular access from Hanover Close. This access is a shared public footpath which also links to Constable Avenue to the north.
- 1.2 This full application proposes the erection of 3 dwellinghouses and 5 flats sited in two groups of buildings. On the frontage of the site is proposed a two storey building containing 4 flats and to the rear is a lower two storey building with car parking on the ground floor and a flat above. The three townhouses are sited towards the rear of the site with individual rear gardens behind the dwellings. Ten car parking spaces are proposed.
- 1.3 The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Access Appraisal, Contamination Investigation and Bat Survey report.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS 1 - 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (2005)** contains advice on delivering sustainable development.
- 2.2 **PPS 3 - 'Housing' (2006)** aims to make good use of land and comments on development in urban areas.

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

- **ENV7:** Quality in the Built Environment
- **ENG1:** Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Energy Performance

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 policy and Structure Plan 2003.

- None relevant.

3.3 Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995)

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

- **H31** - new housing only permitted where appropriate standards of privacy and amenity can be maintained.
- **En20** – Planning permission subject to condition requiring landscape scheme.
- **En25** - all new development to respect scale, form, materials and design of buildings in locality.

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** – Housing development up to and including estate scale may proceed in St Neots.
- **HL5** - good design and layout in all new housing developments to achieve an efficient use of land, respect townscape, appropriate dwelling mix, incorporate landscaping, create an attractive distinctive place and promote energy efficiency.

- **HL7** – The District Council will seek to maximise the re-use of previously developed land and support the re-use of empty properties, and the conversion of under used dwellings or office or other buildings into housing use.

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

- **B1 Design Quality** - a development proposal should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of layout, form and contribution to the character of the area.
- **B2 Street Scene** - requires development to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of streets and public spaces.
- **B4 Amenity** - a development proposal should not have an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of existing or future occupiers within, adjoining or in the vicinity of the site in terms of daylight and sunlight, privacy, noise and disturbance, air quality, safety and security or oppressive or overbearing impact.

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:** Settlement hierarchy’ – residential development schemes of all scales may be appropriate within the built up area of St Neots.

4. **PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 8301081FUL – Erection of cover over car hoist – approved.
- 4.2 0702966OUT – Residential Development to include means of access – approved.
- 4.3 0801871FUL – Erection of 5 Dwellings and 4 flats – withdrawn.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 **St Neots Town Council – OBJECTION** (copy attached).
- 5.2 **County Council Highways – NO OBJECTIONS.**
- 5.3 **HDC Environmental Health** – further information on the ground contamination is required and this can be dealt with by condition.
- 5.4 **Environment Agency – NO OBJECTIONS** subject to minimum floor levels for the development, contamination information and no filtration of surface water drainage into the ground to be subject of conditions.
- 5.5 **CCC Footpaths Officer** – no comments received.
- 5.6 **Natural England – NO OBJECTIONS** subject to the recommendations regarding avoidance of impacts to nesting birds being incorporated in a planning condition.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 **THREE** letters of **OBJECTION** have been received commenting on the original plans which make the following points:
- Overlooking;
 - Height of the building is twice the height of the existing;
 - Adverse affect on the value of property;
 - High density of development;
 - Insufficient car parking;
 - Inability of cars to pass each other on the access road;
 - Access route used frequently by pedestrians and children going to school;
 - Do not want 5 apartments at the rear of property; and,
 - Original objections have not been met
- 6.2 **ONE** letter has been received in response to the amendments, re-iterating the point that they did not want five apartments at the rear of their property and that the revisions did not address their concerns. Any further comments received will be included in the Friday letter.

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

- 7.1 The principle of residential use on this site using the existing access has been established with the granting of outline planning permission reference 0702966OUT. Although the use of the access was established the layout at that time was illustrative and the number of dwellings therefore unknown. This application has been submitted as a full application following the withdrawal of the previous full application for 5 houses and 4 flats. The main issues to consider here therefore are the layout and design of the development, access and highway issues, effect upon residential amenity, wildlife and landscape issues and third party representations.

Quantum and Density of Development

- 7.2 Both central and local planning policy aims to achieve an efficient use of land and generally at least a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare should be achieved. In built up areas of towns where access to public transport is good higher densities can be achieved. The local guidance is contained within Policy H2 of the Interim Planning Policy Statement where it states that densities of between 40-75 dwellings per hectare can be achieved. In this case the density is 72 dwellings per hectare which is below the maximum suggested by the policy. Of more relevance on an enclosed, relatively small site such as this, is whether the proposal represents a well conceived, high quality design.

Layout and Design

- 7.3 The buildings on the site have been arranged in two blocks with the flats closer to the entrance and the houses located towards the rear of the site. The car port with flat above will form the visual link between the two blocks. This grouping of buildings will form a central courtyard space creating a sense of identity and focus for the new dwellings. The courtyard will also provide space for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles. The design of dwellings is traditional and takes its cue from traditional courtyard developments. Materials would be brick and dark stained weatherboarding. It is considered that this is a well thought out design which responds appropriately to the constraints of the site.

Access and Highway Issues

- 7.4 The access serving the site is also a shared public footpath and designated public right of way which has over the years been used by both the car repair business and pedestrians using the footpath. Estimated vehicular traffic to the car repair business was 50 vehicular movements per day. The accompanying Access Appraisal submitted with the application states that the established commercial use of the site could have the potential to generate around 95 movements per day. The same appraisal document states that the anticipated traffic generation for the proposed development will be around 33 trips per day, which is clearly a reduction in traffic using the access. The Highway Authority, whilst not doubting this figure and not objecting to the proposal, have queried whether a company generating 95 trips per day would consider moving onto the site because of the restrictions of the access. The highway authority has suggested conditions relating to turning and parking on site, and details of the access improvements. The access for this proposed use is therefore acceptable subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions. Ten car parking spaces for eight units close to the Town Centre is considered appropriate.

Effect upon Residential Amenity

- 7.5 This is a site which is enclosed on all sides by established housing. The existing buildings on the site are single storey commercial/car repair buildings and the proposal will represent a considerable visual change to the site. Amendments have been received relating to the position of windows on the proposed scheme in order to minimise the

impact upon the residential amenity of surrounding properties. Although there will be some impact upon the residential amenity it is considered that this is acceptable bearing in mind the distances involved and the removal of the existing commercial use.

Wildlife and Landscape Issues

- 7.6 The site has few natural features apart from some relatively immature trees. Natural England were consulted as the site is within 600 metres of the St Neots Common SSSI; however they have commented that this development is unlikely to have any effect upon the special features of interest and they have no objections. They do however recommend that the recommendations regarding avoidance of impacts to nesting birds be secured through the use of a planning condition.

Flooding

- 7.7 The Environment Agency has requested that floor levels be no lower than 16.10 ODN and the topographical survey submitted shows existing floor levels at between 15.80 and 16.00 metres and therefore it is considered that the required floor level will be acceptable.

Third Party Representations

- 7.8 The points raised in third party representations have been dealt with in this report. The impact upon the value of properties is not a material planning consideration.

Conclusion

- 7.9 This represents a well thought out development which will enhance the local area, while resulting in minimum impact upon the surrounding residential amenity. Traffic generation levels as a result of the proposal will be lower than that of a lawful commercial use which could use the existing buildings without the need for planning permission. It is therefore considered that planning permission in this instance should be granted.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

8. **RECOMMENDATION – APPROVE**, subject to conditions to include the following:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 02003 | Time Limit (3yrs) |
| 05001 | Buildings |
| Nonstand - | Floor levels |
| Nonstand - | Contamination risks |
| Nonstand - | Surface water drainage |

- Nonstand** - Parking and turning
- Nonstand** - Details of access
- Nonstand** - Access to be hard surfaced
- Nonstand** - Protection of nesting birds
- Nonstand** - External lighting
- 13003** - Permitted Development (Extensions)
- 13007** - Permitted Development (Windows)

Background Papers:

Planning Application File Reference: 0803231FUL
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

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