

**Case No:** 0802248OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)

**Proposal:** ERECTION OF TWO STOREY RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS ROAD, PARKING AND LANDSCAPING.

**Location:** LAND EAST OF WEST NEWLANDS

**Applicant:** MARLBOROUGH PROPERTIES UK LTD

**Grid Ref:** 535482 277971

**Date of Registration:** 06.08.2008

**Parish:** SOMERSHAM

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**RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE**

**1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION**

- 1.1 This site is located on the western side of Somersham, between the main part of the village, and the West Newlands industrial estate. The land is part of a large open field, presently in agricultural use, and it has no natural features of note apart from mature hedges on the southern and western boundaries. It rises slightly away from the road. The site has dimensions of approximately 60m by 120m (0.72ha). There is a field access to the site at the south western corner.
- 1.2 Apart from the industrial estate to the west, and the main body of the village to the east, there is a ribbon of residential development on the opposite side of the road. The land to the north is in agricultural use.
- 1.3 The proposal is in outline, with all matters reserved, and is to erect a two storey residential care home. Indicative plans have been submitted with the application which show the proposed layout of the site, the position of the access, and the provision of car parking at the rear of the site. The overall dimensions of the building will be 70m by 80m, with a maximum footprint of 3900 sqm and its height will vary between a maximum of 12m for the entrance feature, and 9.8m generally. The Design and Access Statement says that the applicants' intention is a building in a "modern style of architecture". The building will contain around 80 bedrooms and will generate between 50 and 60 full time jobs. Landscaping will be provided around the site.
- 1.4 The land is within the village environmental limit, but outside the existing built form, and is part of a larger allocation for employment purposes (a total of 2.5ha) in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995. This allocation has been carried forward into the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007. The road is classified (B1086).

1.5 The application has been advertised as a departure from the provisions of the development plan.

## 2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 **PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)** contains advice on the operation of the plan-led system.

2.2 **PPS3 – “Housing” (2006)** sets out how the planning system supports the growth of housing completions needed in England.

2.3 **PPG4: “Industrial and Commercial Development and Small Firms” (1992)** contains advice on the role of the planning system in relation to industrial and commercial development.

2.4 **Consultation Paper on new Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning for Sustainable Economic Development.** This sets out how planning bodies should, in the wider context of delivering sustainable development, positively plan for sustainable economic growth and respond to the challenges of the global economy, in their plan policies and planning decisions.

2.5 **PPG13: “Transport” (2001)** provides guidance in relation to transport and particularly the integration of planning and transport.

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 – requires new development to be of a high quality which complements the distinctive character and best qualities of the local area and promotes urban renaissance and regeneration

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](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95)

- **E3:** “Provision of land” – land allocations for the needs of general industry, warehousing and distribution, office and high technology uses.
- **E8;** “Small scale employment generating development” – will normally be permitted within defined environmental limits subject to demonstrated employment need, likely impact on character, amenities and infrastructure.
- **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.
- **En25:** “General Design Criteria” – indicates that the District Council will expect new development to respect the scale, form, materials and design of established buildings in the locality and make provision for landscaping and amenity areas.
- **CS5:** “Health and Social Services” - the Council will normally support the provision of facilities for social care subject to environmental and traffic considerations.
- **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](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan) - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002)

- **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.

3.5 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 – development 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 of streets and public spaces.
- **B4** – Amenity – developments should not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of existing and future occupiers.
- **H10** – Nursing and Care Homes. Development should be located in the defined limits of Key Centres (Somersham is a key centre

[limited growth]) and should enable facilities to be reached easily without the use of the car.

- **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.
- **P10** – Flood Risk – development should: not take place in areas at risk from flooding, unless suitable mitigation/flood protection measures are agreed; not increase the risk of flooding to properties elsewhere; make use of sustainable drainage systems where feasible; be informed by a flood risk assessment where appropriate.

3.6 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 Somersham as a ‘Key Service Centre’ in which development schemes of moderate and minor scale and infilling may be appropriate within the built up area.

3.7 The SPD Design Guide (Part 1) is a material consideration.

#### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 None recorded.

#### **5. CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 **Somersham Parish Council – OBJECTION** (copy attached)

5.2 **Local Highway Authority (CCC) – NO OBJECTION**

5.3 **Cambridgeshire Archaeology** – The site lies to the immediate north of the Registered Park and Garden of Somersham Palace Deer Park and to the north-west of Somersham Palace which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Finds in the area are consistent with settlement in the Roman and Elizabethan periods. A condition requiring archaeological evaluation prior to development would be appropriate.

5.4 **Environmental Health Officer** – Noise from the adjoining industrial units should not have a significant impact on this development.

## **6. REPRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 Neighbours – Six letters have been received. The following comments have been raised:-
1. The provision of an additional access from the main road would be inappropriate and would lead to further hazards for road users. The road is heavily used and slowing and turning traffic into the site would exacerbate the turning movements already happening with the other accesses. Traffic generated by the proposal would add to the problems on the road.
  2. The residents of the care home would suffer noise and disturbance from the adjoining industrial units.
  3. There is no need for such a large facility in the village. The site is not appropriate, and a smaller one should be found elsewhere in the village.
  4. The land should be retained as farm land or should be used for set aside.
  5. Somersham does not have a good bus service, and residents would find it difficult to access facilities elsewhere.
  6. The electricity supply in this part of the village is poor.
  7. The location of the road suggests that additional land may come forward for development at some time. Land to the side and rear could be under threat. There should be a comprehensive scheme for the whole of the site.
  8. If approved, a footpath/cycle track should be constructed along St Ives Road from The Pasture to the industrial estate.
  9. The land is green belt, and should not be built on.
  10. The land should be used for industrial purposes to provide employment.

## **7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES**

- 7.1 The issues in this case relate to the principle of the development; the impact the development will have on the character of the area; the highway considerations; the impact on existing and proposed occupants and drainage.

### **Principle of the development**

- 7.2 The application site is part of a larger (2.5ha) area of land allocated for employment purposes (Classes B1 and B2) in policy E3 of the 1995 Local Plan. It is also within the village limits shown on the Local Plan Inset Map for Somersham. Prior to this application, no proposals have been forthcoming to develop the land for these or any other purposes since its allocation. The proposed residential care home is a Class C2 Residential Institution use; as such it is not within the range of uses for which the site is allocated and the proposal is a departure from the provisions of the development plan. The 1995 Local Plan does not have a policy safeguarding allocated employment sites from other forms of development so in terms of that plan proposals for other uses are treated on their merits. This proposal is on a site that has not been developed for the allocated use over a prolonged period, including a period of economic growth; the proposal will generate significant employment and it would not, even in the absence of a comprehensive scheme for the site, prejudice the development of the remainder of the site for appropriate

employment uses. The remaining land would mainly lie between the proposed development and housing on The Pasture so a Class B2 use might not be suitable in this area. Policy CS5 of the Local Plan is specific to the development of facilities for health and social care. It states that these will normally be permitted subject to environmental and traffic considerations. The site is considered to be suitable for this use. The size of the proposed care home suggests that it would cater for needs arising from a wider area than just Somersham but this would be compatible with the identification of the village as a 'Key Service Centre' in the Submission Core Strategy.

- 7.3 The site is shown on the Proposals Map which accompanied the withdrawn 2006 Core Strategy and the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement as an unimplemented employment allocation. The allocation will be reviewed in the preparation of the site specific Planning Proposals DPD later this year, after the Core Strategy has been resolved.
- 7.4 Policy H10 of the Interim Planning Policy Statement HIPPS allows nursing homes to be developed in the defined limits of Market Towns and Key Centres (Somersham was identified as a Key Centre - Limited Growth) provided that shopping, community and medical facilities can be reached easily by those without access to a car, as appropriate for the level of mobility of potential residents. The policy allows development on a scale which would not normally be allowed for general housing, recognising that specialist accommodation often requires a minimum number of units to be viable and that a rural location may sometimes be appropriate in addressing the care needs of the residents. The site is in the Settlement Boundary for Somersham shown in the Proposals map which accompanied the withdrawn Core Strategy of 2006 and remains relevant to some settlements and policies in the Interim Planning Policy Statement. It is about 700m from the village centre, which is considered to be an acceptable walking distance to facilities. As recommended by the Local Highway Authority, any permission should be subject to a condition requiring the provision of a footway along the site frontage and extending to link with the existing footway network.
- 7.5 The Submission Core Strategy, which is the most up to date statement on settlement policies, uses a written definition of what constitutes the 'built-up area' for all settlements. The site is part of a large area of undeveloped land which is clearly not within the built-up area. But for the reasons set out above it is considered that the principle of this use in this location is acceptable.

#### **Impact on the character of the area**

- 7.6 The development will have an impact on the character of the area, given that the site is presently an open field. Although all matters of detail are reserved for subsequent approval, the drawings submitted with the application show sufficient information for the application to be determined in accordance with current regulations. The drawings show an approximate location for the building, together with dimensions giving the lengths, width and maximum height. The drawings submitted with the application show that the proposed building will be set back from the road frontage, and that additional landscaping will be provided between it and the frontage hedge. This

scale of development is acceptable in the context of this large site, and there will be ample space around the building for it not to appear cramped in its setting. The amount of floor area proposed is substantial, but it will be broken down into a series of individual wings, and this will reduce the overall visual impact. The wings will be arranged around a central entrance feature (maximum height of 12m) – a common feature of many modern buildings. Additional planting will help to break up the outline of the building, and soften visual impact.

- 7.7 Whilst this building will be different from the adjoining properties, it is considered that a development of the scale, appearance and location proposed will not have an adverse impact on the character of the locality. Development on this site can be seen as a self contained unit, and there is no reason why it should follow the style of the existing buildings. High quality design is encouraged by PPS1, and Authorities are encouraged not to stifle innovation or originality. There is no reason why a modern style, two storey building would be inappropriate in this location. The proposal will be consistent with the requirements of policies ENV7 of the East of England Plan, En25 of the Local Plan, HL5 of the Local Plan Alteration and B1 of the Interim Policy Statement.

### **Highway Considerations**

- 7.8 The Local Highway Authority has no objection to the proposal, and the recommended requirements can be dealt with at the detailed application stage, or through the imposition of conditions. A development of this type is unlikely to generate a high volume of traffic, and will not attract large vehicles in the same way that a B1 or B2 use would. 38 parking spaces are shown on the indicative layout plan although more could be provided if necessary without there being an adverse impact on the location of the buildings, or the provision of landscaping. A precise requirement cannot be established at this stage as the number of full time employees present on the site at any one time is not known with certainty. However, assuming a three shift working pattern, in accordance with the provisions of policy T2 and Appendix 1 of the Interim Policy Statement no more than about 20 spaces should be provided for employees and 20 for residents. This gives a total of 40 spaces overall, whereas 38 are indicated. It is considered that the site can accommodate the appropriate number of parking spaces for the proposed development. The amount of traffic generated by the development should not have an adverse impact on traffic using St Ives Road. The development conforms to policies T1 and T2 of the Interim Policy Statement.

### **Amenity of existing and proposed occupants**

- 7.9 The amount of noise and disturbance generated by the development will not be high. The nearest residential properties are on the other side of St Ives Road, and should not be significantly affected. The site is close to the West Newlands industrial estate end and there is the potential for noise and disturbance from present or future industrial uses to adversely affect the amenity of residents in the residential care home. The issue has been investigated by acoustic consultants and it is considered that the impact should be at a level which can be

considered in the detailed design of the new building. The proposal conforms to policy B4 of the Interim Policy Statement.

## **Drainage**

- 7.10 Notwithstanding the Parish Council's concern, technical consultations have not indicated any surface water drainage issues. The proposal complies with policies CS8 of the Local Plan and P10 of the Interim Policy Statement.

## **Conclusions**

- 7.11 The proposal is a departure from the development plan which allocates the site for employment uses in Classes B1 and B2. Notwithstanding this, it would be appropriate to grant planning permission because the site has not been developed for the allocated use over a prolonged period; the proposal will generate significant employment; it would not, even in the absence of a comprehensive scheme for the site, prejudice the development of the remainder of the site for appropriate employment uses and it would comply with policies relating to the proposed use, namely policy CS5 of the Local Plan and H10 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007. In other respects the proposal complies with the Development Plan policies referred to above, and there are no overriding reasons why outline planning permission should not be granted. Even though the application is a departure from the Development Plan, for the reasons set out above, it is considered that approval would not significantly prejudice the implementation of the development Plan policies and proposals. The application need not, therefore be referred to Council or Go-East.
- 7.12 Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that planning permission should be granted in this instance.

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

<b>01014</b>	Details reserved (all reserved)
<b>01003</b>	Reserved matters within three years
<b>01006</b>	Dates for commencement
<b>Nonstand</b>	Hedge retention
<b>06012</b>	Hard and soft landscape implementation
<b>Nonstand</b>	Tree/hedge protection.
<b>Nonstand</b>	Closure of existing access



<b>Nonstand</b>	Access construction
<b>Nonstand</b>	Visibility splays
<b>Nonstand</b>	Footpath link.
<b>06017</b>	Landscape maintenance schedule
<b>Nonstand</b>	Archaeological work
<b>04001</b>	Details surface and foul water
<b>Nonstand</b>	Various access details

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

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 Alterations (2002)  
 Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007  
 Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy  
 2008

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