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p.p.s.

Phillips Planning Services Ltd.
Town Planning and Development Consultants

Our Ref: P04307

22 June 2012

Members of the Development Control Committee
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
Bedfordshire
SG17 5TQ

Dear Councillor

Development Control Committee 27 June 2012
Item 14 - Land at Bridge Farm, Ivel Road, Shefford, Ref 12/01125

We are writing to you in your capacity as a Member of the Development Control Committee and specifically in respect of the application that you will consider at the meeting on the 27th in respect of development at Bridge Farm, Ivel Road, Shefford.

Our client, own the land which lies to the east of the application site.

Our client has not raised objection to the application, but considers it important to raise the following issue with you.

The issue is that of the provision of an appropriate access from the application site to our clients land to the east.

Policy MA6 which guides the consideration of the current application states that the development of the site should be subject to:

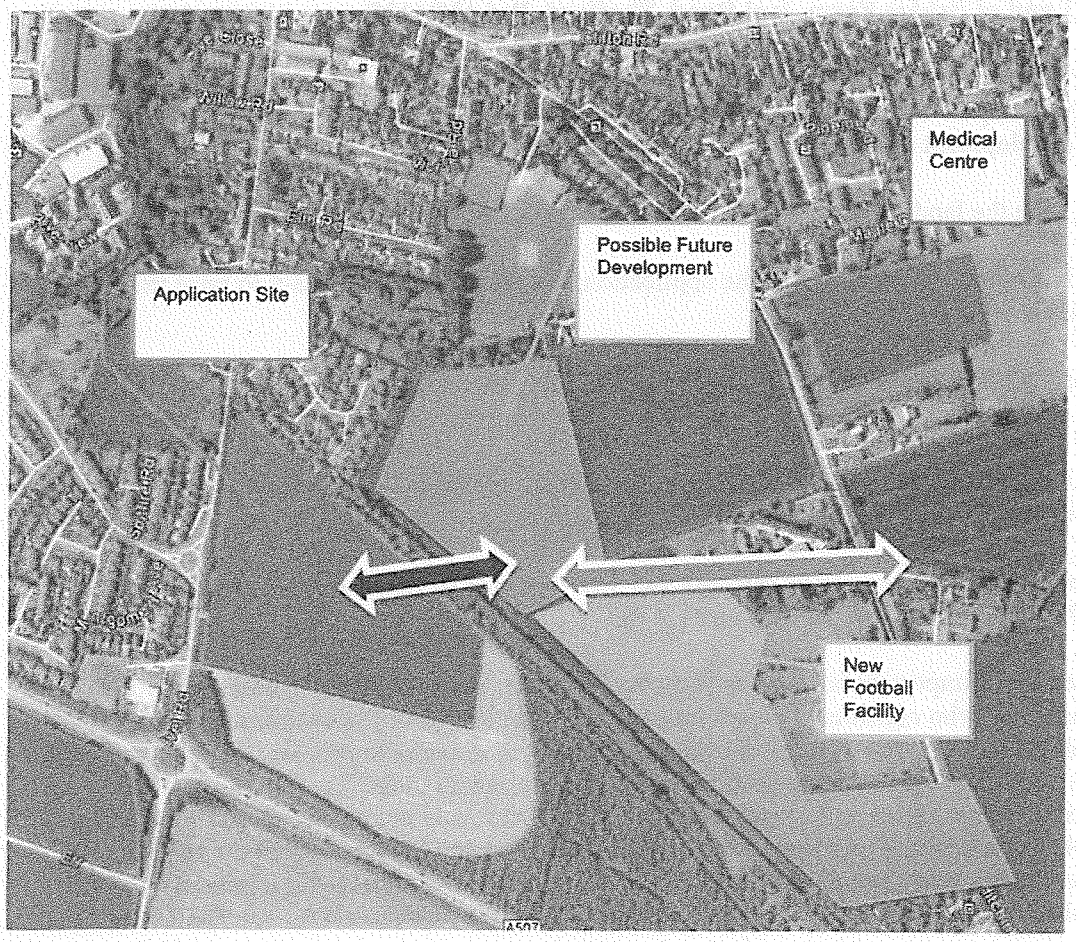
> ***A route to be safeguarded through the site in order to allow sufficient future access and services to land to the east and south.***

This requirement is important because as you may be aware, it was an element inserted by the Planning Inspector who considered the allocation of the site as part of the examination of the then draft plan. The Inspector included the link requirement in response to concerns from local residents, in particular those living in neighbouring Queen Elizabeth Close. The Queen Elizabeth Close residents had submitted representations to the effect that should our clients land ever come forward for development any link from the site to Ivel Road should be taken through the current application site rather than through Queen Elizabeth Close itself. (Our client owns a property in Queen Elizabeth Close which would be demolished to provide the link)

www.phillips-planning.co.uk
E-Mail: info@phillips-planning.co.uk
Kingsbrook House
7 Kingsway, Bedford, MK42 9BA
Registered in England No. 2696302
Tel: 01234 272829 Fax: 01234 271412

The layout which is before you for consideration, whilst showing a link in principle, has not been designed to the Central Bedfordshire standard for a link road of the nature envisaged and does not therefore comply with the requirements of Policy MA6. (I refer you to the comments of our clients Highway Consultant which are attached.) In essence the link shown is only 5 – 5.5 metres wide but the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide 'Movement, Streets and Places' which sets out current standards for new highways requires that main streets, which 'form part of the more strategic route network', must have a carriageway width of 6.25m where they are on bus routes.

To provide some context to this matter, should our clients land ever come forward for development it is likely to accommodate 150 – 200 houses (shown orange below) and its main access would be taken from a partially implemented roundabout access off Hitchin Road to the east. (Purple arrow) This access has been recently constructed in compliance with the necessary standards to provide access to the new Shefford Football facility. (Green) 300 children will utilise this facility. As you may also be aware Shefford Medical Centre opened on Hitchin Road in 2011 and is a key destination within the settlement.(Light Blue) Finally, Samuel Whitbread Community College have plans to provide a new access from Hitchin Road to assist in removing coach traffic from the existing frontage in Shefford Road.



Therefore we consider it very likely that should any link be provided in the future from the site to our clients land (Black Arrow) it will quickly become a desirable route for residents coming from the west of the town via Old Bridgeway and Churchill Way seeking to access the Medical Centre, Football facility, potentially the school or simply just avoid the congestion within Ivel Road, High Street and on Clifton Road.

It is our submission that the proposed link should be increased in width to 6.25 metres such that it would accord with Central Bedfordshire standards and recently adopted policy for a link of this nature.

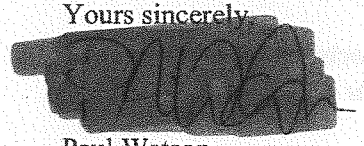
In addition to the increase in width we suggest that the link should be provided or if not physically provided, then the safeguarded route should be adopted up to the boundary with our clients land. If the link is not secured in this way then it is never likely to come forward as if our clients land is developed this will simply be accessed from Hitchin Road with a potential link through Queen Elizabeth Close.

For clarity we would ask that members impose relevant conditions to:

1. Require a minimum link road width of 6.25 metres: and
2. Require the safeguarded route to be adopted up to the eastern boundary

Thank you for considering these points.

Yours sincerely



Paul Watson
PHILLIPS PLANNING SERVICES

Phil Jones Associates
Transport Planning Consultants

Innovation Centre · 1 Devon Way
Longbridge Technology Park · Birmingham · B31 2TS
T 0121 222 5422 · F 0121 222 5423
admin@philjonesassociates.co.uk
www.philjonesassociates.co.uk

Mr P Watson
Phillips Planning Services
7 Kingsway,
Bedford,
MK42 9BA

21 June 2012

Our ref: 108

Dear Paul

Shefford: Applications Ref CB/12/01125/FULL and CB/12/01123/OUT

As requested, I have now reviewed the Officer's report on the above applications. It is extremely disappointing that the Planning Authority has seen fit to ignore our submissions on the important matter of the design of the internal highways to properly allow for a connection through the site, which is required by planning policy.

I note that the Environmental Health Officer has been consulted on the impacts of the future link, and he has stated that there will be no noise impacts. Firstly, it is not clear how he could have come to such a view as there are no traffic flow forecasts for the connection.

More importantly, however, our view is that residents will object to this future link on much wider grounds than noise. Our experience is that concerns will be raised by residents on the impact of the connection on road safety, parked vehicles and on their general amenity, as well as property values. These matters have clearly not been properly considered by the planning authority in making such a narrow response.

Moreover, given the policy background, it is very surprising that the highway authority has made no mention of the connectivity issue in its consultation response. This is a serious omission on their part and is in my view a derogation of their duty to plan properly for the future development of the settlement.

The planning officer states on Page 152:

With regard to the width of the road, the proposal is considered sufficient to serve the development as proposed. The adjoining land has no planning status and it is not known at this stage the quantums of development that my come forward.

Notwithstanding the fact that this statement fails to give sufficient weight to policy MA6, I find this to be a very narrow assessment of the design parameters for the connection. The suggestion that the width of the road is dependent on the amount of development that will be directly served by it completely misses the point.

As you correctly pointed out in your letter of 8th May, the amount of traffic using the link will be significant as it will form a strategic connection between the western and eastern parts of Shefford, as well as places beyond. If it is not designed properly, with the benefit of sensible forward planning, it will be inevitably be termed a potential 'rat run' and will be strongly resisted at the time by local residents and therefore elected members.

The planning and highway authorities have an opportunity here to carry out some sensible future planning, to the benefit of the town as a whole, as the link will help to provide traffic relief to the town centre. At the moment they appear to be wasting that opportunity. Moreover, in the absence of this connection, access to the future development may need to be gained from Queen Elizabeth Close, which is likely to cause some concerns amongst existing residents.

In conclusion I would refer the attention of the planning and highway authorities to paragraph 3.6.19 of Manual for Streets, which deals precisely with this issue:

3.6.19 When developing outline masterplans for large-scale proposals, such as an urban extension, the design team needs to consider the longer-term vision for the area in question. Such a future-proofing exercise involves looking beyond the usual planning periods to consider where development may be in, say, 20 or 30 years. The issues identified may influence the masterplan. An example would be allowing for the future growth of a settlement by continuing streets to the edge of the site so that they can be extended at a later date (Fig. 3.8). This principle also applies to smaller-scale schemes which need to take account of future development proposals around an application site and, where appropriate in discussions with the local planning authority, to ensure that linkages are established wherever possible and that the site is swiftly integrated into its surroundings.

Yours sincerely

Phil Jones
Director

25 June 2012
CAPL249054/A3/CC/TE

savills

Members of Central Bedfordshire Development Management Committee

Colin Campbell BSc DipTP MRTPI
E: ccampbell@savills.com
DL: +44 (0) 1223 347068
F: +44 (0) 1223 347111

Unex House
132-134 Hills Road
Cambridge CB2 8PA
T: +44 (0) 1223 347 000
savills.com

Dear Councillor

CB/12/01125/FUL and CB/12/01123/OUTLINE, Bridge Farm, Ivel Road, Shefford

1. We refer to the above planning applications and the committee reports which are being considered at the Council's Development Management Committee on 27th June 2012. We write on behalf of Mr and Mrs Foster and Polehanger Farm who own land adjacent and to the east and south of the application sites, including the 6.5 hectares of woodland to the east. Mr and Mrs Foster have previously promoted the development of the whole area between Ivel Road, Shefford Road and the A507.

2. We consider that the committee reports do not fully set out the issues in relation to Policy MA6 of the Adopted Development Plan and its consideration of the issues surrounding the requirement to provide access and services to land in the east and south. We also write regarding the approach to S106 in relation to the planning application.

Access to land to the east and south

3. Policy MA6 requires "a route to be safeguarded through the site in order to allow sufficient future access and services to land to the east and south". The purpose behind this policy requirement is to ensure the proper planning of Central Bedfordshire and to facilitate the delivery of sustainable development. Central Bedfordshire is a predominantly rural district, with a small number of market towns and large villages. The supply of previously developed land in sustainable locations is limited and therefore it is inevitable that green field land will be required in order to meet future development needs in the most sustainable way. The consequence of that background is that the inspector into the Site Allocations DPD inserted a requirement in Policy MA6 to ensure that land to the east and south of the application sites could come forward in the future should that land be required. In order to ensure that land can be delivered at some point in the future, the Council needs to ensure that there are sufficient safeguards in granting planning permission at Bridge Farm to ensure that development is not hindered in the future. At present the committee report fails to fully explain the issues to members and indeed only appears to refer to safeguarding access to land to the east and south and does not refer to the need for services to be safeguarded as required by Policy MA6. As matters stand, and without a requirement that the developer provides roads and services up to the boundary of the planning application sites, it is likely that future development to the south and east could be hindered. We submit that is not in the interests of the proper planning of sustainable development in the area and as a consequence it is contrary to the intentions of the development plan and to the National Planning Policy Framework which places a positive obligation on local authorities to achieve sustainable development.

4. If the Inspector into the Site Allocations Development Plan Document had intended these issues all to be left to future consideration he would not have inserted this second bullet point to Policy MA6 which

imposes a positive obligation on the Council to ensure that sufficient provision is made for future access and services to facilitate delivery of land to the east and south.

5. The committee report in relation to CB/12/01123 advises that links to land to the east and south cannot be ensured as this is an outline application with all matters reserved and therefore it cannot be known at what point connections should be made. The requirement of the development plan specifically seeks to avoid such a situation and we consider this to be a significant weakness in the application and the decision making process. As we have already set out the Council is under a positive obligation to ensure the delivery of sustainable development and therefore it should not be permitting development unless it can be assured that the inspector's requirements have been met. If the development plan had intended that land in this area be treated differently there would have been no need for the inspector to insert the wording into the policy. As we have set out in our responses on the planning application in order to ensure the proper planning of sustainable development in the area a design exercise is required which considers the whole of this area including the land to the east and south to ascertain the most sustainable and appropriate form of the development and the connections between the sites.

6. Without ensuring this safeguard is in place an inspector, in the future, considering the deliverability of land to the east and south through the development plan process may well conclude that such land is not deliverable owing to the potential for the creation of a ransom by the Council's actions. This is clearly the situation which the Inspector who carried out the Examination into the Site Allocations DPD sought to avoid and therefore without ensuring such safeguards are in place the proposals are contrary to the adopted development plan which is seeking to facilitate the development in this area should it be required rather than to hinder it.

7. In our representations on application CB/12/01125 we raised a question regarding the status of the land at the end of the main spine road, which appears to be identified as open space/landscaping in the planning layout (SHEFF-02-100). The committee report does not discuss this issue but at present it would appear that forms part of the open space contribution and similarly could therefore be a barrier to future development to the east and south.

8. Condition 19 requires the implementation of a 5m landscape buffer strip along the southern and eastern edge. It needs to be made clear that this buffer should not prevent the provision of access and services to land to the east and south

S106

9. The committee report as it stands does not explain the level of contribution which would be required in order to accord with the Council's adopted Planning Obligations SPD. It is therefore not possible to arrive at a view as to whether the development is acceptable in planning terms. Nor does the Committee Report (or indeed the applications documentation) set out the level of open space which would be required arising from this level of development and therefore it is not possible to come to a view as to whether the S106 contributions for green infrastructure accord with policy. For example, the report on application CB/12/01125 states that contributions totalling £295,430 are required for green infrastructure, Forest of Marston Vale and Open Space, but contributions of just £97,000 have been offered, as the landowner has undertaken tree planting costing in the region of £68,000 "in recent years in the vicinity of the site".

10. In addition to that substantial shortfall in funding green infrastructure, it is unclear where the £68,000 of expenditure has taken place and there is no information on the planning to file to substantiate this. My clients are local landowners and are unaware of any planting of this scale in the vicinity of the site in recent years. It should be noted, for the avoidance of doubt, that the substantial area of planting which has taken place to the east and south of the application sites is on Mr & Mrs Foster's land and is not the land being referred to by the applicants. In the absence of information as to where this planting has taken place we do not see how this can be said to be directly related to the development nor that it can be taken into account in consideration of open space provision and green infrastructure arising out of the development. If the provision counts towards the green infrastructure requirements arising from these

proposals this application needs to secure public access to the area through the S106 agreement and put in place mechanisms for the management of the area and replacement planting should any trees/plants die, be removed, be seriously damaged or become diseased.

Recommendations of the reports

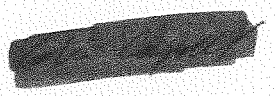
11. There is no reference in the report's recommendation regarding application CB/12/01125 of the need for the legal agreement to secure the provision of access and services to land to the east and south. This requirement needs to be explicitly referred to in the Council's decision.

12. There is no reference in the report's recommendation regarding application CB/12/01123 of the need for the legal agreement to secure the provision of services to land to the east and south. This requirement needs to be explicitly referred to in the Council's decision. Part 10 of the report does refer to securing access to the south, but does not cover securing services and does not cover securing access and services to the land to the east. It may be that the design and capacity of the access and services provide access to the both land to the east and south. Accordingly, the recommendation should explicitly refer to requiring the provision of access and services to land to the east and south.

Conclusions

13. There remain a number of important policy issues which are not dealt with adequately in the planning application documentation nor the committee report. We request that members defer the application until such a time as proper consideration has been given to ensuring that land to the east and south can be delivered at a point in the future should it be needed, in accordance with the requirements of the development plan and in accordance with the positive obligation placed on the planning authority to achieve sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Yours sincerely



Colin Campbell BSc DipTP MRTPI
Director

cc Cllr Anthony Brown
Cllr Lewis Birt
David Lamb