

UTT/1816/05/OP - LITTLE DUNMOW

Proposed extension to Oakwood Park addition of up to 162 dwellings to those approved under APP/C/1570/A/96/273656, UTT/0023/03/OP, UTT/0537/05/OP, associated site reclamation works, open space, highways, engineering and infrastructure works and landscaping

Location: Land adjacent to 27-63 Station Road & Land at former sugar beet works and sewerage treatment works. GR/TL 670-200.

Applicant: G L Hearn

Agent: Enodis Plc & Enodis Property.

Case Officer: Mr J Pine 01799 510460

Expiry Date: 02/01/2006

ODPM classification: MAJOR

NOTATION: The extreme NW part of the application site lies within Oakwood Park Development Limit to which Oakwood Park Local Policy 1 relates. The remaining land NW of Stebbing Brook and all of the land SE of the Brook lies beyond the Development Limit and also that of Felsted Village.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE: Oakwood Park is located about 3.5km E/SE of Great Dunmow and 1km W/NW of the centre of Felsted, just south of the Flitch Way Country Park, which runs along the route of the former railway from Braintree to Bishops Stortford. To the N/NW of the River Chelmer and Stebbing Brook, the Park consists of areas of completed housing and current house building, landscaping and areas of remediated and unremediated ground, the latter currently being used for soil storage. To the SE of Stebbing Brook and east of the River Chelmer lie the Sewage Treatment Works (STW), former settlement lagoons, bund material, and a nature reserve site. There is also an area of sloping agricultural land W/SW of existing houses in Station Road, the southernmost part of which is being used for topsoil storage.

The administrative boundary with Chelmsford Borough Council runs along the River Chelmer.

The application site is of an irregular shape. It consists of all the land to the SE of Stebbing Brook (excluding one small compound operated by the Environment Agency). To the NW of Stebbing Brook, the site consists of most of the remediated and unremediated ground and the landscaped margin along Station Road, and includes all the land within the Oakwood Park Development Limit forming part of the Phase 6 housing.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS: 162 dwellings would be erected as an extension to Phase 6, bringing the total number of dwellings permitted in outline at Oakwood Park to 1,000. These extra dwellings would increase the residential area of the Park from about 27 ha (67 acres) to 29.4 ha (73 acres). About 77 of the extra dwellings would be on reclaimed land N of Stebbing Brook, about 85 on the former agricultural land rear of 27-41 Station Road. All 162 dwellings would be beyond Development Limits. To accommodate the extra dwellings (which would include 40% affordable), changes would be required to the approved Masterplan. Accordingly, a draft new Masterplan has been submitted for approval, which also envisages the upgrading of the STW and consequent relaxation of the *cordon sanitaire* (see below). Some further community benefits are also proposed.

In addition to the 162 extra dwellings, the other changes and further community benefits are as follows:

- The community hall and playing fields as originally approved would be displaced by the 77 extra dwellings N of Stebbing Brook. The tongue of open space extending N to the village green would be remodeled at its southern end.
- The Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) would be relocated from S of the original location for the village hall to a position within the tongue of open space.
- The Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) would be relocated from N of the original location of the playing fields to a position on the W side of Station Road N of the new access that would be formed to serve the new dwellings behind Station Road.
- The playing fields would be relocated to the SE to part of the former agricultural land behind 35-63 Station Road and the STW. The area of the playing fields would be enlarged from 2.35 ha to 3.5 ha.
- The community hall / pavilion would be relocated to the rear of 57-63 Station Road, containing 2 badminton courts, changing rooms with kitchen and storage areas.
- An additional community building including a multi-use room for such events as pre-school groups and committee meetings would be provided on land N of Stebbing Brook close to the extra dwellings.
- The path between 35 & 37 Station Road would be upgraded.
- A new road serving the new dwellings behind Station Road, the community hall / pavilion and playing fields would be constructed between the proposed new STW and 63 Station Road.
- Removal of the existing STW structures and replacement with public open space, including additional pedestrian links across Stebbing Brook to the playing fields. In total, informal recreation areas would increase from about 18 ha to 22.5 ha.

APPLICANT'S CASE: A number of documents have been submitted by the applicant's agent and consultants. These are:

Planning Statement by G L Hearn (copy of Conclusions attached).

Draft new Masterplan by Novell Tullett

Landscape Report by Novell Tullett

Ecological Appraisal by Novell Tullett, containing an appraisal, desk study and development impact assessment of the proposed nature reserve, and an appraisal of the STW

Flood Risk Assessment by Millard

Transport Assessment by Millard

Sustainability Assessment by Millard

All these documents can be inspected at the District Council's Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden offices.

In addition, a Consultation Statement has been submitted by PPS, which is an independent public affairs company that specialises in community consultations relating to planning applications.

RELEVANT HISTORY: Outline planning permission for reclamation of despoiled land, demolition of redundant structures and erection of 650 dwellings was granted on appeal in 1998. Further outline planning permission to increase dwelling numbers to 810 was granted in 2004, following which an amended Masterplan was also approved later on in the year. In

2005 outline planning permission was again granted, this time to increase the dwelling numbers to 838. Under this last outline planning permission, Phase 6 would consist of 98 dwellings, and takes in all the residentially allocated land under Oakwood Park Local Policy 1 that is included within the established *cordon sanitaire*. The *cordon sanitaire* prevents building within 300m of the western boundary of the STW, but would be relaxed upon agreement between the developer and Anglian Water to replace or remove the STW.

Various sets of reserved matters (relating to Phases 1-5) and variations to conditions have been approved since 1998. A public inquiry is scheduled for January 2006 into 2 disapprovals of reserved matters for details of the local centre, in which there is a housing element.

Temporary use of agricultural land (rear of 35–63 Station Road) for the storage of dried topsoil recovered from adjoining settlement lagoons was allowed on appeal on 19/1/2000. A number of conditions were imposed, including discontinuance and restoration to its former condition by 1/4/2007. This date has been extended by renewal until 1/4/2009. This temporary use is now taking place. (*Note: the application site address was given as 35-63 Station Road, but the red edged plan included the land rear of 27-35 as well*).

An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development of Land (CLOPUD) has been submitted by Anglian Water to Essex County Council. This is to confirm whether the new STW can be constructed as Permitted Development.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS: The main Development Plan issues will be whether

- 1) **the location of the new dwellings would accord with the strategic sequential principles set out in the approved Structure Plan (ERSP Policy H2),**
- 2) **the proposed revisions to the Masterplan required to accommodate the new dwellings would be acceptable (ERSP Policies H3 and C5, ULP Policies S2 and S7),**
- 3) **the form of the new residential development would be appropriate (ERSP Policy H4)**
- 4) **the provision of affordable housing would be appropriate (ERSP Policy H5, ULP Policies H9 and H11),**
- 5) **there would be a material detrimental effect on residents of Station Road (ULP Policies GEN2 *Design*, GEN4 *Good Neighbourliness* and GEN5 *Light Pollution*),**
- 6) **highway dangers would be created (ERSP Policy T3 and ULP Policy GEN1),**
- 7) **the new housing would be in a sustainable location (ERSP Policies CS4&5),**
- 8) **flood risk would be caused (ULP Policy GEN3),**
- 9) **there would be a material detrimental effect upon existing landscape character, nature conservation or archaeology (ERSP Policies NR1, 5 and 6, HC5&6 and ULP Policies GEN7, ENV3, 4, 7&8)**

A further issue will be the weight to be attached to the applicant's financial viability case re the existing Phase 6, and the effect upon District housing completion rates

Background papers: see application file.
