

Case No: 1100025FUL (FULL PLANNING APPLICATION)

Proposal: REPLACEMENT OF GARAGING WITH PARKING COURT, LANDSCAPING AND REPOSITION OF EXTERNAL STORES AND BIN STORAGE AREA

Location: LAND AND BUILDINGS AT AND INCLUDING 1 TO 16 BROWNS SQUARE

Applicant: LUMINUS GROUP

Grid Ref: 518782 260141

Date of Registration: 28.01.2011

Parish: ST NEOTS

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The two sites subject of this application are both on land associated with a three storey block of flats known as '1 to 16 Browns Square' which are located within a residential area of St Neots and adjacent to St Neots Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The area of land located to the north east of the flats currently has 11 single storey flat roof garages and a small open parking area. The site also includes a small court yard with concrete sheds.
- 1.3 The other area of land located to the south of the site but within the curtilage of the flats is an area of under used land.
- 1.4 The application proposes to remove the 11 garages to provide an open parking area with 19 parking spaces and landscaping. An enclosed courtyard for bin storage will also be provided in an enclosed area close to the entrance of the flats.
- 1.5 A new metal security fence is proposed along part of the southern boundary to enclose an area where 6 concrete sheds and a drying area is proposed.
- 1.6 The site is within an area liable to flooding.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)**

2.2 **PPS5 - Planning for the Historic Environment (2010)** sets out the Government's planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment.

2.3 **PPS25 - Development and Flood Risk (2010)**

2.4 **PPG13 - Transport (2011)**

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** - 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.

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.

- No policies relevant to this application

3.3 **Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995)**

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

- **En5:** Conservation Area Character - development within or directly affecting conservation areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character and appearance.
- **En9:** Conservation Areas - development should not impair open spaces, trees, street scenes and views into and out of Conservation Areas.
- **En20:** Landscaping Scheme - Wherever appropriate a development will be subject to the conditions requiring the execution of a landscaping scheme.

- **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 adequate provision for landscaping and amenity areas.
- **CS9:** Flood water management – the District Council will normally refuse development proposals that prejudice schemes for flood water management.

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)

- No policies relevant to this application

3.5 **Adopted Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2009**

Policies from the Adopted Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2009 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning then click on Planning then click on Planning Policy and then click on Core Strategy where there is a link to the Adopted 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.

3.6 **Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010**

Policies from the Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010 are relevant.

- **E1:** “Development Context” – development proposals shall demonstrate consideration of the character and appearance of the surrounding environment and the potential impact of the proposal.
- **E3:** “Heritage Assets” – proposals which affect the District’s heritage assets or their setting should demonstrate how these assets will be protected, conserved and where appropriate enhanced.
- **H3:** “Adaptability and Accessibility” – the location and design of development should consider the requirements of users and residents that are likely to occur during the lifetime of the development.
- **H7:** “Amenity” – development proposals should safeguard the living conditions for residents and people occupying adjoining or nearby properties.

- **E10:** “Parking Provision” – car and cycle parking should accord with the levels and layout requirements set out in Appendix 1 ‘Parking Provision’. Adequate vehicle and cycle parking facilities shall be provided to serve the needs of the development.
- **C5:** “Flood Risk and Water Management” – development proposals should include suitable flood protection / mitigation to not increase risk of flooding elsewhere. Sustainable drainage systems should be used where technically feasible. There should be no adverse impact on or risk to quantity or quality of water resources.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 No planning history recorded

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **St Neots Town Council** – Recommendation **REFUSE**, due to the loss of amenity parking (**copy attached**).

5.2 **County Highways Engineer** – **NO OBJECTION**

5.3 **Environment Agency** – **NO OBJECTION**

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 **ONE** letter received from the occupier of No. 19 Browns Square who currently rents one of the garages and comments that it would result in a loss of parking and there would be no benefit from removing the garages.

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

7.1 The main issues to consider here are whether the proposal will have an impact upon the appearance and character of the surrounding area, neighbour amenity, highway safety, parking and any flood related issues.

Visual Amenity and Impact upon the Surrounding Area

7.2 The existing flat roof garages are mainly grouped together in a typical garage block arrangement. While the garages are structurally in a reasonable condition, it is considered they do not enhance the general appearance and character of the area. Additionally the applicant has confirmed the majority of the garages lay empty and under used.

7.3 It is however considered the new parking area will update the area and open up the space within the street scene. The proposed landscaped areas will soften the appearance of the hard surfacing and overall enhance the surrounding area and the wider Conservation Area.

7.4 The small concrete sheds and security fencing proposed on the southern end of the site will be sufficiently screened by the existing

hedge and there is no objection in this respect of the application in terms of the visual appearance of the proposal.

- 7.5 The application therefore complies with Policies En5, En9 and En25 of the Local Plan 1995, Policies E1 and E3 of the Development Management DPD, and PPS1 and PPS5.

Highway Safety and Parking

- 7.6 The information submitted by the applicant suggests the existing garages and parking bays provide 17 car parking spaces. Whilst this is maybe the case, some parking is available to the front of garages by the tenants. However, the information submitted in support of the application suggests the garages are under used.
- 7.7 The information within the design and access statement suggests the development will provide a net gain of 2 parking spaces to be used by all the local residents. As there is an increase of readily available parking provision here, there is no objection to the proposal in terms of the parking standards as set out in the Development Management DPD, Appendix 1, and parking provision.
- 7.8 The existing parking bays are currently in the ownership of the County Highways Authority. A letter confirming no objection to the 'stopping up' of this area is attached to the file. As the applicant does not own this area of the site a Certificate B has been served on the County Highways as a procedural requirement.
- 7.9 As the Highway Authority has expressed no objection, it is considered the application complies with Policy E10 and PPG13.

Neighbour Amenity

- 7.10 As discussed above the removal of the garages and reconfiguration of the court yard is considered to visually enhance the area. The parking area will also provide an open parking area for all of the local residents.
- 7.11 The one objector to the scheme has raised concern about the loss of the rented garage; however, the application seeks to open the area for all of the residents to park safely and conveniently.
- 7.12 As the use of the area mainly remains unchanged in terms of vehicles manoeuvring around the site, the proposal is not considered to be unduly harmful to the amenities of the local residents in terms of noise and disturbance. The application therefore complies with Policy H7 of the Development Management DPD.

Landscaping

- 7.13 The Landscaping scheme as shown on plan No. BSSN-PL-01 will assist in softening the hard surfacing area and reduce the potential dominance of vehicles within the street scene.
- 7.14 A soft and hard landscaping condition should be appended to the decision, as should a boundary treatment condition.

- 7.15 It is considered that the application complies with Policy EN20 of the Local Plan 1995.

Flood Issues

- 7.16 Whilst the site lies in area that is liable to flooding the Environment Agency have confirmed there is no objection to the proposal.

Conclusion

- 7.17 The application to remove the garages is considered to visually improve the appearance of the site and the character of the wider area. The open parking area will not impact upon highway safety and the new parking area will be available to all local residents, with minimal impact upon their amenities. The other minor alterations to the communal areas are also considered as a visual improvement to the overall character of the site within the street. There are no issues relating to flood risk. The application is therefore in accordance with Policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan, Policies En5, En9, En20, En25 and CS9 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995, Policy CS1 of the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Policies E1, E3, H7, E10 and C5 of Development Management DPD.

- 7.18 Having regard to applicable National and Local Planning Policies, and having taken all relevant consideration into account, it is recommended that planning permission should be approved in this instance.

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

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 02001 - | Time limit |
| Nonstand - | Details of all boundary treatment |
| Nonstand - | Soft and hard landscaping |

Background Papers:

Planning Application File Reference:
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003
Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration, 2002
Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy 2009
Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010

CONTACT OFFICER:

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