

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

7 March 2018

AUTHOR/S: Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

Application Number: S/0548/18/FL

Parish: Cambourne

Proposal: Enclose two external fire escape stairways on north elevation

Site address: South Cambridgeshire Hall, 6010, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne

Applicant: Michael Turner, South Cambridgeshire District Council

Recommendation: Approval

Key material considerations: Principle of development
Visual impact upon the local area

Committee Site Visit: N/A

Departure Application: No

Presenting Officer: Edward Durrant, Principal Planning Officer

Application brought to Committee because: The applicant is South Cambridgeshire District Council

Date by which decision due: 09 April 2018

Executive Summary

1. This full application seeks permission for the enclosure of two external stairways to that are located on the northern elevations of the Council's offices at Cambourne and requires specific planning consent as it would result in a material change to the appearance of the building.
2. The application site is located within the Development Framework of Cambourne and the principle of the proposed development is acceptable. The visual impact of the enclosures is not considered to have a detrimental impact upon the character of the building or a wider visual impact upon the setting of the Business Park.

Planning History

3. S/0320/15/FL - The provision of new solar photovoltaic (PV) canopy system, amendments to car park layout to accommodate the system and 10 additional parking spaces. Upgrade to existing cycle storage facilities and provision of roof mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) systems to existing cycle and refuse ancillary buildings –

Refused.

S/0951/08/F - Reconstruction of existing and construction of additional staff parking and associated landscaping works – South Cambridgeshire. Hall - Approved.

S/6147/02/RM - Council Offices, associated works and civic square - Approved

S/6136/01/O - Erection of three storey building for offices (B1 Use) or Council Offices for South Cambridgeshire District Council (Sui Generis Use)

National Guidance

4. National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan Policies

5. The extent to which any of the following policies are out of date and the weight to be attached to them is addressed later in the report.

South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD, 2007:

6. DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria

South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission - March 2014

HQ/1 Design Principles

Consultations

9. **Cambourne Parish Council** – Recommends approval and has suggested that public art be incorporated into the enclosures.
10. **Environmental Health Officer** – Has no objection.

Representations

11. No third part representations received.

Site and Surroundings

12. The site edged red has been drawn around the three storey office building known as South Cambridgeshire Hall, which occupies the westernmost plot of Cambourne Business Park. The building primarily accommodates District Council staff as well as officers from the County Council. To the west of the car park the boundary is well screened by semi-mature landscaping that was planted some fifteen years ago. To the north and south the landscaping is less dense and less mature as it was planted at the time South Cambs. Hall was built. The parcels of land to the north and south were identified as employment land under the original Cambourne masterplan, neither of which has as yet been developed.
13. The site is located within the Cambourne Village Framework and in addition to the

perimeter landscaping there are two strips of semi-mature landscaping between rows of parking spaces within the car park, and a further area of landscaping between the ancillary buildings and the cycle shelters. To the north of the building there are two external metal stairways that provide fire escape access to all three floors of the building. The easternmost stairway is taller and has a secure gate that allows access to the roof of the building. Both stairways are open to the east and west and are therefore easily accessible.

Proposed Development

14. The application proposes to enclose the eastern and western elevations of the two stairways and provide doors on the ground floor to allow the egress of occupiers of the building in the event of an emergency.
15. In the past few months there has been a number of instances of youths causing petty vandalism on the Park and this has included them gaining access to the roof via the open stairwells. The Council's insurance providers have requested that the stairwells be enclosed in order to limit any liability in the event of an accident involving an unauthorised person using the stairways.

Planning Assessment

16. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are the principle of development and whether there would be any detrimental impact to the visual appearance of the building that would impact negatively upon the character and appearance of the Business Park.

Principle of Development

17. South Cambridgeshire Hall is a contemporarily designed office building and the stairways are key features visually of the northern elevations of the building. The enclosure of the stairways will not have any impact upon the function or use of the building and therefore the principle of the development would be acceptable.

Design and Visual Impact

18. In 2015 an application was refused for photo voltaic panels on the Council's car park due to the detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the Business Park. The proposed means of enclosure would be similar to the metal mesh that presently defines the northern elevations of the two stairways. A photo has been provided of the proposed mesh but no specific product details given. Given that the proposed mesh material would be in keeping with the existing character and appearance of the building the development is not considered to have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the Business Park. A condition will be used to ensure that the material of the enclosure matches that of the existing mesh, as much as is reasonably practical.

Other matters

19. Cambourne Parish Council has suggested that the enclosed elevations could incorporate public art in order to break up the expanse of metal mesh. There would be no planning policy requirement for any public art on a development of this scale. Moreover, as the rear of the building is not an area where members of the public are encouraged to visit there is very little merit of installing any public art in this location.

Conclusion

20. Having considered the proposed development against the applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material into account, it is recommended that planning permission should be granted in this instance.

Recommendation

21. Approval subject to:

Conditions and Informatives

Planning conditions and informatives as set out below, with the final wording of any amendments to these to be agreed in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair prior to the issuing of planning permission:

Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development, which have not been acted upon.)
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: drawing numbers 1392-PL001 Rev P1 and 3126 (Staircase Enclosure).
(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the enclosures shall either match, or be similar to, those used for the existing building, or shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. Where materials are approved by the Local Planning Authority, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason – To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Background Papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission 2014
- Planning File Reference: S/0548/18/FL

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