

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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### **S/1907/05/O - Longstanton**

### **Erection of Two Bungalows, Land at Clive Hall Drive/Mills Lane for D J Harradine**

#### **Recommendation: Refusal**

**Date for determination: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2005**

#### **Departure Application**

#### **Conservation Area**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The 0.25 ha site lies to the north-east of the junction of Mills Lane and Clive Hall Drive and has a frontage to both roads. The site is pastureland, surrounded on its boundaries with hedgerows and young trees. There is a wooden shed close to Clive Hall Drive. Directly opposite, to the north-west, there are two dwellings fronting Mills Lane. Further along Mills Lane, to the north-east, there is a group of three dwellings and a caravan park. Oakington Barracks lies beyond these to the north-west. To the south and south-west there are detached dwellings in Clive Hall Drive, and to the south east, there is Badger's Holt mobile home park.
2. The outline application, received on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2005 proposes the erection of 2 bungalows on the site. All detailed matters are reserved for subsequent approval. The density proposed is 8 dwellings per hectare. A Planning, Design and Access Statement has been submitted with the application.

#### **Planning History**

3. The site has a long history of refusals for residential development dating back to 1975. Two applications in 1994 and 1997 were withdrawn prior to the issue of decision notices refusing planning permission and in 1999 a single bungalow was refused on the south-east half of the site.
4. The Inspector, when reviewing the Deposit Local Plan in January 2002, considered a representation from the applicant for development of this site for a small group of 6 or so houses. He rejected the idea, commenting, "I have supported the infill-only approach to Longstanton St. Michaels. It would be inconsistent with that view to support extension of the larger village framework to include undeveloped land without the character of an infill plot which could not be developed at an appropriate density without exceeding 2 dwellings".
5. Planning permission for the erection of three dwellings on the site was refused by Members on 13<sup>th</sup> May this year, following a site visit (**S/0475/05/O**). The reason for refusal was:

1. The site is located in the countryside and residential development is contrary to the following Policies:
  - (a) Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 which restricts development in the countryside to proposals which can demonstrate an essential need for a particular rural location. No essential need has been demonstrated in this case; and
  - (b) Policies SE8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and Policy Longstanton 5 of the Inset Map No 67, in that the development is not infilling by no more than two dwellings within the physical framework of Longstanton as defined on the Inset Map. The country lane character of Mills Lane would be eroded and development in this location would make it difficult to resist further similar proposals, which cumulatively would damage both the rural character of this part of Longstanton and undermine policies aimed at protecting the countryside from unnecessary development.
6. The applicant has lodged an appeal against this decision, which is to be considered at an informal hearing.

### **Planning Policy**

7. The site is outside the village framework defined in the 2004 Local Plan. The site is included within the extended Conservation Area for Longstanton which has been designated following a period of public consultation and was adopted by Full Council as Council policy on 22<sup>nd</sup> September this year.
8. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 states: development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposal can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
9. **Policy P7/6** (Historic Built Environment) Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
10. **Policy SE8** of the 2004 Local Plan states: there is a general presumption in favour of residential development within village frameworks. Residential development outside these frameworks will not be permitted.
11. **Policy SE9** (Village Edges) - development on the edge of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the countryside.
12. **Policy CS5** (Flood Protection) - planning permission will not be granted where the site is likely to increase flood risk unless it can be demonstrated that the effect can be overcome by appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures.
13. **Policy EN30** (Development in Conservation Areas) – proposals in conservation areas will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area, especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. Schemes that do not specify traditional local materials or details that do not fit comfortably into their context will not be permitted. Applications should be accompanied by sufficient details to allow their impact on the conservation area to be assessed.

14. **Policy Longstanton 5** states development in Longstanton St Michael's will be restricted to infilling within the built-up framework of the village. The supporting text states "in particular, the country lane character of St Michael's Lane and Mills Lane will be retained..."

### **Consultations**

15. **Longstanton Parish Council** recommends approval, provided that only two bungalows are built on this plot of land.
16. **Council's Conservation Manager** recommends refusal of the proposal as it provides no details of the appearance of the development and, notwithstanding this, he considers that the proposal would be harmful to the separation of the Longstanton with the proposed new development at Northstowe.
17. **Environment Agency** objects to the proposal as it provides insufficient information on proposals for both surface water and foul water drainage. For this reason the application fails to conform to Policy CS5.

### **Representations**

18. 17 letters of support for the proposal have been received. These comment that:
- a) A modest and sensible addition to the housing stock at this end of the village.
  - b) It is a logical extension to the Clive Hall Drive housing development.
  - c) This will screen the mobile home park from residents in Mills Road.
  - d) A very appropriate spot that should not cause any problems to neighbours or villagers.
  - e) Complies with infill criteria for this part of Longstanton.
  - f) There is a shortage of this type of bungalow development in this part of Longstanton.
  - g) Government encourages local families to remain within their villages.
  - h) This will fit in well and will 'straighten' the village envelope adjacent to the well established hedge on the northern boundary.
  - i) SCDC has allowed other developments in the countryside and outside the framework of Longstanton, which already override its own policies.
19. 3 letters of objections to the proposal have been received, on the grounds that:
- a) The development would nullify the conception of a buffer strip of land/green belt between Longstanton and the proposed new town.
  - b) This would not protect the rural nature of this part of the village.
  - c) Reduction of green space in the village.
  - d) Increase in congestion and traffic in the area.

- e) Inappropriate for a Conservation Area.
- f) Outside the development framework, contrary to policies SE4, SE8 and Longstanton 5.
- g) Sufficient dwellings are being constructed in Longstanton to cater for local need.
- h) Loss of good agricultural land.
- i) Harmful ribbon development.
- j) A few years ago the owner planted hedge plants and trees in a line across his land parallel to Clive Hall boundary, artificially creating potential 'plots' either side of the field access. The agent has submitted a planning, design and access statement.

## 20. Agent's Representations

In support of the application, the agent states that:

- a) Since the existing village framework boundary was drawn, the appearance of the site has changed because of the establishment of a mature hedgerow, which provides a visual screen when viewed from the north.
- b) The site is not designated as a Protected Village Amenity Area, so its retention as undeveloped land is not considered important.
- c) There would not be any material harm to the setting of the village of Longstanton or the existing conservation area.
- d) The proposals represent a desire for a rural-based worker to live nearer to their place of work. There is an identified social need in recognising a requirement for special needs housing in a rural location.
- e) The height and scale of the development will be consistent with neighbouring dwellings.
- f) There will be no access onto Mills Road, so preserving its 'country lane' character.
- g) The proposal amounts to infill, in accordance with Policy Longstanton 5.
- h) The application is accompanied by an indicative layout plan showing the possible siting of two bungalows.

## Planning Comments

### *Village Framework*

- 21. The site is outside the village framework defined in the 2004 Local Plan and its development for residential purposes would be contrary Policy SE8 and to the specific Policy Longstanton 5 which seeks to retain the "country lane" character of Mills Lane by restricting developments to infilling (i.e. no more than 2 dwellings) within the village framework. The Inspector in 2002 refused to accept that the site could be considered as

an infill plot, and since then the circumstances on which this assessment was based have not changed significantly.

22. The case for an exception to be made in this case is based upon the assessment that there will be no material harm to the country lane character as a result of the development. The site is part of an extensive open and green area which creates a strong rural setting to the village. The erection of two bungalows and the various paraphernalia associated with domestic use would fundamentally alter the character and appearance of the site and its contribution to the setting of the village. In refusing planning application S/0475/05/O, Members accepted that the development of the site for three dwellings would cause harm to the character of the area, and the same concern applies to the current proposal as the openness of the site would be destroyed in a similar way.
23. If allowed, this development would provide a precedent for development on other sites outside village frameworks, to the progressive detriment of the appearance of the countryside.

### ***Conservation Area***

24. The site lies within the recently designated extension to the Longstanton Conservation Area. The supporting statement of the report describes the open land between Mills Lane and St Michael's as 'very important to the landscape settling of the village'. Development of the site would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This is an additional material consideration which adds weight to the refusal of planning permission dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

### ***Drainage***

25. The Environment Agency has lodged an objection based on the lack of information of drainage proposals supplied with the application. This is capable of resolution and I note that the Agency did not object to application reference S/0475/05/O. The site is not within a high or medium risk flood zone. In itself this objection would not justify the refusal of the application.

### ***Representations***

26. The considerations put forward by the agent and supporters of the proposal have been carefully considered. For the reasons set out above I do not consider that any amounts to an overriding reason to allow the proposed development contrary to well established policies designed to protect the countryside from non-essential development and the appearance and character of the Conservation Area.

### ***Recommendation***

27. Refusal for the following reasons:
  1. The site is located in the countryside and residential development is contrary to the following Policies:
    - (a) Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 which restricts development in the countryside to proposals which can demonstrate an essential need for a particular rural location. No essential need has been demonstrated in this case; and

- (b) Policies SE8 and Longstanton 5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 in that the development is not infilling within the physical framework of Longstanton as defined on the Inset Map No 67. The country lane character of Mills Lane would be eroded and development in this location would make it difficult to resist further similar proposals, which cumulatively would damage both the rural character of this part of Longstanton and undermine policies aimed at protecting the countryside from unnecessary development.
2. The site lies within the extended Longstanton Conservation Area. Notwithstanding the inadequate standard of the information of the development proposals submitted with the application, the Local Planning Authority considers that the erection of two dwellings on this land would neither preserve nor enhance the existing landscape setting of the village and the rural character and open appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. For these reasons, the proposal would be contrary to Policy P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
3. Notwithstanding the above reasons for refusal, the proposal does not contain sufficient information of surface water and foul water drainage to enable the impact of the development on the environment to be assessed. For this reason, the proposal does not conform to Policy CS5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning file Refs. S/1907/05/O and S/0475/05/O.

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