

## **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/1203/05/LB and S/1204/05/F - Abington Pigotts**

**(1) Alterations and Conversion of Barns to 2 Dwellings Comprising (Plot 1) One, 5 Bedroomed Dwelling with Extensions for Library Projecting Drawing Room Window and Family Room, and (Plot 2) One, 3 Bedroomed Dwelling with Extensions for Porch, Playroom and Kitchen and 4 Covered Parking Bays. Alteration, Conversion and Rebuilding of Barn (Plot 3) to Form 4 Bedroom Single Storey Dwelling with Projecting External Steps and Window. Conversion of Granary to Studio/Workshop. New Attached Fences and Gates. Extension of Farmhouse Boundary Wall**

**(2) Extension and Conversion of Agricultural Buildings into 3 Dwellings, Together with the Erection of Cartlodge with Workshop Over, Fences, and Gates, Home Farm, High Street For Mr D Ivey**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for Determination: 12<sup>th</sup> August 2005**

#### **Departure Application**

#### **Conservation Area**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. Home Farm is situated on the north-eastern edge of the village. It consists of a listed farmhouse, with an informal courtyard of barns adjoining to the north-east. The north eastern range of barn, cartshed and granary are listed in their own right, the other historic barn curtilage listed barns on the south-eastern and north-eastern boundaries of the site are predominantly Victorian, those on the north-west and south-west modern. The older barns are clad in timber boarding and roofed in corrugated iron, the exception is the granary which is roofed in slate. The barns also have a number of small modern additions.
2. Fronting the site and running to the rear of the barns is an overgrown historic moat. Vehicular access to the courtyard is between Home Farmhouse and the barns. The north-eastern boundary of the site is marked by a farm track which has its own access to High Street.
3. To the north-west of the site is agricultural land and to north-east a bungalow belonging to the application's mother. Home Farmhouse itself and a modern granary to its rear are on the south-western boundary.
4. The full and listed building applications, received on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2005 and amended on the 6<sup>th</sup> October and the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2005 primarily proposes the conversion and extension of the historic barns to 3 dwellings with the erection of a cartlodge with workshop over. Accompanying the application are a planning statement, design statement and a report on potential alternative uses.

5. Unit 1 will be created from the tall listed barn at the northern end of the site. Modern lean-to additions to the north-west and east elevations are to be removed. A lean-to extension and a small projecting bay window are added to the eastern elevation. Accommodation is arranged on 2 floors to create a 5 bedroom dwelling. A cart lodge with workshop over is proposed within its curtilage on the site of existing pig pens.
6. Unit 2 occupies the remainder of the range of barns on the north eastern boundary. Again 2 storey, 3-4 bedrooms will be created with small lean-to extensions being added to the eastern and western elevations. In the existing single storey element of the barn a workshop/studio and 2 parking spaces will be provided.
7. Unit 3 utilises the lower detached barn on the site frontage, the granary and the adjoining cart lodge to provide a 4-bedroom dwelling. A modern appendage on its roadside elevation is removed and a small projecting bay window and external stairs added to the east elevation. New oak columns support the roof on part of the courtyard elevation. The Granary is converted to a studio workshop and 2 parking spaces provided in the adjoining cart lodge.
8. Three residential curtilages will be formed on site involving the realignment of the farm access track on the eastern boundary with extensive tree planting, and the creation of a courtyard with a shared access area.
9. Various modern agricultural buildings and silos will be removed in the process. The modern granary building to the rear of Home Farm currently accessed through the courtyard will have a new opening created in its south-western gable enabling it to be accessed via the farm track on the eastern boundary.
10. In support of the application it is stated that the existing former agricultural barns are no longer suitable for agricultural purposes and alternative use is sought to safeguard their future. They have been redundant since 1997. This is important, especially given their Grade II status. An opportunity is presented to improve the visual appearance of the Conservation Area and the approach to Abington Pigotts itself by the removal of a number of unsightly, redundant structures. The structures are sound and capable of domestic conversion, without the need for major reconstruction, whilst acknowledging important repairs are required.
11. The report on potential alternative uses for the barns concludes:
  1. The agents letting experience shows that it would be extremely difficult to obtain pre-lets in the current market for any commercial use. Even if pre-lets were achieved for commercial uses the financial appraisals show that none of the schemes are economically viable. Therefore undertaking a marketing campaign for commercial use cannot be justified. Furthermore, any such use would generate an unacceptable level of traffic movements in the village.
  2. Holiday lets are difficult to justify financially, particularly in the early years when occupancy rates are unknown and it takes time to establish a customer base. There is an on-going maintenance cost.
  3. Activity and leisure uses are not suitable in terms of impact on the surrounding area and alternative competition.
  4. A livery yard would create a substantial number of traffic movements to and from the site. The cash flow is heavily negative and it would be difficult to justify the expenditure based projected returns.
  5. Residential conversions, incorporating some studio/workshop space to create live/work units, is considered the optimum use for the buildings, both financially and in terms of sustainability.

## Planning History

12. There is no relevant planning history

## Planning Policy

13. The application site is outside but adjoining the village framework. The buildings are within the Conservation Area.

The following policies are relevant: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:

Policy P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development).

Policy P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development).

Policy P5/5 (Homes in Rural Areas)

Policy P7/2 (Biodiversity)

Policy P7/6 (Historic Built Environment).

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:

Policy SE9 (Village Edges)

Policy HG10 (Housing Mix and Design)

Policy EM10 (Employment in the Countryside (Conversions of Rural Buildings)

Policy EN5 (Landscaping of New Development)

Policy EN12 (Nature Conservation Unidentified Sites)

Policy EN14 (Protected Species (Bats/Barn Owls)

Policy EN15 (Development Affecting Archaeological Sites)

Policy EN22 (Conditions to Protect the Fabric and Character of Listed Buildings)

Policy EN26 (The Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses) and

Policy EN27 (Application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent).

Policy EN28 (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)

Policy EN30 (Development in Conservation Areas)

14. Paragraph 10.71 of Policy EN27 states in relation to barn conversions:

“Inevitably, the first alternative use examined for a vacant farm building is residential and this poses a number of problems, especially when the building forms part of a farm complex and is situated in an isolated position in open countryside. Aisled timber framed barns are difficult to light without constructing new openings or peppering the roof with skylights. The alterations required for such conversions would frequently have an unacceptable impact on the barn’s appearance. Recreational or commercial uses might be more suitable, particularly where the need to obtain daylight inside the building is less important”.

## Consultation

15. **Abington Pigotts Parish Meeting** has no recommendation. It originally recommended approval subject to a tree planting not obstructing sight lines on a bend and to any external lighting being sensitive to the rural character of the village.
16. **The Local Highway Authority** was initially concerned at the lack of turning area within the site, but this has now been resolved by the omission of plot walling in the courtyard.
17. **The Environment Agency** has no objections subject to conditions concerning surface and foul water drainage and contamination.
18. **The County Archaeologist** comments that the site is located within the grounds of Home Farm, a moated site of medieval date. A condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation is recommended .

19. **The Conservation Manager** has no objection to the proposed conversion, and meetings with the applicants have led to the submission of amended plans which address concern about points of detail.
20. **The Housing Manager** states a housing needs survey in 2004 identified the need for 5 affordable dwellings in the village. This scheme is not appropriate for on-site affordable housing being barn-conversions. The provision of alternative land was explored but was not feasible. Therefore a financial contribution will be sought.
21. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** require a tree survey regarding proposed works in the moat area and adjacent to the barns.
22. **The Landscape Design Officer** agreed with the Parish Council that the dense planting proposed in the front of the moat is excessive and should be replaced by 2-3 trees. Full landscaping and tree protection conditions are required.
23. **The Ecology Officer** confirms that, surprisingly, there was no evidence of bat roosts. However there was evidence of bats feeding within the barn. As such the new development should be conditioned to incorporate a number of artificial bat roosts. Bird boxes should also be required. The treatment of the moat is possibly the biggest impact upon the site's biodiversity. A condition is required concerning a scheme for the ecological restoration of the moat, whilst carefully balancing the need for landscaping and tree retention.
24. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no objections subject to conditions concerning restrictions on the operation of power-operated machinery and a contamination survey to be carried out. Informatives concern bonfires and the use of driven pile foundations.

### **Representations**

25. 2 letters have been received from local residents; one raising no objections, the other expressing concerns about the lack of affordable housing proposed. The ownership of the pond at the front of the site is queried and it is important that it is not screened by trees but remains visible from the road.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

26. The key issues are the appropriateness of a residential conversion and the details of the proposed scheme.
27. The redundant barns, most of which are listed, are located on the edge of the village and form a potentially attractive courtyard adjacent to the main farmhouse, also a listed building.
28. The planning applications is a departure as Local Plan Policy encourages recreational or commercial uses to be given priority. The applicants have submitted a detailed justification for a residential use to address this policy matter. It has been summarised in Para 11 above.
29. The scheme has been designed with studio/workshop space for each of the units to help create a live/work concept which could provide some employment on site. The location of the barns adjoining the village framework makes residential use more acceptable in my view, especially as the courtyard group can easily be divorced from

the working farm which has a separate, existing access. Clearly, a commercial use which generated large amounts of traffic would be inappropriate here.

30. A series of amended plans addressing points of detail have been submitted following discussions with officers in order to achieve a successful scheme. The Conservation Manager is now satisfied the barns will be sensitively converted and will enhance the setting of the listed farmhouse. Inappropriate modern additions to the barns will be stripped away, the courtyard and moat enhanced and the barns restored and given a new lease of life.
31. Affordable housing is required (1 unit) but the Housing Manager has agreed that a financial contribution would be more appropriate in this instance given the difference in converting large barns to meet housing society standards.

### **Recommendation**

32. Approval of both applications as amended by plans franked the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2005, drawing Nos. 04027-07C, 04027-08C, 04027-09G, 04027-10C, 04027-11E, and franked 6<sup>th</sup> October 2005 drawing Nos. 04027-06C, 04027-12C, 04027-13C, subject to the following conditions:
33. **S/1203/05/LB**
  1. Standard Condition 3 years - (Reason A.)
  2. The proposed works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans and specification of works noted thereon, except where modified by the conditions of this consent.  
(Reason - To ensure compliance with the approved plans.)
  3. Before work commences, arrangements shall be made by the applicant to enable the Local Planning Authority (normally the Council's Conservation Officer) to meet the owner or agent and the contractor on site to discuss the conditions of this Consent and the manner of works.  
(Reason - For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the proper control of works.)
  4. Precise details of the proposed windows and doors to a scale of not less than 1:20 shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To ensure the use of details appropriate to this listed building.)
  5. The proposed weatherboarding and all external joinery shall be stained black to the satisfaction of the Local planning Authority.  
(Reason - To ensure a traditional finish to the external joinery and weatherboards.)
  6. Any works of repair and replacement, which are agreed on site with the Local Planning Authority, shall precisely match the original to the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction.  
(Reason - To ensure that such works are in keeping with the character and appearance of this listed building.)

7. Before work commences on site, precise details of the following shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority:
    - a. The position and details of soil vents pipes, mechanical extracts and flues.
    - b. Details of the proposed staircases.
    - c. Details of floor finishes.
    - d. Details of replacement and new rainwater goods.
    - e. Details of the rooflights(Reason - To ensure detailing appropriate to this listed building.)
  8. A sample of the proposed roof tiles and slates shall be provided on site for the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To ensure the use of roofing material appropriate to this listed building.)
  9. The roof on dwelling 3 and the single storey roofs of dwellings 1 and 2 shall be covered in natural quarried slate to the approval of the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - For the avoidance of doubt.)
  10. No member nor part member of the timber frame, floor joists, weatherboards nor roof timber shall be removed without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To protect the fabric of these listed building.)
  11. All mortars, plasters and render shall be lime rich to specifications submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To ensure the use of the appropriate mix of traditional lime plasters and mortars.)
  12. All brickwork repairs shall precisely match the existing brick, bonding and mortar to the approval of the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To ensure such repairs match the existing brick detail.)
- 34. S/1204/05/F**
1. Standard 3 years - (Reason - A).
  2. No development shall commence until details of materials to be used for surfacing of the access road and courtyard have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason - To ensure the farmyard character of the conversion is maintained.)
  3. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), the following classes of development more particularly described in the Order are expressly prohibited in respect of the property and each unit thereon unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf:-
    - i) PART 1, (Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse), All Classes
    - ii) PART 2, (Minor operations), Class A(Reason - To safeguard the character and setting of the converted barns.)

4. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until a binding undertaking prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 shall have been entered into with the Local Planning Authority, requiring the payment of a commuted sum to the Local Planning Authority in lieu of the provision on site of affordable housing. (Reason - To ensure the development makes provision for Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy P5/5 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy HG7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
5. During the period of alterations and construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08:00 hours on weekdays and 08:00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18:00 hours on weekdays and 13:00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays), unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions. (Reason - To protect the amenities of neighbouring residential property.)
6. Prior to the development commencing an investigation of the site shall be undertaken to establish the nature and extent of any contamination of the site and any remedial works to deal with contamination. This shall initially consist of a desktop study, which will include details of the site history, development of a site conceptual model, and a preliminary qualitative risk assessment. If any likelihood of contamination is indicated by initial study then a further detailed site assessment shall be carried out which shall include intrusive investigations and which shall fully characterise the nature, extent and severity of contamination. Recommendations for a remediation strategy and post-remediation validation testing should be included. Remedial work should be carried out before development commences. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the details approved by the Local Planning Authority. Any variation to the above shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before work is undertaken. (Reason - To ensure the site is free from contamination and safe for residential use, and to prevent pollution to the water environment.)
7. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development and specification of all proposed trees, hedges and shrub planting, which shall include details of species, density and size of stock. (Reason - To enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area.)
8. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation. (Reason - To enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area.)

9. The scheme of landscaping shall include a detailed tree survey including the species of all existing trees, showing which are to be retained and which it is proposed to fell. The landscaping proposals shown on plan No 04027-06 C franked the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2005 are specifically excluded from this permission. (Reason - To enable an assessment to be made of the appropriateness of the scheme.)
10. A scheme for the restoration and future management of the moat shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of any part of the development. The plan shall include:
- (1) Description and ecological evaluation of the moat and surrounding habitats.
  - (2) Aims and objectives of the restoration and future management of the moat and its surrounding habitats;
  - (3) Appropriate restoration options for achieving the above aims and objectives;
  - (4) Prescriptions for restorations actions and future maintenance of the moat;
  - (5) Preparations of a work schedule to include: timing of works; depth of any excavation; shape of bank profiles and edge treatments; means of disposing of dredged materials; source of water supply; aquatic and marginal planting.
  - (6) Personnel or body responsible for implementation of the scheme.
- The plan shall be carried out as approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To retain a nature conservation habitat in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN12.)
11. No development shall take place until details of the provisions to be made for the nesting birds and bat roosts have been submitted together with details of the timing of the work, and are subsequently approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason - To provide and enhance roost sites for bats and birds in converted buildings in accordance with Local Policy EN14.)
12. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of foul water drainage shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such times(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme.)  
Reason - To prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment.)
13. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of surface water drainage shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme, and the integrity of any proposed surface water system must be demonstrated prior to the commencement of development.  
(Reason - To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water drainage.)



14. No development shall take place on the application site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning.  
(Reason - To secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of the remains.)

### **Informatives**

1. This permission should be read in conjunction with Listed Building Consent Ref: S/1203/05/LB.
2. The Environment Agency has the following comments:

The application site shall be subject to a detailed scheme for the investigation and recording of contamination and a report submitted together with detailed proposals in line with current practice for the removal, containment or otherwise rendering harmless of such contamination, as may be found.

The applicant's attention is drawn to DETR Circular 03/99 which requires an applicant to demonstrate that a connection to the public foul sewer is not available.

In the eventuality of a connection to the public foul water sewer not being available, the suitability of any non-mains sewerage systems, particularly those incorporating septic tanks, must be effectively demonstrated by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

An acceptable method of foul drainage disposal would be connection to the public foul sewer.

Only clean, uncontaminated surface water, should be discharged to any soakaway, watercourse or surface water sewer.

Where soakaways are proposed for the disposal of uncontaminated surface water, percolation tests should be undertaken, and soakaways designed and constructed in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or CIRIA Report 156), and to the satisfaction of the Local Authority. The maximum acceptable depth for soakaways is 2 metres below existing ground level. If, after tests, it is found that soakaways do not work satisfactorily, alternative proposals must be submitted.

Any culverting or works affecting the flow of a watercourse requires the prior written consent of the Environment Agency under the terms of the Land Drainage Act 1991/Water Resources Act 1991. The Environment Agency seeks to avoid culverting and its Consent for such works will not normally be granted except as a means of access.

Notwithstanding the provision of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order), any oil storage tank shall be sited on an impervious base and surrounded by oil tight bunded walls with a capacity of 110% of the storage tank, to enclose all filling, drawing and overflow pipes.

Site operators should ensure that there is no possibility of contaminated water entering and polluting surface or underground waters.

3. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** advises:
1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, before development commences, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations should be submitted to and agreed by the District Council's Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
  2. During demolition and construction, there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the District Council's Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

4. **Reason for approval**

1. Although the proposal does not accord with South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy which requires recreational or commercial uses to be given priority for barn conversions, it is considered the following material considerations warrant approval of the application:
  - (a) The site adjoins the village framework and is not in open countryside.
  - (b) Commercial and recreational uses have been explored and found to be uneconomic or inappropriate. A use which generated large volumes of commercial vehicles would pose environmental and traffic problems on the narrow village roads.
  - (b) The design; as amended, minimises openings in the external elevations of the frontage barn to maintain the agricultural character of the site.
  - (c) The application barns can be physically separated from the working farm and environmental conflict is unlikely to occur.

In all other respects the proposal is considered generally to accord with the following development plan policies:

**Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**

Policy P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development).

Policy P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development).

Policy P5/5 (Homes in Rural Areas)

Policy P7/2 (Biodiversity)

Policy P7/6 (Historic Built Environment).

**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004**

Policy SE9 Village Edges)

Policy HG10 (Housing Mix and Design)

Policy EM10 (Employment in the Countryside (Conversions of Rural Buildings)

Policy EN5 (Landscaping of New Development)

Policy EN12 (Nature Conservation Unidentified Sites)

Policy EN14 Protected Species (Bats/barn owls)

Policy EN15 (Development Affecting Archaeological Sites)

Policy EN22 (Conditions to protect the fabric and character of Listed Buildings)

Policy EN26 (The Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses) and

Policy EN27 (Application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent).

Policy EN28 (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)

Policy EN30 (Development in Conservation Areas)

2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:

- Impact of conversion on listed building;
- Impact on setting of adjacent listed farmhouse;
- Impact on the historic moat;
- Residential amenity.

**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 Files Ref: S/1203/05/LB and S/1204/05/F

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