

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

10th May 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0455/06/F – Meldreth

Change of Condition 2 of Planning Permission S/1933/02/F (Allowed at Appeal) To Allow Replacement of 2 Caravans by Mobile Homes and Erection of Day Room, Hawthorn Park, Kneesworth Road, for W Price

Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 2nd May 2006

Site and Proposal

1. The site is a 0.36ha plot of land located on the south east side of Kneesworth Road. There is existing planting on all boundaries of the site. A public footpath abuts the south west boundary of the site. To the rear and either side is agricultural land and on the opposite side of Kneesworth Road is a group of former agricultural buildings now occupied by a fencing company.
2. The site has consent for the stationing of 6 touring caravans (See Planning History below).
3. This full application, registered on 7th March 2006 seeks retrospective consent for the variation of Condition 2 of planning consent S/1933/02/F to allow the replacement of 2 caravans by mobile homes and the erection of day room close to the south west boundary of the site.

Planning History

4. Planning consent for the use of the site as a gypsy caravan site to provide 3 pitches was granted at appeal in August 2003. A condition of the consent restricted the permission to the stationing of a maximum of 6 touring caravans for settled occupation or for long term use and that no further caravan or mobile home or other form of living accommodation should be stationed or erected on the site without the prior grant of planning permission. (Ref: **S/1933/02/F**)

Planning Policy

5. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") restricts development in the countryside to that which can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
6. **Policy HG23** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2003 ("The Local Plan") sets out the criteria for assessing applications in respect of gypsies and travelling showpeople. Amongst these criteria it states that sites, either on their own or cumulatively, should not have a significant adverse effect on the rural character and appearance, or the amenities of the surrounding area and; that built forms of development will not be permitted except for utility outhouses.

Consultation

7. **Meldreth Parish Council** recommends refusal. "The screening of this site does not meet the expectations of the Planning Inspectorate. The site is highly visible in winter, with a large number of vans and other structures. Foul water needs to be assessed by SCDC (reference Inspector's Report, August 2003)."
8. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** concludes that there are no significant impacts from the Environmental Health standpoint but requests that the applicant be advised that a Caravan Site Licence will be required for both mobile homes should planning consent be granted.
9. The **Countryside Services Team, Cambridgeshire County Council** has no objection.
10. The comments of the **Trees and Landscapes Officer** have been requested and will be reported at the meeting.

Representations

11. None received.

Applicant's Representations

12. In a letter accompanying the application it is pointed out that Mr Creedie Price on Plot 1 has a wife and three children (aged 10, 4 and 18 months). The touring caravan which has been replaced was a small one used for touring and could not be easily heated for use by children during winter months.
13. Mr William Price on Plot 3 has a wife and four children (boys aged 14 and 1, and girls aged 12 and 9). An additional separate bedroom is required in Housing Law because of the ages and sex of the children and this could not be provided in two touring caravans.
14. In respect of the retention of the day room it is stated that this is in line with Council caravan sites all of which have a day room on each pitch. This room has a cooker, space to install a washing machine and an area for children to play. There are seven children on site in addition to Mrs Price senior's other grandchildren who occasionally visit her.
15. The replacement of two touring caravans by two mobile homes is stated to be a matter of principle and they will not be for ever the mobiles that are currently on site. Their current size is not relevant to this change of condition.
16. The current mobile homes are approximately 20m x 4m and the day room is 4.7m x 5.7m with a ridge height of 2.2m.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. Planning consents exists for the use of this site. The key issues to be considered with this application are whether the replacement of 2 caravans by mobile homes and the erection of day room materially prejudice the previous appeal decision or the criteria set out in Policy HG23 of the Local Plan.

18. In allowing the appeal the Inspector restricted the use of this site to a maximum of 6 'touring caravans' for settled occupation or long term use. Whilst I am of the view that the legal definition of a touring caravan could differ from that of a mobile home, hence a variation of condition may be required, the principle of whether such a unit is acceptable is unchanged, and indeed provided the unit retains an element of mobility both can be considered caravans for the purposes of the law. I do not consider that this proposal results in any change in the potential impact of the site in the countryside, which is well screened on all sides, although I have asked the Trees and Landscapes Officer to confirm that the landscaping required by the appeal decision has been carried out and maintained.
19. The day room which has been erected is modest in size and provides facilities that are to be expected on such sites. I do not consider it materially changes the impact of the site in the countryside.
20. I am exploring with the applicant whether the remaining four touring caravans are still required. I shall report further.

Recommendation

21. Approve subject to:
- 1) The use of the land as a caravan site shall be carried on by Mr William Price and his immediate family and their dependants and shall be restricted to persons defined as gypsies in section 24(8) of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 or any Act revoking or re-enacting that Act. (RC. To ensure that the site is used for a particular need in accordance with Policy HG23 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004).
 - 2) This permission is for the stationing of a maximum of 4 touring caravans and 2 mobile homes for settled occupation or for long term use. No further caravan or mobile home or other form of living accommodation shall be stationed on or erected on the site without prior grant of planning permission. (RC. To ensure that the site is used for a particular need in accordance with Policy HG23 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004).
 - 3) The site shall not be used for any trade or business purpose other than the parking of 1 commercial vehicle for each pitch. No materials shall be stored in the open and no car breaking or burning of materials shall take place on the site. (RC. To minimise visual intrusion into the countryside).

Informatives

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: HG23** (Gypsies and Travelling Showpeople)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Visual impact on the locality

General

A Caravan Site Licence will be required from the Council's Environmental Health Department.

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 Ref: S/0455/06/F & S/1933/02/F

Contact Officer: Paul Sexton – Area Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713255