

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

5<sup>th</sup> March 2008

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

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**S/0064/08/F & S/0069/08/F – GREAT ABINGTON  
Extensions and Alterations at Nos. 16 & 17 Chalky Road  
for Mr & Mrs R. Allen and Mr G. Jones**

**Recommendation: Refusal**

**Dates for Determination: 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**Notes:**

**These applications have been referred to the Planning Committee for determination by Chairman's Delegation meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008.**

**Members will visit the sites on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008.**

**Site and Proposal**

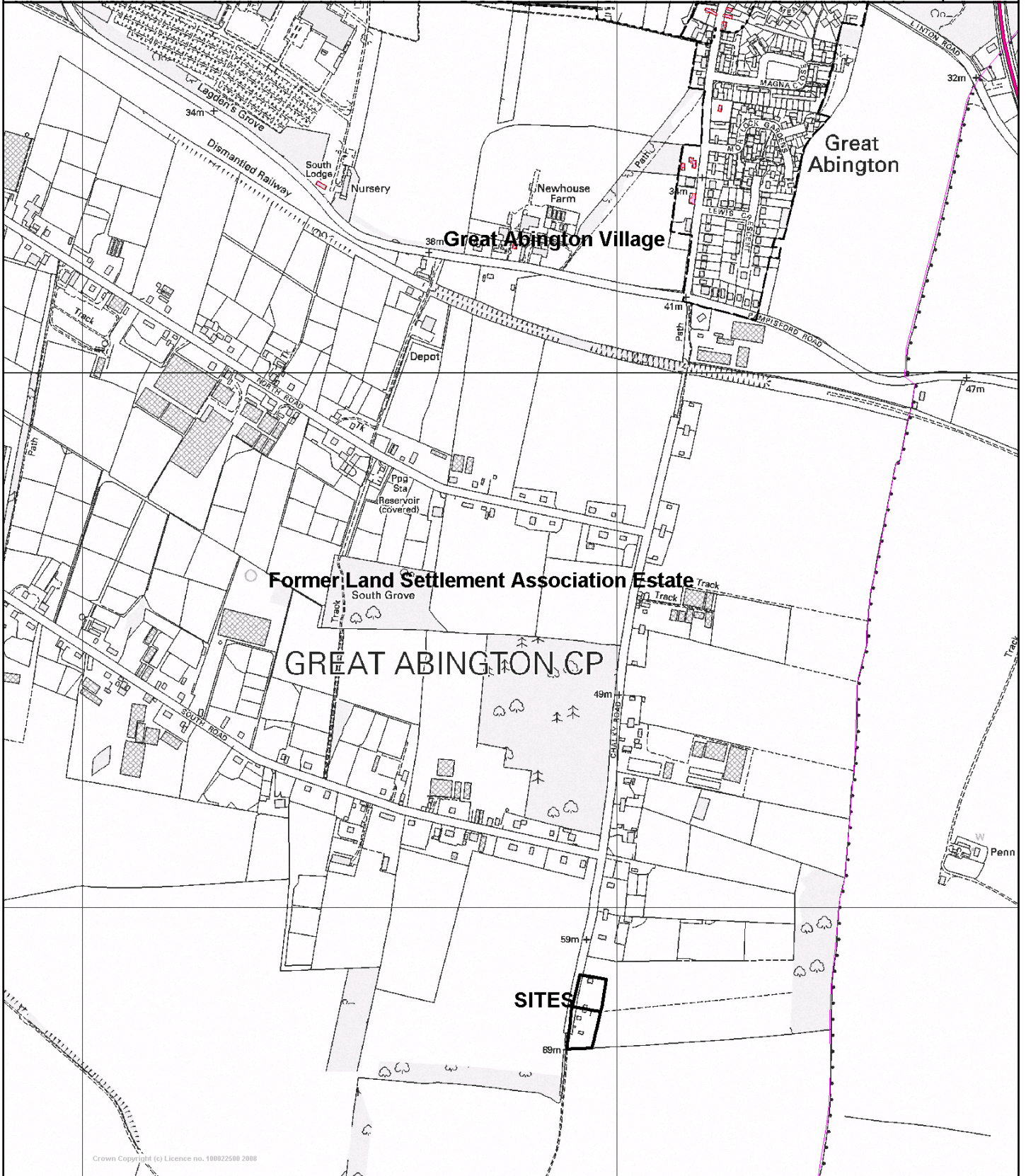
1. Nos. 16 and 17 Chalky Road, Great Abington are a pair of semi-detached, 1930s, mansard style cottages that are situated within large plots on the former Land Settlement Association (LSA) Estate, outside the Great Abington village framework and in the countryside. Chalky Road is public footpath that runs along the western boundary of the site.
2. The sites have a combined area of approximately 0.7 of a hectare. The applications received 14<sup>th</sup> January 2008, propose to separate the two dwellings and erect two-storey side extensions measuring 2.7 metres in depth x 5.8 metres in width, and two-storey rear extensions measuring 3.3 metres in depth x 5.8 metres in width (external measurements). Each relevant dwelling would comprise a kitchen lounge/diner and study at ground floor, with four bedrooms, a bathroom and en-suite bathroom at first floor.

**Planning History**

3. Planning applications for extensions and alterations to the dwellings (references **S/1619/07/F** and **S/1620/07/F**) were withdrawn in October 2007 following an agreement by the Chairman's Delegation meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007 with the officer's recommendation of refusal. These applications sought to separate the dwellings and extend them by approximately 120% in volume.

**Planning Policy**

4. Policy **P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy **DP/2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007 seek to ensure that all new developments incorporate high standards of design that respond to the local character of the built environment.



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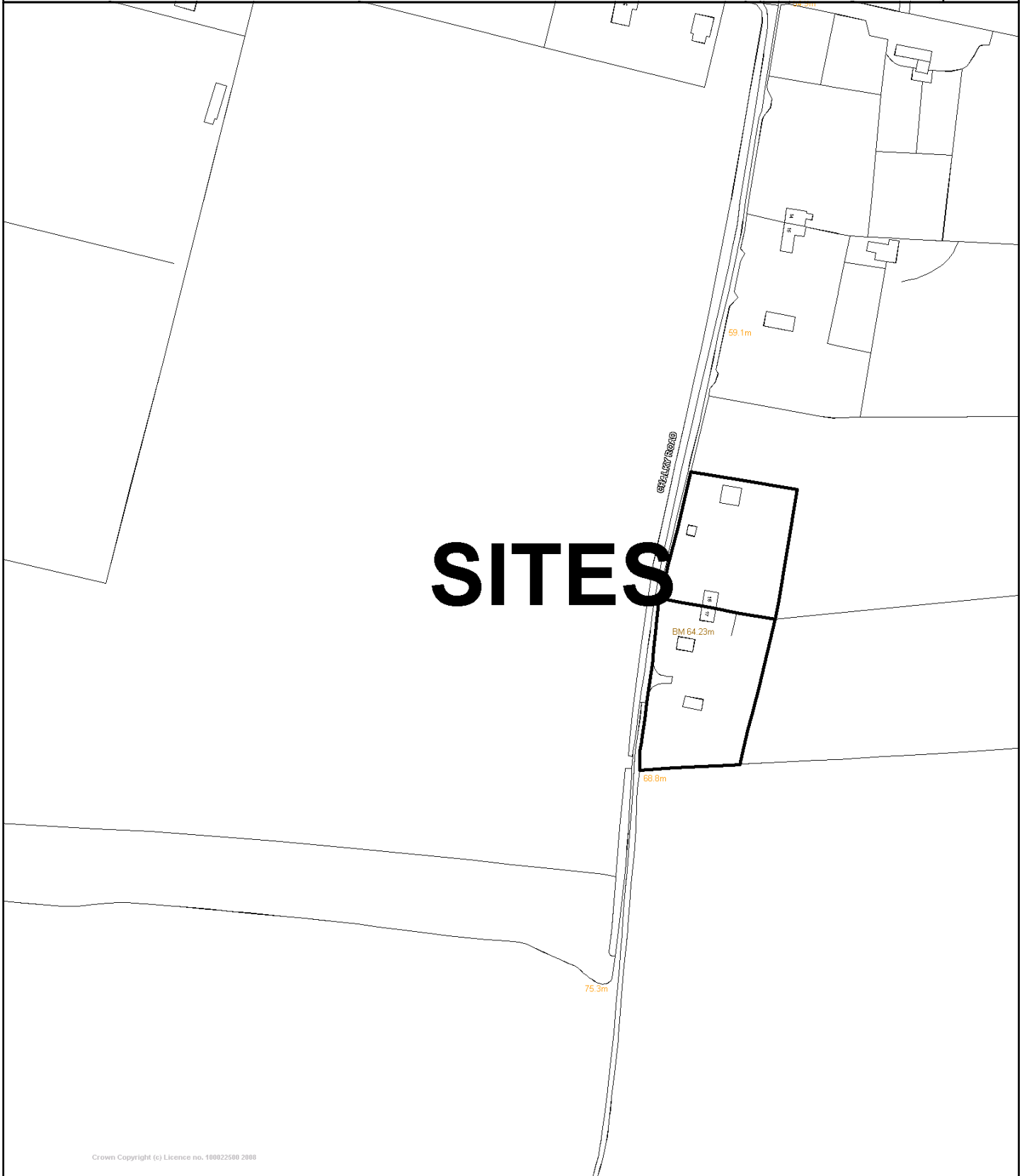
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# SITES



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5. Policy **DP/3** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007 states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the countryside and landscape character, village character, or residential amenity.
6. Policy **HG/6** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007 states that extensions to dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted where:
  - (a) The proposed development would not create a separate dwelling or be capable of separation from the existing dwelling;
  - (b) The extension does not exceed the height of the original dwelling;
  - (c) The extension does not lead to an increase of 50% or more in volume or gross internal floor area of the original dwelling;
  - (d) The proposed extension is in scale and character with existing dwelling and would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings; and,
  - (e) The dwelling is of permanent design and construction.

It states that, in exceptional circumstances, material considerations may justify an exception to criteria b and c, for example, dwellings with a very small original footprint that do not meet modern living standards.

### **Consultation**

7. **Great Abington Parish Council** recommends approval of the applications and comments that, although the designs exceed the usual permitted extension limit, the original properties are very small and lack basic facilities. The current plans can only improve the properties and the area as a whole.

### **Representations**

8. Councillor Orgee supports the applications because of the special character and distinctiveness of former LSA Estate in an area that lies outside the Great Abington village framework.
9. Twelve letters have been received from residents on the former LSA Estate supporting the applications. Their comments relate to the current limited size and facilities of the dwellings, the history of the applicants, and that other properties in the area have been significantly increased in size.
10. The applicants state that the planning applications are for building works to bring the houses up to a standard where they will provide family accommodation for the 21st century. There are a number of material considerations to these planning applications that justify the relaxation of the 50% limit including a small original footprint (around 40m<sup>2</sup>), poor living standards, (especially a lack of proper bathrooms), large curtilage, not in open countryside or green belt, and not a family home. The LSA Estate has a distinct character that is separate from the village of Great Abington but with a density not normally associated with a rural area.

## Planning Comments – Key Issues

11. The main issues to be considered during the determination of these applications relate to the impact of the separation and extension of the two dwellings upon the character and appearance of the countryside and street scene in relation to Policy HG/6 criteria.
12. The former LSA Estate is situated to the south of the main village of Great Abington. It comprises 276 hectares of land that consists of a linear pattern of development of approximately 60 dwellings along three roads- North Road, South Road and Chalky Road. The development has a low density of approximately three dwellings to the hectare. The main land use is agricultural/ horticultural with the remainder in residential and equine uses. The roads are single carriageway in width and substandard. Despite the number of dwellings, the area remains agricultural in character.
13. The dwellings are currently a pair of semi-detached, small, two bedroom cottages. There are no objections in principle to extensions to the dwellings to create additional living accommodation.
14. However, the separation and extension of the dwellings would result in two, large, detached dwellings. Such an increase in scale and alteration to the existing character is considered to materially change the impact of the dwellings upon their surroundings.
15. The proposed extensions would result in an increase of 55 square metres in floor area and 183 cubic metres in volume. This would lead to an increase of approximately 95% in the floor area and 97% in the volume of the original cottage and would significantly exceed the permitted increase of 50% defined under Policy HG/6 of the Local Development Framework.
16. The extensions would almost double the size of the existing cottages. The side extensions would increase the span of the front elevations of the cottages from 13 metres (6.5 metres wide each) to 19.5 metres (9 metres each with a 1 metre gap in-between). The rear extensions would increase the depth of the dwellings by approximately a third and the high eaves height would not be in keeping with the mansard style of existing properties. These extensions would therefore substantially increase the scale and bulk of the dwellings when viewed from Chalky Road and would result in a loss of openness and rural nature that would harm the character and appearance of the countryside.
17. The increase in the size of the dwellings would also result in the loss of two small units of accommodation within the countryside that Policy HG/6 seeks to protect.
18. Whilst it is acknowledged that the original floor area of the cottages are small and not up to current living standards, such an increase in scale and change to character would significantly depart from the policy limit. Officers would support applications for extensions to the existing dwellings to create acceptable living spaces that are not considered to have such a significant impact upon the openness and rural character of the countryside.
19. The character and distinctiveness of the former LSA Estate is not considered materially different in environmental or policy terms to other rural parts of the district. This view has been backed up by inspectors appeal decisions for development in the area in February 2003 and November 2004 (references S/1219/02/O and S/2380/03/F) when it was designated as a special policy area in the former Local Plan.

20. Whilst it is accepted that there are other dwellings on the former LSA Estate within the vicinity of the site that have had significant extensions, these were granted planning permission in the late 1980s/ early 1990s. Circumstances have changed since this time through the introduction of more restrictive policies in the Local Plan in relation to extensions to dwellings in the countryside and therefore extensions that may have been acceptable at that time, may not be acceptable today. In any case, these extensions should not set a precedent, as each application will be determined upon its own merits.
21. The history of the applicants' residence on the former LSA estate and personal circumstances are not material planning considerations that would outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the countryside from the proposals. The development would remain long after the personal circumstances cease to be material.
22. Although the development may be proportionate to the size of the large plots in which the dwellings are situated, they would still result in a substantial increase of built form that would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the countryside.
23. The rear extensions, by virtue of their high eaves height, span and roof designs, would be out of keeping with the mansard style of the existing dwellings. They are not considered to represent a high standard of design that responds to the local character of the built environment and would result in an incongruous development that would have an unacceptable visual impact upon the street scene. In contrast, the side extensions respect the style and design of the existing houses and would in all respects comply with Policy HG/6.
24. The proposal would not seriously harm the amenities of neighbours through being unduly overbearing in mass, through a significant loss of light, or through overlooking leading to a severe loss of privacy, given the ample size of the plots.

### **Recommendations**

25. Refusal (for each application):

The proposed extensions would result in an increase of 55 square metres in floor area and 183 cubic metres in volume. This would lead to an increase of approximately 95% in the floor area and 97% in the volume of the original cottage and would significantly exceed the permitted increase of 50% allowed for extensions to dwellings in the countryside. The extensions would almost double the scale of the original cottage through an increase in the span and depth of the dwelling, and the high eaves, width, and roof style of the rear extension would create a design that would be out of keeping with the character of the existing dwelling. In addition, the separation and extension of the existing pair of small, semi-detached, two bedroom cottages to create two, large, detached, four bedroom dwellings would be highly visible from Chalky Road. Such a substantial increase in the bulk of built form would materially change the impact of the dwelling upon its surroundings to the detriment of the openness and rural character of the countryside. It would also result in the loss of a small unit of accommodation within the countryside. Whilst it is acknowledged that the original floor area of the cottages are small and not up to current living standards, such a significant increase in the scale of the dwelling would not depart from the policy limit. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy HG/6 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007 that states that extensions to dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted where the extension does not lead to an increase of 50% or more in volume or gross internal floor area of the original dwelling

and the proposed extension is in scale and character with existing dwelling and would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings, unless there are exceptional circumstances that exist that justify a departure from the policy, Policy DP/3 that states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the countryside and landscape character, and Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy DP/2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007 that seek to ensure that all new developments incorporate high standards of design that respond to the local character of the built environment.

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

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003.
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007.
- Planning File References S/0064/08/F, S/0069/08/F, S/1619/07/F, S/1620/07/F, S/1219/02/O and S/2380/03/F.

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