

## **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/2416/07/F - BARRINGTON**

**New Dwelling at Land Adjacent 17 Orwell Road for Landmark Real Estate**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

#### **Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the comments of the Parish Council conflict with that of the Officers. It has also been requested by the Local Member Councillor Bird that this application is presented at Committee for the same reasons as that of the Parish Council.**

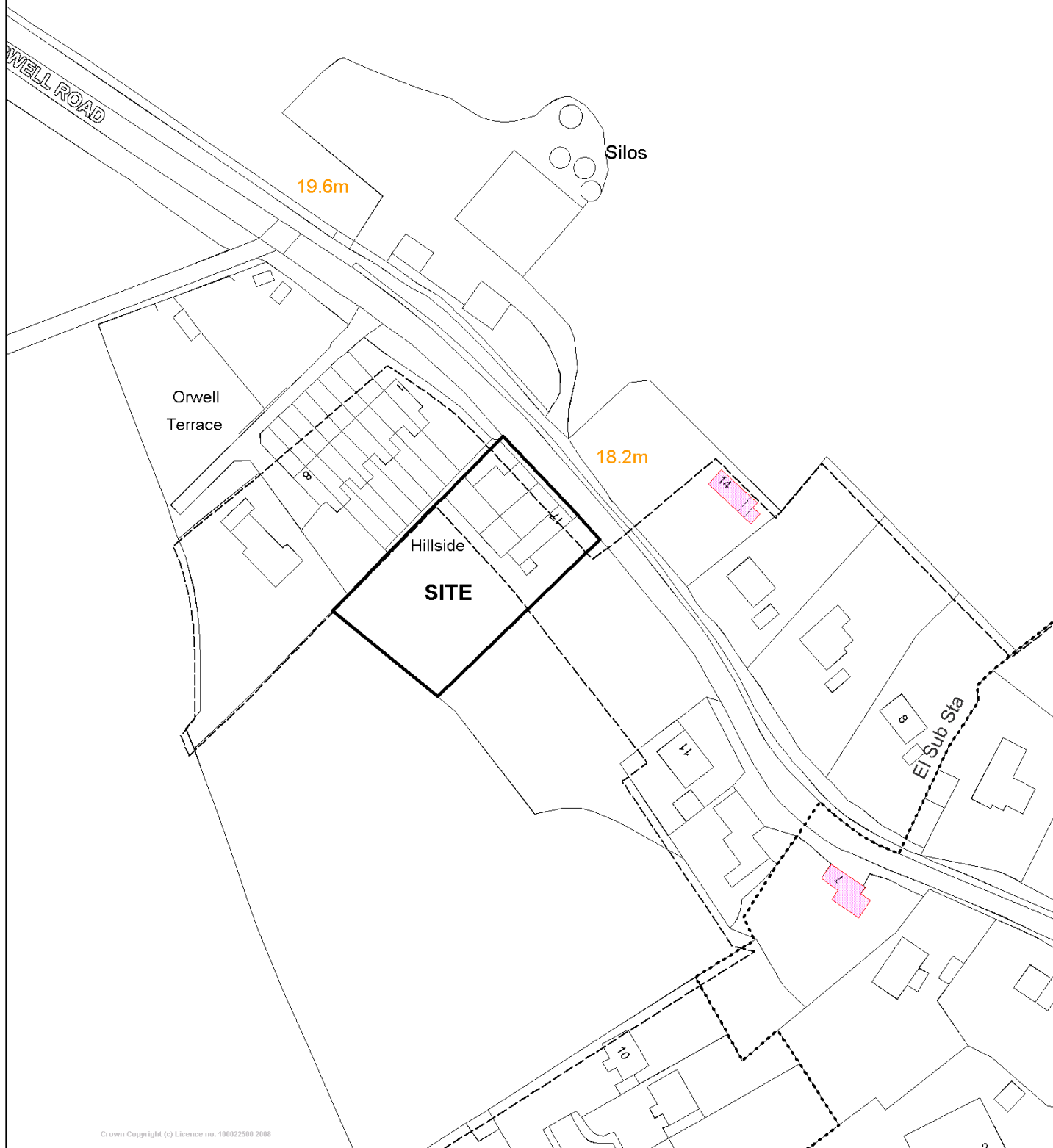
**Members will visit the sites on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site comprises 1650m<sup>2</sup> and the front 0.056 ha of the site occupied by buildings is located within the village framework for Barrington; it is outside the Conservation Area but west and opposite the nearest Listed Building (14 Orwell Road). To the north west of the site is Orwell Terrace, a row of 8 terraced properties whose rear gardens almost abut the application site, separated only by a small private footpath that is used to access the rear of those properties. This boundary currently comprises single storey outbuildings and mature hedging. To the North and East of the site across Orwell Road are farm buildings and predominately open countryside comprising an Iron Age settlement and Anglo Saxon burial ground. To the south and southeast is open countryside and the garden of No. 17 Hillside.
2. The full planning application, received 24<sup>th</sup> December 2007 proposes demolition of the existing single storey outbuildings and replacement with a new two storey detached four bedroom dwelling house. The height to the eaves varies from front to back comprising approximately 5.3m at the front and 2.4m and 5.1m at the back. Height to the ridge also varies from front to back measuring between 7 and 8 metres high. The dwelling has been sited approximately 14 metres from the neighbouring properties to the north west. The density of the scheme, incorporating No. 17 Hillside, equates to 12 dwellings per hectare.

#### **Planning History**

3. **S/1437/07/F** was submitted in July 2007 for the erection of a detached dwelling, similar to that of the current proposed scheme and an extension to the existing dwelling at No. 17 Hillside. The proposed extension to No. 17 was seen as acceptable, the proposed dwelling raised concern with officers due to its overbearing impact on the occupiers of Orwell Terrace and the scheme was recommended for



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refusal. The new dwelling was omitted from the application, which was approved as amended.

4. Meetings with the applicant and agent have been ongoing since this time to negotiate alterations to the new dwelling to address the overbearing impact it would have on the neighbouring occupiers. The scheme now submitted is a result of these negotiations

### **Planning Policy**

5. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (the County Structure Plan') requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development and which provides a sense of place, which responds to the local character of the built environment.
6. **Policy ST/6** of the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy lists Barrington as a Group Village.
7. **Policy DP/2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2007 (LDFDCP) addresses the design of new development. It states, in part, that all new development must be of high quality design and should preserve or enhance the character of the local area and be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area.
8. **Policy DP/3** of the LDFDCP addresses development criteria. It states, in part, that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity or village character.
9. **Policy DP/7** of the LDFDCP permits development and redevelopment of unallocated land and buildings within development frameworks provided, inter alia, that the site does not form an essential part of the local character, and development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours.
10. **Policy HG/1** of the LDFDCP aims to achieve net residential densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment.

### **Consultation**

11. **Barrington Parish Council** recommends refusal. The comments are as follows:

*The Parish Council objected strongly to the erection of a large 4-bed house in place of the present outbuildings. It was noted that the roofline to the current proposed house has been modified to a minor extent compared with the previous Application, but the building would present as a large mass to the existing houses at Orwell Terrace. The proposed house together with 17 Orwell Road and Orwell Terrace would present as a dense development on Orwell Road, currently comprising mixed architecture dwellings with open space between. The proposed dwelling is too close to the road. There is insufficient on site car parking for residents and visitors and there is no turning space to allow safe egress on to this busy highway which is required due to poor visibility of oncoming traffic. The speed limit on this road is 40 mph and not as stated in the Application. Upstairs windows would overlook Numbers 4-6 Orwell Terrace. The plot is not generous and there is no possibility of screening from Orwell Terrace or the road. Concerns were expressed about the ability of the sewers to cope with the development.*

*The Parish Council is concerned about the cumulative development by the owners of the whole site of this former working farm. The Parish Council noted that this is not a brownfield site.*

12. **Local Highway Authority** has made the following comments:

*The applicant state in their written submission that there is sufficient inter-vehicle visibility from the proposed development. Please request that the applicant show the required splays (2.4m x 70m) on their drawings. In the event that the Planning Authority is so minded to grant permission to the proposal please add an informative to the effect that the granting of a planning permission does not constitute a permission or licence to a developer to carry out any works within, or disturbance of, or interference with, the Public Highway, and that a separate permission must be sought from the Highway Authority for such works. Please forward the amended drawing showing the above visibility splays to the Highway Authority for approval.*

13. Following this request the applicants have discussed the site directly with the Local Highway Authority and the LHA has further commented:

*I have been told by the applicant that the maximum visibility splay that they can achieve at the above is 2.4m x approx. 50m. Clearly this falls outside the minimum that we would expect for a 30mph road (2.4m x 70m). However, given the residential nature of the street and the reductions permitted in Manual for Streets, I would be prepared to reduce the splay on condition that empirical evidence, in the shape of a speed survey, has been produced to demonstrate what the actual speeds are and that the reduction is justified.*

14. **The Environment Agency** commented on the earlier application for a dwelling. It did not object to the scheme but included informatives and comments regarding drainage on the site. It also recommended that the Council's Engineer should be consulted in respect of local 'Award Drains'.

15. **Local Authority Drainage Manager:** No comments have been received to date but will be passed on verbally at Committee. (There do not appear to be any nearby awarded watercourses.)

### **Representations**

Two emails have been received from local residents.

16. One email was received from the occupier of No. 4 Orwell Terrace who has raised a number of objections. These are as follows:

*Overbearing: I understand that the new proposal has been drawn up following consultation with the planning department and that you are satisfied that the changes have addressed the issue of overbearing, however, I consider that to lower the rear third of the house (approximately) by 0.6m and to move the first floor of this part of the house back from the boundary by 1.5m will not make the house less overbearing. It will improve part of the house from the point of view of residents of Orwell Terrace, however, the bulk of the house will still present as a very high wall which will be overbearing to the whole terrace, in particular the first 3 houses. Miss Garner has informed me that you are not concerned about number 1 because it has a garden at the side, but in my opinion this is not relevant to the issue of overbearing.*

*Inappropriate density of development for the neighbourhood : The design and Access statement makes much of the large plots elsewhere in Orwell Road. This plot is not wide enough for the 2 houses, one of which already has permission. The plot is very narrow and if the application is successful, there will be 2 large houses on a plot which elsewhere in Orwell Road would have only one house. In addition, this plot will have a very dense terrace of houses - Eight small 2 and 3 bedroom cottages - right next to it. The gardens between the proposed development and the houses of Orwell Terrace will be all that separate them, and they are approximately 12m long. This will look and feel very crowded both to the residents and from the road.*

*Inadequate reason given for the development of Farm Buildings, which are not classed as brownfield. You will be aware that there is no shortage of houses of this size and type in Cambridgeshire - the Estate Agents have many hundreds of them. The houses which are needed are more modest social housing. The farm buildings are described as an eyesore, however I would argue that they form an important part of the village scene and could only be improved by changing the corrugated roofs.*

*Safety: Orwell Road is very busy during the rush hours, and at any time the traffic is very fast both entering and leaving the village. The restriction is 40mph not 30mph as stated in the Design and Access Statement and the traffic speeds up towards the de-restriction sign and in the other direction only starts to slow as it reaches the de-restriction sign, thus it is generally going faster than 40mph as it passes no.17. Cars parked off the road at no. 17 would not be able to see the approaching traffic from the direction of Orwell even though the proposed house would be built further back than the existing buildings, because the road bends and cars are hidden.*

*Inappropriate and Poor Design: The design of the new house is poor; it is part of the U shaped design which includes the farmhouse, the extension of which already has permission. If this new house gets permission it will alter the whole focus of the development, by making the part of the houses facing the road, which incorporates the garages, the main aspect of it. The design is unlike anything else on the road and will look out of place. It is tall and dense and characterless and will give an urban aspect to the rural edge of the village. In addition it will detract from the attractive terrace of Edwardian brickmakers' cottages which it will visually oppress. Furthermore, in the total design, the old farmhouse will be no more than a wing of the whole and will lose its character completely.*

*Finally, I would like to say that I do not believe there would opposition to a development of the farm outbuildings which maintained their existing height; and if the actual buildings could be incorporated that would be more in keeping with the village and therefore more desirable. May I draw your attention to the developed barns facing the end of Orwell Rd on the green - that development kept the appearance of the barns as seen from the road. I would argue that the farm and outbuildings at No.17 have more character and charm than those barns and their aspect is equally deserving of preservation at least in terms of shape and mass.*

*I would ask that the committee consider the plot and the application under consideration in its environment, and reject the application, which in my view would detract from the immediate surroundings and from the other dwellings in Orwell Road and I would ask that the important aspect of safety is also considered.*

17. An email received from the occupier of another property in Orwell Road has also been received, comments are as follows:

*This application has already been refused, and all the grounds it was refused on previously still apply. In spite of any claims that have been made, it is a dangerous access, as there is a blind spot on that corner, and people are speeding up when leaving the village. Increased traffic would make it worse. Also, the building would be totally inappropriate for the space, and would overshadow the adjoining houses in Orwell Terrace. It seems unnecessary to try to squeeze a large house, in to a very small, inappropriate space.*

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

18. Having regard to the presumption in favour of development within the village framework, the key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Impact upon residential amenity,
  - Impact upon highway safety.
  - Impact on the character of the surrounding area

### ***Changes since the earlier application***

19. The originally submitted scheme comprised a dwelling of approximately 155.72m<sup>2</sup>. The floor area remains unchanged. The changes are to the north elevation that face the properties in Orwell Terrace. The proposal submitted sees the reduction in the ridge height of part of the dwelling by 0.6m and a 1.5m step away from the boundary at first floor level of this same 7.5m length of building. The total length of the building near the north boundary is some 16m.

### ***Impact on the neighbouring properties.***

20. The proposed dwelling is to be located very close to the boundary of the neighbouring access way, particularly towards the rear of the closest properties No. 1, 2 and 3 Orwell Terrace.
21. The height of the proposed dwelling varies as the floor levels differ slightly from the front to the rear of the site. The height of the building at the front of the site measures at 8.0 metres to the ridge; to the rear of the property the ridge height has been reduced by 0.6 metres and measures 7.0 metres. The approximate 0.4 metre difference is due to the difference in ground level from northeast to southwest.
22. The north elevation has been amended to break up the bulk of the building facing the occupiers of Orwell terrace, firstly by reducing the height and secondly by moving the proximity of part of the first floor away from the boundary. The changes will help to reduce overbearing impact that the building may have on the neighbouring occupiers.
23. The garden of No. 1 Orwell Terrace wraps around its property and therefore the openness of the garden helps reduce any impact the new dwelling would have on neighbour amenity, particularly with reference to being overbearing. There is no significant loss of light to this garden and therefore the impact of the new development minimal.
24. The gardens of No. 2 and 3 would have been more hemmed in by the development if not reduced and the impact more adverse on its occupiers. A large tree in the rear garden of No.2 screens the development, though there is no protection of this tree if the occupiers/owners wish to remove it in the future.

25. The height of the property even at its tallest point is sufficiently distant (approx 14m) not to cause an adverse loss of sunlight or daylight to the rear of the properties in Orwell Terrace.
26. The windows proposed in the north elevation (ground floor utility and cloaks; first floor ensuite) can be fitted and permanently maintained with obscure glazing to overcome any potential overlooking of the rear gardens and can be conditioned accordingly.
27. I am of the view that a single storey dwelling here designed to replicate the existing outbuildings to the original farmhouse would have been a better overall approach to the scheme, but the changes to the original design have helped address the overbearing impact of the property on its neighbours to an acceptable degree.

#### ***Impact on highway safety***

28. This is currently being assessed. In view of concerns regarding speed of traffic and available visibility, the agent has confirmed that a traffic survey will be carried out and the outcome of this survey and the Local Highway Authority comments will be presented verbally at the meeting.

#### ***Impact on the character of the area***

29. The design of the house is very similar to that of the property at No. 17 Hillside and the extension as approved in September 2007. The two properties will stand together in isolation of other properties along this frontage in Orwell Road. The properties at Orwell Terrace are of a completely different style and design altogether and they would predominately hide the new dwelling when approaching from the northwest on the Orwell Road.
30. The design approach of the dwelling is not particularly innovative though it would not be a completely alien feature in the street scene and a replica of the existing house is not unacceptable. The views across the open countryside are partly restricted by mature hedging and farm buildings and I am of the view that the building proposed is in character with the existing street scene and not harmful to its immediate surroundings. The plot frontage, inclusive of No. 17 Orwell Road, measures approximately 31 metres and the new development replaces an existing footprint of development, albeit taller and in a different form.

#### ***Conclusion***

31. I am of the view that the changes made to the design have addressed the issues raised earlier about the development being overbearing to the neighbouring occupiers and that, subject to the comments of the Local Highway Authority and the Drainage Manager, the scheme is acceptable subject to the conditions listed below.

#### ***Recommendation***

32. Approval subject to Conditions.

#### ***Conditions***

1. Standard condition A (RcA) - Commencement of Development.
2. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5a(ii)).

3. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60).
4. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of 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.  
(Reason - To enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area.)
5. 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 building 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.)
6. The first floor window in the northwest elevation of the dwelling, hereby permitted, shall be fitted and permanently maintained with obscure glass.  
(Reason - To safeguard the privacy of occupiers of the adjoining properties.)
7. No windows, doors or openings of any kind, other than those hereby permitted by this planning permission, shall be inserted in the first floor northwest elevation of the dwelling, hereby permitted, unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf.  
(Reason - To safeguard the privacy of occupiers of the adjoining properties.)
8. During the period of demolition and construction, no power operated machinery (or other specified 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 by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions.  
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents during the period of construction.)

### **Informatives**

1. 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.
2. The granting of planning approval must not be taken to imply that consent has been given in respect of the above.
3. All surface water from roofs shall be piped direct to an approved surface water system using sealed downpipes. Open gullies should not be used.



4. 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. **Soakaways will not be permitted in contaminated ground.**
5. Only clean, uncontaminated surface waste. Should be discharged to any soakaway, watercourse or surface water sewer.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S/2416/07/F and S1437/07/F

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