

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Development and Conservation Control Committee	1 st September 2004
AUTHOR/S:	Director of Development Services	

S/1093/04/0 - Cottenham Agricultural Dwelling, Causeway Farm, Smithy Fen, for Mr & Mrs R Jones

Recommendation: Refusal

Site and Proposal

1. Corner of an arable field on the south-western side of Lockspit Hall Drove, 150.0m beyond the humped back bridge. There is a detached house, Turk's Head Farm, immediately adjacent, with arable land to the rear and north-west. There is rough pasture opposite.

The outline application, received 25th May, is for the erection of one dwelling for agricultural purposes.

Planning History

2. None.

Planning Policy

3. **Policy P1/2** of the Structure Plan (2003) restricts new development in the countryside unless an essential case can be demonstrated.

Policy HG16 of the Local Plan (2004) states:-

"In the countryside (i.e. outside village frameworks defined in this Plan), new dwellings complying with Structure Plan 1995 policy SP12/1 will only be permitted on well- established agricultural units where it can be demonstrated that there is a clear, existing functional need relating to a full-time worker, and that suitable existing buildings in the area are not available or the conversion of appropriate nearby buildings would not provide suitable accommodation.

Where a new dwelling is permitted, this will be subject to a condition ensuring the occupation will be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture or forestry or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependents."

Consultations

4. Cottenham **Parish Council** recommends refusal of the application on the basis of siting only. It feels that "it should be sited away from the adjacent property" (presumably Turks Head Farm). However, I understand that it may be altering that view to one of approval.

5. The **Old West Internal Drainage Board** has no objections provided that all surface water is discharged via an infiltration system or that this is no greater than the present greenfield rate.
6. The **Environment Agency** has no objections in principle but asks for a condition detailing means of foul drainage to be imposed.
7. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no adverse comments to make.
8. The **Cambridgeshire County Council County Farms Officer** is unable to support the proposal, his report is attached as Appendix 1.

Representations - Applicants

9. A supporting document is attached as Appendix 2.

Representations – Neighbours

10. Cottenham Village Design Group has no objections subject to the house being of good design and materials.
11. The occupier of Turks Head Farm next door objects to the siting of the proposed dwelling for the reasons:
 - Access will be off a “passing place”, not a lay-by, and any obstruction could impede traffic flow.
 - Lack of screening.
 - If sited adjacent Causeway farm buildings, there is an existing access, better screening and closer for servicing the newly built calf unit.
 - Site restricts access to drain for dredging etc.
 - Too close to my property which had to be sited 65.0m from its neighbour to mitigate against noise and smells.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

12. The key issue with any agricultural dwelling is whether or not there is an existing functional need for a second dwelling on the farm. A second issue is whether or not the site proposed is appropriate.

i. Need

The accompanying statement from the applicant’s agent is detailed, as is that from the County Farms Manager who is unable to support the proposal for the reasons given. The application is, therefore, contrary to both **Policy P1/2** and **HG16**, in that an adequate case has not been made. I have previously written to the Agent asking for a plan of the whole holding, some 118ha/294 acres, and why it is necessary to site the house some 150.0m – 200.0m from the cattle sheds. At the same time I reminded them that planning permission was required for the cattle sheds. No reply has been received, nor an application submitted.

ii. Siting

Paragraph 4.39 of the Local Plan states:-

“Where new buildings are proposed to be erected they should be grouped around existing development to minimise the impact on the countryside”.

In their statement the applicants say they have chosen this site as it is not obviously visible from the public highway, it does not encroach on the open countryside and no new access will be required. It is in close proximity to the farm buildings to fulfil its functional need and, if sited any nearer, may put the occupants at risk from potential straw fires. Reference is also made of the need to be “on site” to minimise theft, and the risk of cattle escaping and to mitigate the risk of arson.

I have asked the County Farms Manager to comment on this issue, assuming that a case may be made in the future, and will report verbally.

If a case is being put forward for a house to provide inter alia, security, then it seems somewhat unusual to choose a site which is “not obviously visible from the public highway” and is some distance from the animals.

Recommendation

13. Refusal

1. The proposal is contrary to **Policies P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) and **HG16** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004) in that a clear, existing functional need has not been put forward to justify a second agricultural dwelling on this farm holding.
2. Notwithstanding the above the proposed site is poorly related to the existing and proposed farm buildings.

Informatives

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/1093/04/O**

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