

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 6th October 2004
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/1540/04/O – Newton
Erection of Additional Dwelling and New Garage for No. 58 Town Street at 58
Town Street for H Hurrell**

Recommendation: Refusal

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.25 hectare application site is located on the west side of Town Street and is presently a walled garden area to No. 58 Town Street, a semi detached gault brick and tile Grade II Listed dwelling. The site comprises a number of single storey redundant outbuildings. To the south is a detached Grade II listed house whilst to the west is agricultural land that lies within the countryside and Green Belt. Along the front boundary of the site is a 2 metre high clunch wall, which is listed in its own right, and vehicular access at its southern end. There are a number of mature trees on the plot.
2. The outline application, submitted on 22nd July 2004, seeks to erect a dwelling on the site. Details of means of access and siting form part of the application. The submitted block plan shows that the dwelling would be set approximately 22 metres back from the frontage of the site with vehicular access being gained via the existing point of access off Town Street. As the proposal seeks to develop land that has historically been used as access/parking by No. 58 Town Street, the application also seeks to provide a replacement garage and access for the existing dwelling. The garage would be sited to the rear of No. 58 and the existing point of access to Home Farm extend across the rear/western boundaries of Nos. 56 & 58 Town Street.
3. A covering letter submitted with the application states that the dwelling has been deliberately set back within the plot to make the building less obvious and well screened when viewed from the site frontage. As a result the character and appearance of Town Street will remain unaffected and the replacement of the existing structure with a dwelling would not represent development that would be out of keeping with the general form of development in Newton. The existing building on the site is of limited architectural value and unworthy of retention. It contributes little to the character and appearance of the locality as it is virtually hidden from public view by the frontage wall. It has no historical and intrinsic connection to No. 58. Although development along this part of the village is linear in pattern there is an absence of a strong building line. The development would go some way towards making a more efficient use of land in accordance with PPG3.

Planning History

4. None

Planning Policy

5. The site is within the village framework of Newton, an Infill-Only Village as defined in the Local Plan 2004.

6. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 requires a high standard a design which responds to the local character of the built environment for all new development.
7. **Policy P7/6** of the Structure Plan requires development to protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
8. **Policy SE5** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that residential development within the village will be restricted to no more than two dwellings provided the site does not form an essential part of village character and development is sympathetic to the character and amenities of the locality.
9. **Policy EN18** of the Local Plan states that consent for the demolition of Listed Buildings will not be granted other than in exceptional circumstances. When assessing applications for demolition, the Council will consider the intrinsic interest of the building, its condition and the efforts made to keep the building in use.
10. **Policy EN28** of the Local Plan states that the Council will refuse applications which:
 - Would dominate the Listed Building or its curtilage buildings in scale, form, massing or appearance;
 - Would damage the setting, well being or attractiveness of a Listed Building;
 - Would harm the visual relationship between the building and its formal or natural landscape surroundings; and
 - Would damage archaeological remains of importance.

Consultation

11. **Newton Parish Council** raises no objections to the application stating:

“In principle the Council has no objection to this proposal providing that the materials used are sympathetic to the surrounding area, and that the existing ‘clunch’ wall is retained to maintain the existing street scene”.
12. **The Conservation Manager** objects to the application stating:
13. “Occupying the site is the former forge of the estate blacksmith and a few corrugated iron open sheds that are used as carports. The sheds are of no interest but the forge, which dates from the 19th century, is a rare survivor of a once common building type. Constructed of gault brick with a pantiled roof and with two gault brick chimneys, it was extended to the southwest in the early-mid 20th century. Internally, all the fittings survive, the forge, circular bellows (still in working order), the anvil, bench and some of the tools.
14. The site forms part of an important gap space in the built up frontage, which separates the listed properties. Whilst the site is enclosed by clunch walls the existing single storey forge is visible within the street scene. A new residential development to the rear of the site would still be obvious even if the forge were to be retained and would consequently visually close the gap between the listed buildings. It would also substantially alter the architectural hierarchy between the two adjacent listed properties, by creating a substantial dwelling in the form of a new farmhouse.

15. The proposal would conflict with the loose spacing of development within this part of Town Street.
16. The proposal would result in the demolition of a listed building, which is of historic interest, in reasonable condition, structurally sound and not beyond repair and is currently used as a store and garaging for the resident of No. 58. There does not appear to be any reason why the forge could not continue as garage/ancillary storage space for No. 58. Indeed there do not appear to be any other outbuildings associated with the property and the demolition of this building will result in the proposed replacement garage, which will affect the setting of the listed house.
17. The proposal will fundamentally alter the character of the site and affect the setting of the adjoining listed buildings and consequently the character of the listed walls”.
18. The comments of the **Trees and Landscape Officer** will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.
19. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections in principle although does express concerns about potential noise disturbance to residents during the construction period. As such, it is recommended that a condition restricting hours of use of power operated machinery be applied to any planning consent.

Representations

20. None

Planning Comments – Key Issues

21. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application relate to:
 - a. The impact of the development upon the setting of adjacent Listed Buildings and upon the character and appearance of the area;
 - b. Neighbour impact;
 - c. Impact on trees.
22. The Conservation Manager has raised strong objections to the principle of erecting a dwelling on this site which is considered to form an important gap in the built up frontage. The proposed development would adversely affect the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings (including the frontage wall) and be out of keeping with the character of the area. The new garage to No. 58 is also considered to affect the setting of the building. In addition, the loss of the old forge building, together with the lack of exceptional circumstances put forward for its demolition, would conflict with the requirements of Policy EN18 of the Local Plan.
23. I am satisfied that a dwelling could be accommodated on this site without compromising the amenities of adjoining residents by reason of overlooking or overshadowing, or by causing noise and disturbance through the use of the access.
24. The proposal involves the creation of a new driveway within the site adjacent to a number of mature trees. In addition, vegetation to the rear of Nos. 56 & 58 Town Street would need to be cleared in order to accommodate the new access. The comments of the Trees and Landscape Officer in respect of these matters are awaited and will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.

Recommendation

Refusal:

25. The site forms an important gap in the built up frontage along Town Street that separates two Grade II Listed Buildings. The erection of a dwelling on the site would visually close the gap between the adjacent Listed Buildings, thereby adversely affecting their setting and consequently the character of the listed walls, and would conflict with the loose spacing of development within this part of Town Street. It would also substantially alter the architectural hierarchy between the two adjacent listed properties by creating a substantial dwelling in the form of a new farmhouse.

The proposal would therefore be contrary to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 Policies P1/3 which requires a high standard of design that responds to the local character of the built environment, and P7/6 which requires development to protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment; and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policies SE5 which requires development in infill villages to be sympathetic to the character of the locality, and EN28 which resists development that damages the setting of Listed Buildings and harms the visual relationship between Listed Buildings and their formal surroundings.

26. The proposal would result in the demolition of the listed forge, which is of historic interest, in reasonable condition, structurally sound and not beyond repair, and in current use as a store and garaging to No. 58 Town Street. No exceptional circumstances have been put forward for the demolition of this building and the proposal therefore contravenes Policy EN18 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which strongly resists the demolition of Listed Buildings. In addition, the demolition of the former forge building necessitates the provision of a new garage to serve No. 58 Town Street which would result in further harm to the setting of this Listed Building.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004; File Ref: S/1540/04/O.

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