

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation  
Control Committee

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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6<sup>th</sup> October 2004

**S/1164/04/F - Comberton**  
**Erection of dwelling and garden/summer house; Land rear of 4 and 8 West Street,  
for Mr B Obank.**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Conservation Area**

**Site and Proposal**

1. The application relates to part of an area of former open grazing land in the middle of the village that is bounded on all sides by other development. There are views of the site across the village pond from the crossroads of Green End and West Street. The land lies to the rear of No.2 West Street, a grade II listed building, and the dwelling at No.8. A barn to the rear of these dwellings has recently been converted to a dwelling, which has views from its rear elevation over the application site. The site also forms part of the setting of No.10 West Street, a grade II listed building. To the west, the site is adjoined by the house at No. 11 Green End. The boundary of this garden with the application site is marked by a row of mature Beech trees that overhang the applicant's land.
2. The site lies within the conservation area, whose boundaries coincide with the northern and western boundaries of the site.
3. The application, registered 4<sup>th</sup> June 2004, is for full planning permission for the erection of a single storey dwelling and a detached summer house, with vehicular access being gained from the existing track to West Street. The plot has a depth of 49m, and has a width that increases from 18m in the south to 33m in the north, giving a site area of 0.13ha. The positioning of the house was originally shown to be 2.2m from the western boundary with No.11 Green End. Amended plans were received 1 September 2004 to show the distance to the boundary increased to 5.0m in order to accommodate the spread of the adjacent Beech trees. The design shows a long timber-clad 2-bed dwelling with a low ridgeline (4.2m) with eaves overhang supported by timber posts. A pantiled roof is proposed. The length of the house has been reduced from 29.0m to 25.0m in response to comments made by the Conservation Manager. The applicant states that the L-shaped dwelling is designed in the style of a converted agricultural building. The density equates to 7.7 dwellings per hectare.
4. A detached summer/garden house, with dimensions width 3.0m x length 5.0m x height (to ridge) 3.0m, is shown to be sited adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, within the proposed garden area.

**Planning History**

5. There is no planning history on the application site itself. However, outline planning permission for the erection of a detached 5-bedroomed house to the rear of the converted barn was dismissed at appeal in 2000 (S/0995/99/O). The Inspector concluded that the open grazing land formed 'an intrinsic part' of the conservation area's character and appearance. It formed a part of the 'pleasing and appropriate

setting' to the listed buildings at No.2 and (to a lesser extent) No.10 West Street, and to the village pond. As the proposed house would be visible from the crossroads, it would 'destroy much of the open and rural character of the grazing land'.

6. The extension and conversion of the barn adjoining the southern boundary of the site and the boundary walls, were the subject of planning permissions S/0754/01/F and S/0676/03/F.

### **Planning Policy**

7. In the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003, **Policy P1/1** (Approach to Development)- development should be located where travel distances by car can be minimised, walking and cycling encouraged and where good transport accessibility exists or can be provided.
8. **Policy P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas) – small scale housing developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account the need for affordable rural housing, the character of the village and its setting, and the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport provision in the immediate area.
9. **Policy SE4** (Group Villages) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 states that redevelopment up a maximum scheme of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework provided that the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; and the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenities of neighbours.
10. **Policy HG11** (Backland Development) – Development to the rear of existing properties will not be permitted where development would: 1) be overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of an existing residential property, 2) be noisy or disturbing to an existing residential property through use of its access, 3) give rise to highway dangers through use of its access, 4) be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
11. **Policy EN30** (Development in Conservation Areas) – proposals in conservation areas will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area, especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. Schemes that do not specify traditional local materials or details that do not fit comfortably into their context will not be permitted.
12. The **Village Inset Plan** states that development at the north-western corner of the crossroads will not be permitted, as it would further erode the linear character of this part of the village (para.17.20).

### **Consultation**

13. **Comberton Parish Council** - recommends refusal of the application. The Council has concerns about the precedent for further development on the former pasture land and the use of the access drive to serve it; the potential for a dwelling to be developed on the site of the summer house in the future; and the principle of using the remainder of the former pasture land for development. In response to the application as originally proposed, the Council were also concerned about the adverse effect on the street scene, conservation area and setting of the duck pond from where the roof line could be viewed.
14. **Conservation Manager** – has been in discussion with the applicant prior to submission. He is satisfied that a suitably designed and carefully sited dwelling could

be placed upon the former pasture land without harming the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. He believes that the proposal is modest and largely hidden from view, notwithstanding the re-siting of the dwelling in order to safeguard the adjoining Beech trees. He has provided detailed advice in the preparation of the design of the dwelling.

15. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – was originally concerned at the proximity of the dwelling to the Beech trees, but is satisfied with the amended siting, subject to the use of a suitable design for the foundations of the property.

### **Representations**

16. A letter of objection has been received from the occupiers of 5, Green End, that adjoins the eastern boundary of the former pasture land area. They are concerned about overlooking and deposit of builder's rubble close to their property. They request the erection of close boarded fencing to remove overlooking, and a condition to control builders rubble during the construction period. The occupiers of the listed building at No.2 West Street have expressed concern about the development, and have drawn attention to the Inspector's decision in 2000. They consider that the land forms a pleasant backdrop to their property, and that the existing access is unsuitable to serve any additional development. They are concerned that the applicant will seek to develop the remaining land in the future.

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

17. The main issues to be considered are whether the principle of development in this position is acceptable, and if so, whether the detailed design and siting submitted are suitable.
18. The site occupies the western-most end of the open area, where there are few views from public spaces outside the site. The southern end of this land forms a rounding off plot with adjoining development at No.8 West Street and the converted barn. The site is in a sensitive location, being within the Conservation Area and having the potential to affect the setting of listed buildings and the village pond. This has been recognised both in the Village Inset Plan and by an Inspector at appeal. Nevertheless, I believe that a carefully designed low-key dwelling could be accommodated on the site without causing harm to these aspects, and without undue harm to the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties. I am not persuaded that the erection of a single dwelling in this specific location will provide a precedent for further development in this area, because of the unique features of this part of the land, neither do I agree that the siting of the proposed summerhouse will provide a precedent for a dwelling in that position.
19. The proposed building has a low roof line and is designed in materials typical of a traditional farm building. I consider that this form of development, sited close to the converted barn, will not appear to be incongruous and will have little impact upon the street scene, adjoining tree belt, neighbours or setting of the listed buildings or village pond. The character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be preserved, and there will be none of the disadvantages found in unacceptable backland development. I consider that the proposal will conform to policies HG11 and EN30.

### **Recommendation**

20. Approval
  1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);

2. SC5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc 5a);
3. SC51 – Landscaping (Rc 51);
4. SC52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc 52);
5. Prior to the commencement of any development, details of the design of foundations so as to avoid damage to tree roots shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specifications. (Reason – To safeguard the roots of nearby trees from damage);
6. SC21 – Withdrawal of permitted development rights (Rc 21(a));
7. SC20 (a) – parking and turning space. (Rc 20);
8. SC26 - Limitations on power operated machinery 08:00 “during the period of construction 18:00 and 13:00 hours (Rc 26).

### Reasons for Approval

#### Informatives

1. The approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
  - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P1/1** (Approach to Development), **P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas)
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE4** (Group Villages), **HG11** (Backland Development), **EN30** (Development in/adjacent to Conservation Areas), **Comberton Village Inset Plan**.
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
  - Impact upon the setting of adjacent Listed Buildings;
  - Impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
  - Impact upon the roots of nearby trees;
  - Residential amenity;
  - Highway safety
3. All other material planning considerations have been taken into account. None is of such significance as to outweigh the reason for the decision to approve the planning application.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Planning applications S/1164/04/F and S/0995/99/F; Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

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