

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director (Operational Services)/  
Corporate Manager (Planning and Sustainable Communities)

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### **S/1830/09/F – CALDECOTE**

**Alterations, Reconstruction and Conversion of Former Barn and Cart Shed to Offices and Demolition of 3 Outbuildings at Manor Farm, Main Street for Mr Kamper**

**Recommendation: Refusal**

**Date for determination: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

#### **Notes:**

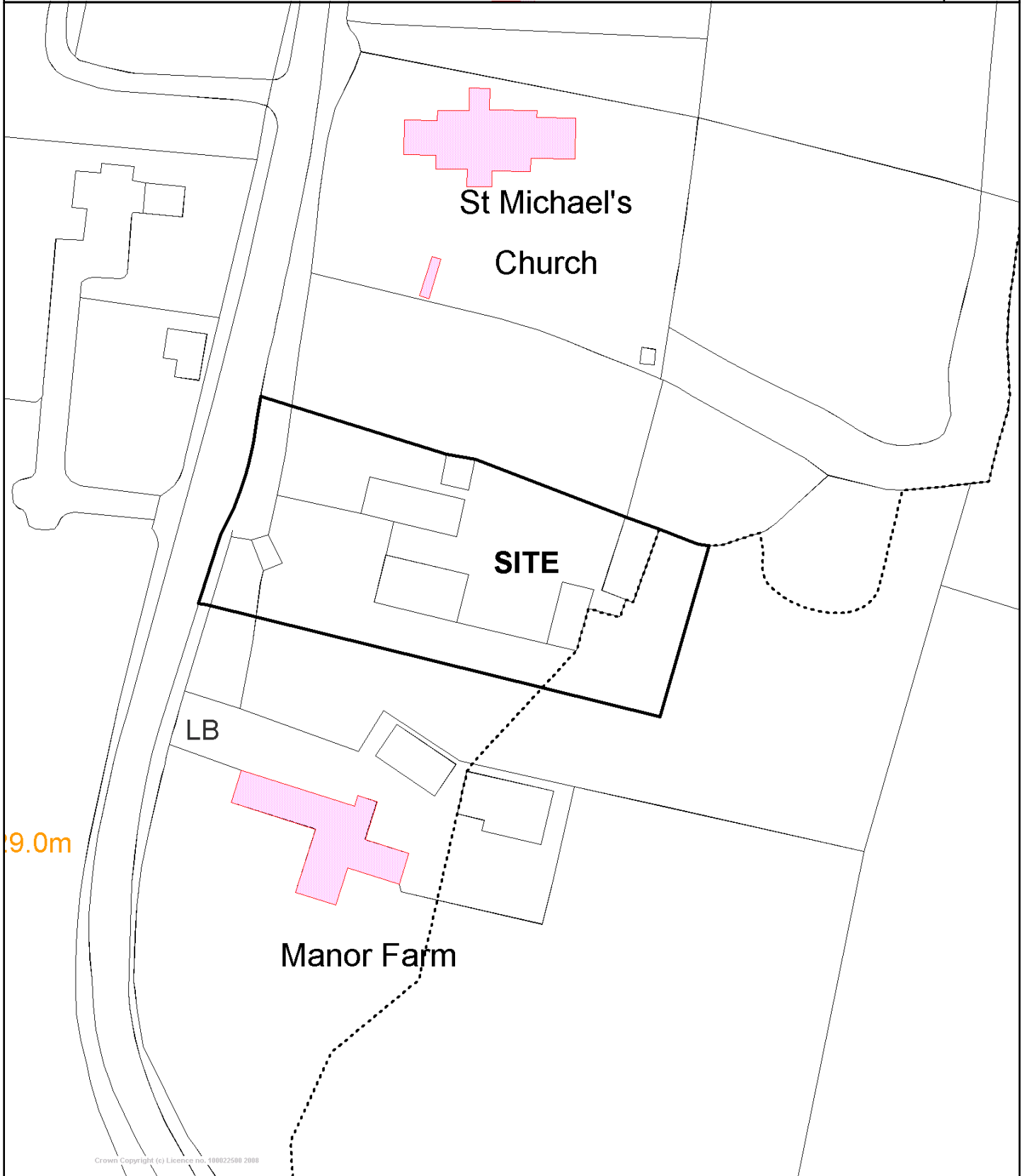
**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Local Member has requested it be presented before Planning Committee, due to concerns on material planning considerations.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The 0.2 ha site is located in the most southern part of Caldecote, outside of the village framework, within the Conservation Area and sited between two listed buildings. The Parish of Kingston is a short distance from the application site (approximately 100m south).
2. The existing buildings comprise dilapidated wooden structures that were originally used for agricultural purposes and are set within the large grounds of Manor Farm; a grade II listed building located approximately 30 metres south of the application site. To the north is St Michaels Church, a grade II\* listed building, this is screened from the site by trees and hedging. To the east is open countryside and to the west is Main Street and access to the site.
3. The full application received 24<sup>th</sup> December 2009 proposes the conversion of existing buildings to offices and demolition of 3 existing outbuildings. The application was submitted with the following documents:
  - (a) Planning statement
  - (b) Design and Access Statement
  - (c) Heritage Statement
  - (d) Bat and Owl Survey
  - (e) Structural Survey

#### **Planning History**

4. **S/0937/06/LB** - Extension and Conversion of Barn and Cart shed to Dwelling and erection of garage/outbuilding – Refused.
5. **S/0938/06/F** - Extension and Conversion of Barn and Cart shed to Dwelling and erection of garage/outbuilding - Withdrawn.



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Scale 1/789    Date 18/2/2010

Centre = 534716 E 256191 N

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6. **S/0111/07/LB** - Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension to Cart shed to form 5-bed dwelling and attached double garage, workshop and store. Demolition of 3 outbuildings – Refused.
7. **S/0112/07/F** - Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension to Cart shed to form 5-bed dwelling and attached double garage, workshop and store. Demolition of 3 outbuildings – Refused. Dismissed at Appeal.
8. **S/0096/09/LB** - Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension of former Barn and Cart Shed. Demolition of 3 outbuildings - Refused.
9. **S/0094/09/F** – Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension of former Barn and Cart Shed. Demolition of 3 outbuildings - Withdrawn.

### **Planning Policy**

10. **PPS1** (Delivering Sustainable Development).
11. **PPS 7** (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas).
12. **PPG15** (Planning and the Historic Environment).
13. **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions:** Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

### **East of England Plan 2008:**

14. **ENV6** (The Historic Environment)  
**ENV7** (Quality in the Built Environment)

### **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Control Policies 2007 (LDFDCP):**

15. **DP/1** – Sustainable Development, **DP/2** – Design of Development, **DP/3** – Development Criteria, **DP/7** – Development Frameworks, **ET/7** – Conversion of Rural Buildings for Employment, **ET/8** – Replacement Buildings in the Countryside, **CH/4** – Development within the Curtilage of a Setting of a Listed Building, **CH/5** – Conservation Area, **TR/1** – Planning for more Sustainable Travel, **TR/2** – Car and Cycle Parking Standards.

### **Consultations**

16. **Conservation Officer** - In summary the team are of the opinion that the best use of the buildings is that for which it was originally designed. The proposals follow the refusal of S/0094/09/F and S/0096/09/LB for alterations, reconstruction, conversion and extension of the barn and cart shed to offices and demolition of 3 outbuildings. This application is for the same scheme but omitting the extension to the cart shed. Although the proposal does not involve an extension to the cart shed there are still concerns about the impact on the character and appearance of these curtilage listed buildings and on the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse and grade II\* listed Parish Church and the Conservation Area.

In this case no compelling evidence has been presented to show that some form of agricultural or storage use could not be maintained. It is clear that an alternative non-agricultural use would be difficult to accommodate due to the close proximity of the listed farmhouse and church. However conversion to an employment use is not considered to

be an acceptable alternative for the above reasons. Consequently a less intrusive use should be sought which does not require so much alteration and extension to the buildings and which avoids destroying their special character. For the above reasons the proposed extension and alterations to the barn and cart shed would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the wider Conservation Area. The barn is prominent within the street scene and the Conservation Area and the proposal, which is considered to be visually intrusive, would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to CH/5 of the LDFDCP, 2007. In addition, the setting of the listed farmhouse would be compromised and the visual relationship between the farmhouse and its former agricultural buildings would be further eroded. The setting of the adjacent grade II\* parish church would also be compromised by an office development in this location. The proposals would therefore be contrary to Policy CH/4 of the LDFDCP, 2007.

17. **Local Highway Authority** – objects to the proposal.

“The Highway Authority would recommend refusal of the above application in its present format:

The proposed development, if permitted, would involve the use of a vehicular access onto Main Street where visibility is severely restricted by a bank to the south of the access and would therefore be detrimental to highway safety. ’

If the application is granted permission by the Local Planning Authority, it will be the Local Planning Authority’s decision with regards to which conditions will be incorporated.

It is requested that the applicant provide a contour survey of Main Street (a hollow way) in relationship to the access way. As visibility splays need to be unobstructed, the Highway Authority is concerned that the cutting that has been created to join the road does obscure the visibility. The gradient of the bank to the road appears from on site observations too great to permit the access to merely follow the bank’s profile”.

18. **English Heritage** – Has not responded within the given timeframe.

19. **Biodiversity Officer** - “I have no objection to this development taking place subject to the development commencing in accordance with the information and recommendations contained within the Bat and Owl Survey, such that two internal cavity bat boxes will be provided on the west and east elevations of the building, that bird boxes will be erected around the site, that the grass will be kept short around the development area to deter the possible presence of great crested newts in the development area.

The restoration of the pond through selective desilting would provide a simple biodiversity gain for the site. The SCDC Ecology Officer would be willing to provide further guidance on the matter”.

20. **Building Control Officer** – raises no objections.

21. **Environment Agency** – The Application falls within Cell F3 (floodzone 1/<1ha change of use from ‘water compatible’ to ‘less vulnerable development’) of Flood Zone Matrix, version 2.0, as such it makes no comment. No other Agency related issues exist, and the Council will be required to respond in respect of flood risk and surface water drainage to encourage sustainable drainage methods are used.

22. **Environmental Health Officer** – Has requested conditions to control hours of demolition/construction and details regarding pile foundations, and informatives including no bonfires and burning of waste on site, and the need for a Demolition Notice establishing ways in which buildings will be dismantled.

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

23. The key issues regarding the scheme refer to the:
- (a) Principle of development
  - (b) Sustainability
  - (c) Highway Safety
  - (d) The impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the two Listed Buildings and their settings
  - (e) The impact on neighbour amenity.

#### ***Principle of Development***

24. There is policy support for the conversion of agricultural buildings to employment use under policy ET/7 of the LDFDCDP 2007, though other criteria must be met.

#### ***a) The buildings are structurally sound***

25. The proposal seeks to retain some elements of the existing structures (predominantly the frames of the building with some work) though a large element of the scheme is new build. In addition, the works of the cart shed amount to some major reconstruction and the works to the Chaff Barn are significant also. The comments from the Building Control Officer inform that, though the frames can be predominately retained, the materials for the external appearance are all likely to be new and not those of the existing buildings, including completely re-roofing both structures. It is accepted that the structure of the buildings could be successfully re-used.

#### ***b) The buildings are not makeshift in their nature and are of permanent, substantial construction***

26. It is accepted that the proposal would meet this criteria and Building Control agree that the works can be carried out in accordance with the structural statement submitted. However, the report states that although much of the original structure remains at low level the sole plate and the plinth would need to be replaced. There is no information on how the new roof would be supported but this would potentially require strengthening of the existing walls in order to take the increased load of a tiled finish. In the report on the 2007 applications, which were dismissed on appeal, the Inspector stated that “the buildings are not in good structural condition; the state of dereliction would require most of the proposal to be undertaken as new build”.

#### ***c) The buildings are capable of re-use without materially changing their existing character or impact on the surrounding countryside***

27. The structures of the existing buildings can be re-used though the external materials for the buildings and the design would have to be as such so as not to have an adverse impact on their historic fabric, the neighbouring listed building and the character of the Conservation Area. This proposal intends to change the character of the buildings to an unacceptable level by inserting new openings, adding extensions and internal alterations and strengthening works that will have a significant adverse impact on the simple character and appearance of the buildings and would result in the loss of historic fabric.

The impact the change of use would have on the wider countryside would have a much lower impact than that of the earlier schemes though the immediate setting would still be harmed and therefore contrary to the policy criteria.

**d) *The form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.***

28. It has been concluded by the Conservation Manager that the form, bulk and general design of the buildings would have an adverse impact on the character of these curtilage listed buildings, the setting of the grade 2 listed farmhouse, the neighbouring grade 2 listed Parish Church and the setting of the Conservation Area. The introduction of a wall to screen the parking area is firstly not detailed and secondly an alien feature in the relationship and context of these buildings. It is seen as a visually intrusive and incongruous addition given the rural location. The extensions to the existing units are not in character with the buildings and the extension to the cart shed.
29. With regard to the new build element the statement proposes it as a replacement building. The structure it is intended to replace is no longer in situ and therefore not a replacement building and quite simply new development in the countryside that is not supported by policy in this instance. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Development Plan in this respect. There is no policy support for new build in the countryside without agricultural or similar justification. It is not considered that this application has justified.

**e) *Perform well against sustainability issues***

30. The site is not well related to the village and there are no services or facilities in the vicinity. The occupiers of this site will be entirely dependant on the car. The application fails in this respect.
31. Additional text for this policy clearly states on pages 50-51:

‘Due to their location, such developments must be carefully controlled. It is crucial that design takes account of the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. It is not sufficient to simply retain the frame of the building and substantially reconstruct around it’.

***Sustainability***

32. The site being located to the very south of the village and outside of the village framework limits easy access to public transport. The closest bus stop is located in the neighbouring village of Kingston, approximately an 18-minute walk from the application site. Visiting the site would be predominately by private vehicle and therefore the development does not promote minimising the use of the car in line with current sustainability policies. There are also no local facilities close by; the local shop is approximately 1.5 miles north of the application site. The site is quite remote for an office use; whilst this might create the perfect atmosphere for those working within them, accessibility and amenity are unsustainable.

***Highway Safety***

33. The Local Highway Authority raise objection to the above application, as submitted, as the access presents problems with highway safety due to obscured visibility. This has been an issue with both previous planning applications and is still not adequately addressed.

## **Conservation Area/Listed Building**

### **Chaff Barn**

34. The Chaff Barn comprises a two bay mid-late 19th Century timber framed barn with a timber framed open lean-to on the north elevation. Both elements are roofed with corrugated sheeting. The proposal seeks to convert the barn and replace the existing lean-to with an extension of a similar form that extends along the whole of the north elevation. There is no automatic right to replacement and the fact that there is an existing lean-to structure of no interest or quality is not sufficient justification for a more permanent structure. The addition of this extension would be to the detriment of the historic plan form and harm the special character and appearance of the barn. In terms of planning policy there is a presumption against extension of rural buildings for employment use and the proposal would be contrary to Policy ET/7.
35. In addition, the alterations include additional openings, internal alterations and some strengthening works all of which would have a significant impact on the simple character and appearance of this former agricultural building and would result in the loss of historic fabric.

### **Cart Shed**

36. This building comprises a four bay timber framed structure that was originally open fronted on the east elevation; the roof is monopitched and covered in corrugated metal sheeting. The proposal is to convert the existing building and reinstate the pitched roof. While there would be no additional openings in the cart shed and therefore no loss of historic fabric, the alterations required for the new use including the addition of insulation, services and a new floor internally and new weatherboarding externally would have a significant impact on the simple character and appearance of this curtilage listed building.
37. For the above reasons, the proposed alterations to the barn and cart shed would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the wider Conservation Area. The barn is prominent within the streetscene and the Conservation Area and the proposal, which is considered to be visually intrusive, would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CH/5.
38. In addition, the setting of the listed farmhouse would be compromised and the visual relationship between the farmhouse and its former agricultural buildings would be further eroded. The setting of the adjacent grade II\* parish church would also be compromised by an office development in this location due to the appearance of these buildings within views to and from the church. The proposals would therefore be contrary to Policy CH/4.

## **Neighbour amenity**

39. The closest neighbouring property is that of Manor Farm, located some 30 metres to the south of the application site. There are no major concerns with regard to the proposed scheme having an adverse impact on the occupiers of this property.

## **Conclusion**

40. The proposed scheme has been scaled down considerably from the first applications received in 2006. The proposal for the use of the buildings to offices demonstrates a re-use that is supported, in principle by the LDF policies, subject to other criteria. This scheme meets only parts of these criteria. In addition, the site is set between two listed

buildings in the Conservation Area where it is the view of officers the development would materially detract from the setting of the listed buildings and would neither preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. The scheme also fails to successfully address sustainability.

41. Although changes to the buildings could increase their longevity it is not felt that the proposed scheme outweighs the level of harm on all other accounts mentioned above.

### **Recommendation**

42. For the above reasons the application is recommended for **refusal**.
1. The site lies in an unsustainable location away from village services and facilities and is not in an accessible location with a choice of means of travel, including non-motorised modes. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DP/1 (b) and TR/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD, adopted July 2007, that aims to minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency.
  2. No compelling evidence has been presented to show that some form of agricultural or storage use could not be maintained. It is clear that an alternative non-agricultural use would be difficult to accommodate due to the close proximity of the listed farmhouse and church. However conversion to an employment use is not considered to be an acceptable alternative use. Consequently a less intrusive use should be sought which does not require so much alteration and extension to the buildings and which avoids destroying their special character. For the above reasons the proposed extension and alterations to the barn and cart shed would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the wider Conservation Area. The barn is prominent within the street scene and the Conservation Area and the proposal, which is considered to be visually intrusive, would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area. The alterations to the barns and the introduction of a formal business use and associated parking areas will materially detract from the simple, rural agricultural character of the site to the detriment of the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Manor Farmhouse, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and the visual quality of the street scene and surrounding countryside. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies DP/2 (a) that aims to preserve or enhance the character of the local area, CH/4 that aims to avoid development that would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building and CH/5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD, adopted July 2007, that aims to determine applications in accordance with legislative provisions and national policy currently in PPG15.
  3. The scheme is not in accordance with the requirements of Policy ET/7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD, adopted July 2007, as it fails to convert buildings without materially changing their existing character or impact upon the surrounding countryside due to the proposed extension and alterations to the barn and cart shed neither preserving nor enhancing the character of the wider area. The proposed changes to the barn will be prominent within the street scene and is considered to be visually intrusive, and therefore detrimental to the character of the site. The alterations to the barns and the introduction of a formal business use and associated parking areas will materially detract from the simple, rural



agricultural character of the site and the visual quality of the street scene and surrounding countryside.

4. The proposed development is contrary to the requirements of Policy DP/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD, adopted 2007, as it would involve the use of a vehicular access onto Main Street where visibility is severely restricted by a bank to the south of the access and would therefore be detrimental to highway safety.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007
- Regional Spatial Strategy - East of England Plan 2008
- PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas
- PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment
- Circular 11/1995 The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions
- Planning files Ref: S/0937/06/LB, S/0938/06/F, S/0111/07/LB, S/0112/07/F, S/0096/09/LB, S/0094/09/F and S/1830/09/F

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