

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

1 December 2010

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

S/1539/10 - HISTON

Variation of Condition 4 of Application ref.S/1318/09/F to Allow Alternate Tree Planting Scheme to Site Frontage. - Land to the south of 102, Cottenham Road for Dr Sally, Harding

Recommendation: Approve

Date for Determination: 4 November 2010

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because Officer recommendation is contrary to that of the Parish Council.

Site and Proposal

1. The site in question comprises approximately 0.10126 ha and is adjacent to No.102 Cottenham Road, which is a detached two-storey dwelling of a mid 20th century character set back from the street behind a tall landscaped and manicured boundary.
1. A detached two-storey dwelling was granted planning permission on the site in accordance with application reference S/1318/09/F. The dwelling is now almost complete but is not yet occupied.
2. The southern boundary of the site was previously formed by a corrugated sheet metal screen and untended hedging. This southern boundary is the edge of the development framework and Green Belt. To the front of the site there are two trees, one an Acer Drummondi and the other a Silver Birch, neither of these trees are afforded statutory protection.

Planning History

3. **S/0125/06/O** – Erection of 7 dwellings with the construction of new access and parking for the existing dwelling – Refused and dismissed at appeal.
4. **S/0645/08/F** – Erection of new dwelling and access and parking for existing dwelling – Approved
5. **S/1318/09/F** – Dwelling – Approved

Planning Policy

6. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007:**

DP/2 – Design of New Development

NE/6 – Biodiversity

Consultations

7. **Histon Parish Council** – Recommends refusal commenting ‘whereas the trees not remarkable, they are established, and were there prior to the commencement of building. The planning application was passed on condition the trees would remain as a screen between the house and the road; it is therefore surprising to note the owner now wishes to vary the condition before completion’.
8. **Tree Officer** – No objections to the proposed variation of condition 4 of application ref S/1318/09/F.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

9. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
1. The reason for the original condition
 2. The impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene

The reason for the original condition

10. The original scheme submitted and approved in accordance with application ref.S/1318/09/F indicated the applicants’ intention to retain the two trees to the front of the site; one an Acer Drummondi and the other a Silver Birch.
11. Planning approval S/1318/09/F was thus subject to a tree protection condition that sought to ensure that the trees indicated for retention would be adequately protected during the period building works in accordance with the applicants intentions and also to retain the soft character of the site desired in this location adjacent to the Green Belt and countryside.
12. Upon completion of the building works on site this conditional requirement will no longer be applicable and the site owners could lawfully remove the trees without seeking approval from the Local Planning Authority.

The impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene

13. Removal of the existing trees would have a visual impact upon the street scene. As indicated in the comments of the Parish Council, the trees in question are by no means remarkable, but they are relatively mature and act to partially screen the dwellinghouse.
14. Removal of the trees would therefore result in the dwellinghouse becoming more visually prominent and would create a starker transition to the adjacent countryside.

15. The applicants acknowledge this and seek to replace the trees like for like in a position further from the front elevation of the dwelling and closer to the highway as indicated on the submitted planting plan. Thus, if the replacement trees are allowed to grow, overtime the character of the street scene would return to its present state.
16. It is thus considered reasonable to vary the condition to ensure that the planting on site is carried out in accordance with the submitted plan. This would also allow an opportunity to apply a retention clause to the condition to ensure that the replacement trees are retained for a minimum period of time (typically 5 years) and replaced if damaged or die. Thus the situation whereby the owners of the site could lawfully remove the existing trees without replacement upon completion of the scheme would be circumnavigated in the short term.

Recommendation

17. **Approve**

Condition 4 to be varied as follows:

Prior to the occupation of the dwelling, hereby approved, the Silver Birch and Acer Drummondi shall be planted in accordance with the tree planting scheme as shown on drawing ref.SCDC1 and date stamped 9th September 2010. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007

Contact Officer: Matt Hare – Senior Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713180