

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 7th December 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/1869/05/F - Histon 3 Houses at 53 Cottenham Road for The Land Partnership

**Recommendation: Refusal
Date for Determination: 25th November 2005**

Site and Proposal

1. 53 Cottenham Road is a residential property with large gardens to the front, west and rear. The site measures 0.232 hectares. The existing house on the site is a fine 19th century villa built in Cambridgeshire gault bricks with a shallow hipped slate roof, however it is not Listed. There is a brick outbuilding attached to the house and a barn-like outbuilding to the west of it. The site contains a number of trees, including a row of pollarded limes to the frontage.
2. The site is within the village framework, forming a spur of land surrounded on three sides by open countryside. To the east there is a pair of thatched cottages at 59 and 61 Cottenham Road, which date from the 17th century and are Grade II Listed. 90 metres to the southwest is Guns Lane, a historic road that is designated as a bridleway.
3. This application received 30th September 2005 seeks full planning permission for three detached dwellings with a detached garage for the existing house. Three large four-bedroom houses are proposed. The site would be developed at a density of 17.39 dwellings per hectare (dph). The application was amended on 10th November 2005 to address highways comments on the access arrangements.

Planning History

4. **S/1982/02/O** granted outline planning permission for two single storey dwellings on the site. The existing dwelling was to be retained within this scheme.
5. **S/2044/04/F** sought planning permission for eight dwellings following the demolition of the existing dwelling. This application was withdrawn prior to refusal, as issues regarding the impact on the village edge, Green Belt and adjacent Listed Buildings had been raised in addition to concerns relating to access, car parking, layout and design.
6. Planning application **S/0075/05/F** for the erection of seven dwellings and a garage to serve the existing dwelling was withdrawn pending refusal on grounds of the impact on the village edge and Green Belt, design, layout and failure to provide an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes.
7. **S/0754/05/F** for the erection of 7 houses, retention of existing and garage for existing was refused at the June Committee, (item 7), on grounds that the development would have an unacceptable impact upon the village edge, was not in keeping with the

character of the area, and the design was not in keeping with the existing built form. An appeal is currently lodged against this decision.

Planning Policy

8. **Policy SE2 'Rural Growth Settlements'** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("Local Plan") defines Histon as a Rural Growth Settlement in which residential development will be permitted on unallocated land providing the development meets with the criteria of this and other policies included within the Local Plan.
9. **Policies 9/2a** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("Structure Plan") and **Policy GB2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan identify the purpose of the Green Belt and limits development to that which is 'appropriate'. and will preserve the openness of the Green Belt.
10. **Policy SE9 'Village Edges'** of the Local Plan requires development on the edge of villages to be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact upon the countryside and to ensure that harmony with the prevailing landscape character is achieved.
11. **Policy HG10 'Housing Mix and Design'** of the Local Plan requires developments to include a mix of housing types and sizes, with the design and layout being informed by the wider area.
12. **HG12 Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings within Frameworks** of the Local Plan sets out the requirements that must be met in order for proposals to extend or alter dwellings within village frameworks to be considered for approval.
13. **Policy TP1 'Planning for More Sustainable Travel'** of the Local Plan seeks to promote sustainable travel and as such planning permission will only be granted where small-scale increases in travel demands will result, unless satisfactory measures to increase accessibility are included. Standards for maximum car parking levels and requirements for cycle storage are found in Appendices 7/1 and 7/2.
14. **Policy EN15 'Development Affecting Ancient Monuments or Other Archaeological Sites'** of the Local Plan seeks to protect, preserve and enhance known and suspected sites and features of archaeological importance and their settings by requiring investigations and refusing planning permission where damage would result.
15. **Policy EN28 'Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building'** of the Local Plan requires proposals that affect the setting of Listed Buildings to not dominate, damage the setting, well-being, attractiveness of the building, or its visual relationship with the surroundings, or damage archaeological remains.
16. **Policy P1/2 'Environmental Restrictions on Development'** of Structure Plan restricts development where it could damage areas that should be retained for their biodiversity, historic, archaeological, architectural and recreational value.
17. **Policy P1/3 'Sustainable Design in Built Development'** of the Structure Plan states that a high standard of design and sustainability should be adopted for all new forms of development.
18. **Policy P5/3 - 'Density'** seeks to achieve best use of land.

19. **Policy P7/6 ‘Historic Built Environment’** of the Structure Plan requires Local Authorities to protect and enhance the historic environment, including designated conservation areas.

Consultations

20. **Histon Parish Council** recommends approval. Its comments on the amended access will be reported verbally.
21. The **Conservation Manager** objects to the design, which adopts a series of quasi-agricultural type structures in an unconvincing group, presents a large two-storey gable to the adjacent listed building, and has inadequate space for landscaping to the village edge, further stating:

“The concept behind the current proposal may be acceptable, but I believe it requires significant further development before it would be acceptable. I therefore recommend that the applicant be advised to withdraw the current proposal and to hold further discussions with officers before a revised application is submitted”.
22. The **Trees and Landscape Officer** raises no objections.
23. The **Local Highways Authority** requested amendments to the access, which have been received. Comments on the amendments will be reported verbally.
24. The **County Archaeology Office** advises that the site lies in an area of uncertain archaeological potential and it is possible that archaeological deposits survive on the site, which could be destroyed or damaged by the proposed development. The plot lies on the on the edge of the village, to the north of the historic core and site of St Etheldreda’s Church. Crop marks indicative of Prehistoric or Roman settlement and the remains of a possible Bronze Age barrow are known to the west of the site. A negative condition in accordance with PPG16, requiring a programme of archaeological investigation at the developer’s expense, is recommended.

Representations

25. No representations have been received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

26. The key issues in determining this planning application are the impact of the design and layout of the proposals on the village edge, character of the area, amenities of the existing dwelling, density and setting of the neighbouring listed buildings.

Impact of the layout and design

27. The three dwellings proposed are all substantial four-bedroom houses with double garages. Due to the size and bulk of these, the site will appear to be over-developed in contrast to the spacious layout of properties in the surrounding area. In effect the dwellings will be too large for the plots proposed and limited space for gardens and landscaping to the village edge.
28. The garden to serve plot 3 is between 3.0m and 6.5m in depth and mostly north facing and will be shaded by the dwelling and by plot 2, which is to the west. The need for landscaping to the village edge also reduces the openness of views to

countryside beyond and will result in the garden having a dark and unappealing feel.

29. Similarly, inadequate garden space has been retained to serve the existing dwelling. The garage proposed to serve the existing house is located at an angle, to the rear of the house, with land associated with plot 3 beyond. Plans indicate that some further land may be included from the garden of the adjoining dwelling, however this is not within the applicant's ownership and so cannot be guaranteed
30. The scheme fails to provide a mix of house sizes and types and as such is contrary to policy HG10.
31. The Conservation Manager has raised issues relating to the design in relation to the adjacent Listed Buildings and village edge and considers the proposals to be harmful to the setting of the listed buildings, particularly from plot 3. In addition, the appearance of the village edge will be harmed due to the failure to incorporate adequate amenity space and landscaping.

Inefficient use of land

32. The proposed development makes inefficient use of land, with a density of just 17.39 dph. Histon is a rural growth settlement with good access to public transport, facilities and services scheme. While the site is on the village edge the proposed scheme fails to provide a density that makes best use of the land and the applicant has not demonstrated that there are strong design grounds for such a low density.

Recommendation

33. Refusal on the following grounds:
 - a) The character of the area is one of spacious plots in an edge of village location, which is adjacent to the Cambridge Green Belt. The proposed development will result in an appearance of overdevelopment of the site due to the size, footprint and siting of the buildings which does not reflect the spacious existing character of the built area and will be harmful to the openness and rural character of the adjacent Green Belt. As such, the proposals do not accord with policies SE2 (Rural Growth Villages) and GB2 (Green Belt) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004.
 - b) The proposed dwelling at plot 3 and the existing dwelling will be served by inadequate private amenity space and as such occupiers will have poor amenity. In addition, the scheme fails to provide an appropriate mix of house sizes and types, which has in part resulted in the site having an appearance of overdevelopment, and is contrary to policy HG10 (Housing Mix and Design) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004.
 - c) The design and scale of plot 3 will be harmful to the setting, visual relationship and curtilage of the adjacent Listed Buildings and as such is contrary to policy EN28 (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004.
 - d) The proposed development makes inefficient use of land, with a density of just 17.39 dph. The application does not demonstrate that there are strong design grounds for such a low density and as such is contrary to PPG3, Policy P5/3 (Density) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003, and SE2 (Rural Growth Settlements) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004.

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 refs. S/1869/05/F, S/0754/05/F, S/0075/05/F, S/2044/04/F and S/1982/02/O

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