

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

**S/1613/05/F - Linton
4 Houses at 9 High Street for P Sargent**

**Recommendation: Refusal
Date for determination: 13th October 2005**

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. The application relates to a 0.09 hectares/0.22 acres site occupied by a pitched roof workshop, a flat roof office, flat roof toilet buildings and hardstanding. It is now vacant but was previously used as a vehicle servicing and repair garage. The site rises to the south. There is a dropped kerb along the whole of the site's High Street frontage. The Crown PH is situated to the north. Its car park and garden to the rear are set down below the level of the site. A terrace of 4no. 2-storey houses with accommodation in the roofspace accessed from Cambridge Road is located to the west. No.2 Cambridge Road, a detached bungalow set up approximately 1 metre above the level of the site, and No.7 High Street, a two-storey house accessed from Cambridge Road with a detached garage to the rear and a sitting out area in its northern corner, lie to the south of the site. The site has an open frontage. There is a 1.4m high approximately wall along the boundary with The Crown's car park/garden. A flint wall, fence and the rear of an outbuilding within No.2 mark the boundary between the site and No.2 Cambridge Road. The boundary to No.7 High Street is marked by a mix of walls and fencing.
2. This full application, registered on the 18th August 2005 and amended by plan date stamped the 17th October 2005, proposes the erection of a terrace of 2no. 2-bedroom and 2no. 3-bedroom dwellings following the demolition of the existing buildings on the site. The dwellings would be 7.5 metres high to ridge, 5 metres high to eaves and would be faced with brickwork and boarding and would have a slate roof. 6no car parking spaces and on-site turning would be provided. The existing access, reduced in width to 5 metres, would be used. A refuse space would be provided close to the High Street frontage, with each dwelling being provided with bin stores. The density equates to 44 dwellings to the hectare.

Planning History

3. A previous application for 4 houses on the site was withdrawn (**S/2127/04/F**).
4. A Conservation Area Consent application for the demolition of the former garage/workshop building is yet to be determined (**S/2126/04/CAC**).

Planning Policy

5. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/3** requires a high standard of design for all new development which responds to the local character of the built environment.

6. Local Plan 2004 **Policy SE2** states that residential development will be permitted on unallocated land within Linton provided that (a) the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; (b) the development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours; (c) the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity; and (d) residential development would not conflict with another policy of the Plan, particularly policy EM8 which relates to the loss of employment sites. It also states that development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings to the hectare unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.
7. Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG10** states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. It also states that the design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency.
8. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EM8** states that the conversion, change of use or re-development of existing employment sites to non-employment uses within village frameworks will be resisted unless the existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution or unacceptable levels of traffic or where it is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand. The supporting text states that applications will need to be accompanied by documentary evidence that the sites are not suitable or capable of being made suitable for continued employment use, including evidence that the property has been adequately marketed for a period of not less than 12 months on terms that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises.
9. Local Plan 2004 **Policy TP1** states that the Council will seek, through its decisions on planning applications, to promote more sustainable transport choices and to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, by amongst other things restricting car parking to a maximum of an average of 1½ spaces plus ¼ space for visitors per dwelling.
10. Local Plan 2004 **Policy CS10** states that, where permission is granted for residential development of 4 or more dwellings, financial contributions will be sought towards the provision of additional permanent or temporary education accommodation in those cases where the new development would cause the planning capacity of permanent buildings at the local primary or secondary schools to be exceeded during the 5 years following the date of the application.

Consultation

11. **Linton Parish Council** recommends approval but asks that the amended site layout be referred to Highways for their comment.
12. **Conservation Manager** states that the revised scheme overcomes his original concerns and has no objection to the scheme as amended subject to conditions relating to materials and landscaping.

13. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections subject to the imposition of conditions and an informative relating to the times when power operated machinery shall not be operated during the construction period except in accordance with agreed noise restrictions, driven pile foundations, a site investigation and a remedial strategy and stating that there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site during construction except with his Department's prior permission. It is not aware of any recent complaints about any environmental problems caused by the previous garage use of the site.
14. **Building Control Surveyor** confirms that the general layout re. Fire Brigade access appears acceptable.
15. **Local Highway Authority** does not object to the proposal as amended but states that the turning head is only suitable to serve the turning movements of cars. Delivery vehicles etc will be forced to reverse into the site from High Street or reverse out of the site onto High Street. It remains concerned about the number of parking spaces and resultant on-street parking.
16. **Environment Agency** raises no objections subject to the imposition of conditions relating to surface water drainage and ground contamination investigation, assessment and remediation.
17. **County Education** seeks a £10,000 contribution towards education provision as it is concerned that adequate secondary school capacity is not available at Linton Village College where pupils residing at the site would be expected to attend.
18. **Cambs Fire & Rescue Service** states that access and facilities should be provided in accordance with Building Regulations and the responsibility for approving details rests with Building Control.
19. **County Archaeology** recommends that a condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation is attached to any permission.

Representations

20. Occupiers of 7 High Street and Queens House raise the following concerns:
 - a. Need to ensure dwellings do not now or in the future overlook or result in a loss of light to 7 High Street;
 - b. The use of boarding is totally out of keeping with this part of High Street and would be very overpowering when viewed from 7 High Street;
 - c. Loss of light to 7 High Street;
 - d. Absolute guarantees are required that any damage to 7 High Street's garden wall and/or garden when the office and lavatory block are demolished is repaired;
 - f. Who will maintain the strip of land to the front of the dwellings?;
 - g. Inadequate parking provision;
 - h. Will the High Street footpath be redefined and will public lighting be installed?;
 - i. Wheelie bin storage;
 - j. Sewage and drainage disposal;
 - k. Can the smallest bedrooms accommodate beds?;
 - k. Need to ensure any overground telephone masts do not conflict with the external layout.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

21. The main issues in relation to this application are: the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the impact on neighbours; highway matters and parking provision; and the loss of an employment site.
22. The scheme as amended is considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Manager suggests that the vertical weatherboarding on the north east and south west elevations should be painted a pale colour. Indeed, the reduction in the width of the access provides an opportunity for welcome landscaping to soften the appearance of the site frontage. First floor windows are either high level or would overlook The Crown's car park and garden. The scheme would not be unduly overbearing and would not result in undue overlooking, loss of light to or loss of outlook from neighbouring properties.
23. Whilst delivery vehicles would have to reverse into or from the site, the scheme is for 4 houses and such manoeuvres are likely to be infrequent. Six car parking spaces for 4 dwellings is considered to be appropriate towards the centre of a Rural Growth Settlement with access to public transport.
24. Whilst the scheme is considered to be acceptable in all other respects, Local Plan Policies EM8 and SE2(d) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and the supporting text state that applications for the redevelopment of existing employment sites will only be supported if they are generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution or traffic or, alternatively, if it has been demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand.
25. There is no evidence that the use of the site has caused environmental problems and it has not been demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand. With regard to marketing, the agents confirmed that the previous tenants have located to another site in the village and, whilst there has been no official marketing as a commercial site, there have been no enquiries to the applicant in this respect.

Recommendation

26. Refusal (as amended by drawing no. SC.163.6 rev.B date stamped 17.10.05).
26. The proposed development is contrary to Policies EM8 and SE2(d) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which only support the redevelopment of existing employment sites if they are generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution or traffic or, alternatively, if it has been demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand.

There is no evidence that the use of the site has caused environmental problems or, by way of marketing or any other means, that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand.

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/1613/05/F, S/2127/04/F and S/2126/04/CAC.

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