

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 7th December 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/2040/05/F - Fen Ditton

Dwelling at Meadow View, off High Street for Mr. David Frost and Mr. Derek Frost

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 28th December 2005

Conservation Area

Members will visit the site on Monday 5th December 2005.

Site and Proposal

1. The site measures 0.064 hectares, of which 0.048 hectares is developable land. The site is served by a 3.6 metre wide and 27 metre long access track that runs between 36 and 38 High Street. This also provides access to outbuildings at the rear of 26-36 High Street and to a field north of the site. There is an area of wooded land between the site and fields beyond. The land immediately to the north of the site lies within the Green Belt. The site itself is relatively flat, however it is located above the ground level of properties fronting High Street. There are two vacant mobile homes currently located on the site and an outbuilding comprising a carport and store.
2. This full planning application, registered on 26th October 2005, proposes the erection of a two-bedroom bungalow with integral garage with access via the existing track. The density of the development will be 20.8 dwellings per hectare (dph).

Planning History

3. In 1970 planning permission was granted for the siting of one caravan under ref. **C/0690/70**. Subsequently temporary planning permission was granted for the siting of two mobile homes under ref. **S/0226/79** and this was renewed twice under references **S/1684/89/F** and **S/1917/91/F** before permanent permission was granted in 1996 under ref. **S/1587/95/F**.
4. Earlier this year an outline planning application for two houses on this site was refused under ref. **S/0434/05/O**. The grounds for refusal were: (summarised):
 - a. Out of keeping with the strong linear character of the High Street and failure to enhance or preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
 - b. It would create an unsympathetic and intrusive form of development that will fail to preserve the openness of the surrounding countryside and Green Belt;
 - c. Harm to neighbouring amenities as the development would be overbearing visually, result in overlooking of rear gardens, and noise and disturbance from use of the access;
 - d. Highway safety due to inadequate visibility splays;
 - e. Lack of affordable housing.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:

5. **Policy P1/3 Sustainable Design in Built Development** seeks to provide a sense of place, which amongst other matters, responds to the local character of the built environment and is sustainable.
6. **Policy P5/3 - Density** seeks to achieve best use of land.
7. **Policy P5/5 – Homes in Rural Areas** permits small scale housing developments in villages taking into account the need for affordable rural housing, village character and setting and the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and public transport in the area.
8. **Policy P7/6 - Historic Built Environment** will be protected and enhanced by sensitive schemes of quality.
9. **Policy P9/2a - Green Belt** limits development within the green belt, the purpose of which is to preserve the character of Cambridge, maintain and enhance its setting and to prevent coalescent of communities.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:

10. **Policy SE4 - Allocates Fen Ditton** as a 'Group' Village where development of up to a maximum of 8 dwellings will be permitted within village frameworks. Development may exceptionally consist of up to 15 dwellings if this would make the best use of a brownfield site.
11. **Policy SE9 - Village Edges** - any scheme on the edge of a village should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact on the countryside.
12. **Policy HG10 - Housing Mix and Design** requires residential developments to include a mix of units in terms of type, size, and affordability, making best use of land and for the design and layout of schemes to be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape.
13. **Policy HG11 - Backland Development** only permits development to the rear of existing properties when it would not 1) result in overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of existing properties 2) result in noise and disturbance to existing residential properties through the use of its access, 3) result in highway dangers through use of its access or 4) be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
14. **Policy GB1 - Green Belt** - the setting and special character of Cambridge will be protected.
15. **Policy GB2 - Green Belt** - inappropriate development will not be granted unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated, the fundamental aim being to protect the character and openness of the Green Belt.
16. **Policy EN5 - The Landscaping of New Development** - new development will require appropriate landscaping schemes to be submitted and agreed. Existing features on site i.e. trees and hedgerows, should be retained and incorporated into the scheme.

17. **Policy EN30 - Development in Conservation Areas** - expect new developments to enhance and/or preserve the character of a Conservation Area.
18. **Policy EN31** - Expects high standards of materials and landscaping in a Conservation Area.

Consultations

19. **Fen Ditton Parish Council** recommends refusal and comments that it is against backland development and does not feel the proposed dwelling would be in keeping with the area.
20. **The Conservation Manager** recommends refusal, commenting:

“This application follows the refusal of a previous application for a pair of semi-detached dwellings on the same site. Whilst this current application will have a smaller impact, and see the removal of two mobile homes on the site, I remain of the opinion that it will result in an inappropriate backland development that will be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity and, on balance, it will still neither preserve nor enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EN30 of the Local Plan. Removal of the mobile homes would be an enhancement of the Conservation Area, but their replacement by a dwelling could set a precedent for further backland development on adjacent sites that would result in further harm to the Conservation Area.

As backland development the proposal should also be assessed against the requirements of Policy HG11 of the Local Plan. The adoption of a single storey solution might avoid the issue of overbearing development and overlooking of existing properties, but I believe it is still in conflict with the remaining three criteria of this policy in that:

- a) The development will result in noise and disturbance to the existing residential properties through the use of its access;
 - b) The access has very limited visibility and is near a bend, so will result in highway dangers;
 - c) The development will be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.”
21. **The Trees and Landscape Officer’s** comments are awaited and will be reported verbally to the Committee.
 22. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** comments that in order to minimise the effects of development on nearby residents or occupiers a condition should be attached covering hours of construction using power operated machinery. Informatives regarding bonfires and pile foundations is also recommended.
 23. **The Local Highways Authority** comments that there is a lack of pedestrian and vehicular visibility splays. The poor geometry and visibility of the existing access is not adequate to serve the existing traffic so is certainly not suitable to cater for any further development. Notwithstanding, the site comprises two mobile homes which, if they have been occupied until recently, then vehicles associated with them would have been using the access and it would be difficult to sustain an objection to one replacement dwelling.

Representations

24. No representations had been received at the time of writing. However the statutory consultation period does not expire until the 29th November 2005. Any representations received will be reported verbally to the Committee.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

25. The key issues in relation to this proposal are the impact on the Conservation Area, whether the site is appropriate for backland development and highway safety.

Conservation Area

26. The site is currently occupied by two mobile homes with permanent consent. While these are relatively modest structures, the replacement with a permanent single storey, albeit of greater footprint, is in the long-term considered to be preferable in terms of the impact upon the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Backland Development

27. The High Street has a very linear character, however there is an established use of the site for residential purposes. In the long-term, as stated in paragraph 26 above, I consider that the replacement of the two mobile homes with a permanent dwelling of modest scale, using appropriate materials, will enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area, and as such accords with conservation and backland development policies.

Highways

28. The proposed development will reduce the number of vehicles using the access, as it will serve only one dwelling as opposed to two mobile homes. There is an established relationship in terms of the access and neighbouring dwellings, which is unlikely to alter significantly as a result of these proposals.
29. The Local Highways Authority acknowledges that as there is a permanent residential use on the site, refusal of this application for one dwelling would be difficult to substantiate. It is acknowledged that the access is sub-standard, however reducing the number of residences using it is a gain in highway terms.

Recommendation

30. Subject to no objections being received from the Trees and Landscape Officer it is recommended that the planning application be approved, subject to the following conditions:
1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
 2. Sc5 a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5aii)
d – Refuse storage accommodation (Rc5d)
e – Finished floor levels of the building in relation in ground level(Rc5e);
 3. Sc22 – No further windows (specify 'east, south and west) (Rc22)
 4. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
 5. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
 6. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);

7. Sc5f – Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas (Reason – To minimise disturbance to adjoining residents);
8. During the period of construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 hours on weekdays and 08.00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18.00 hours on weekdays and 13.00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays) unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions. (Reason - To minimise noise and disturbance to nearby residential dwellings.)

Informatives

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted to and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
2. During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.
3. See attached Environment Agency advice regarding soakaways.

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:** P1/3 Sustainable Design in Built Development, P5/3 - Density, P5/5 – Homes in Rural Areas, P7/6 - Historic Built Environment, P9/2a - Green Belt
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** SE4 - Group Villages SE9 - Village Edges, HG10 - Housing Mix and Design, HG11 - Backland Development, GB1 - Green Belt, GB2 - Green Belt EN5 - The Landscaping of New Development, EN30 and EN31 - Development in Conservation Areas.
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Conservation Area
 - Residential amenity
 - Highway safety

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/2040/05/F, S/0434/05/O, and S/1587/95/F.

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