

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 4<sup>th</sup> January 2006  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/1984/05/F - Orwell**  
**Extension to Clubhouse, Erection of Pro-shop with Ground Keeper's Flat and Erection of 6 Accommodation Lodges for Kentford Developments Limited**

**Recommendation: Refusal**  
**Determination Date: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2005**

### Site and Proposal

1. The application site lies to the south of Orwell and west of Shepreth. It is an established golf course that caters for "pay and play" customers as well as club members.
2. The existing facilities include a clubhouse building, approximately 6.5m in height, that is clad in black stained timber weather boarding with a clay plain tiled roof. It provides a bar, dining area, a small reception and pro shop, toilets and changing rooms, a small store and kitchen.
3. There is a car park at the front of the building and to the west, a golf driving range and another building serving as a machinery store.
4. The full planning application, received on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2005 proposes an extension to the clubhouse building that would be approximately 10m in height, the erection of a shop with ground keeper's flat above, approximately 7.5m in height with a floor area of approximately 240m<sup>2</sup> and the erection of 6 self contained accommodation lodges, approximately 4.3m in height and with a footprint of approximately 100m<sup>2</sup> each.
5. The application includes a statement in support of the application which can be viewed as one of the background papers. It seeks essentially to explain the proposal and the design approach and to justify it in terms of need and visual impact. It also seeks to demonstrate that the proposal is in full compliance with relevant Development Plan Policies.

### Planning History

6. The golf course was first granted planning permission in March 1991. Permission for the clubhouse and ground keeper's dwelling was subsequently granted in April 1991 (clubhouse approximately 9m in height). However these buildings were not erected. Following permission for a temporary clubhouse building, permission was granted in 1996 for a permanent clubhouse that was smaller than that approved in 1991. This is the existing building (approximately 6.5m in height).
7. Planning permission to extend the current clubhouse was granted in July 2004. The extensions do not increase the overall height of the building.

### Planning Policy

8. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (the Structure Plan) states that development in the countryside will be restricted unless the proposal can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.

9. **Policy P4/1** of the Structure Plan states in part that tourism, recreation and leisure development should protect or improve the local environment and landscape. It should strengthen and diversify the local economy, particularly in Peterborough and North Cambridgeshire.
10. **Policy RT1** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (the Local Plan) – Recreation and Tourism Development states in part that: the District Council will have regard to the need for such facilities and the benefits which might accrue. Proposals will be resisted which would by reason of its scale, form, design and materials, together with any associated development such as clubhouses, pavilions, and other buildings and structures would create an intrusive feature in the landscape or surrounding area.
11. **Policy RT11** of the Local Plan – Tourist-related development outside frameworks states that: “Development to provide overnight visitor accommodation, public houses and restaurants will not be permitted outside the framework of settlements except (where the site is outside the Green Belt) in the cases of modest extensions to existing facilities or the change of use/conversion of existing buildings not requiring large extensions”.

### **Consultation**

12. **Orwell Parish Council** recommends approval
13. **Local Highways Authority** - no objections – increase in traffic is likely to be modest.
14. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** - no objections
15. **Environment Agency** objects. It identifies the site as being within zones 2 and 3 of the Agency’s Indicative Floodzone mapping. The proposed development would be at risk of flooding and would increase the risk of flooding to existing property. A Flood Risk Assessment should be submitted with the application. No such assessment has been submitted and the flood risk has therefore not been considered.

### **Representations**

16. None

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

17. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
  - The need for the development
  - The visual impact on the countryside and rural landscape
  - The risk of flooding
18. The applicant has identified that the business has grown and the existing facilities in the clubhouse are inadequate. I accept there is a need for the existing facilities to be improved and agree that an extension to the existing facilities would be justified to achieve this. However, extant planning permission exists for an extension to the clubhouse to provide additional space that does not increase the height of the existing building.
19. The proposed extension is approximately 10m high at its highest point. This, together with its overall bulk, will have a detrimental impact on the visual quality of the surrounding countryside and will be particularly visible in the landscape when viewed from the southerly approach along Malton Road.

The countryside is particularly open in this location and a building of this height and scale would be visually damaging. I am mindful of the permission granted in 1990 for a building of some 9m in height but I consider that this proposal would have even greater impact.

20. The shop and flat will replace extant permission for a ground keeper's dwelling and will be approximately 0.9m higher than that approved but I do not consider this to be a significant increase.
21. The six accommodation units will be completely self-contained. I do not consider that the information contained within the application demonstrates that these are essential to the efficient running of the golf course or necessary for the continuing viability of the business, particularly in view of its small "pay and play" nature (required by S106 on the original planning permission). I also feel these will be visually detrimental, introducing as they do some combined 600m<sup>2</sup> of floor area and residential uses into the open countryside. I accept that landscaping could help to assimilate them, particularly as they are relatively low in height, but this does not, in my view, overcome the above objections.
22. Policy RT11 allows for a modest extension of existing facilities for tourist related developments in the countryside. I do not consider the residential units to be modest when taken together and I do not consider them to be an extension of the existing facilities since they will introduce a new facility, namely overnight self-contained accommodation.
23. The application has not been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and flood risk has not therefore been considered. No planning permission can be considered in advance of such a consideration.

### **Recommendation**

Refusal for the following reasons:

1. The proposed extension to the clubhouse, by reason of its height and bulk, will have a detrimental impact on the visual quality of the surrounding countryside and the open green character of the rural landscape, particularly when viewed looking south from Malton Road. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies RT1 and EN1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
2. The introduction into the golf course of the proposed self contained residential units has not been demonstrated to be essential in this rural location, they will represent intrusive features in the landscape and do not amount to a modest extension of the existing facilities. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies RT1, RT11 and EN1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003.
3. The planning application is not accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. The proposal is premature in advance of the consideration of such an assessment.

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

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning Files reference: S/1984/05/F (including applicants supporting statements) and S/1166/04/F

**Contact Officer:** Nigel Blazeby – Senior Planning Assistant  
Telephone: (01954) 713256