

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Development and Conservation Control Committee	1 <sup>st</sup> February 2006
<b>AUTHOR/S:</b>	Director of Development Services	

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**S/2330/05/F- Shudy Camps**  
**Change of Use of Land from Agricultural to the Storage of Wood and Wood Products**  
**other than Forestry Products (Retrospective Application) at Land Adjacent The Old**  
**Stack Yard, Mill Green for Mr P. Haylock**

**Recommendation: Refusal**  
**Date for Determination: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2006**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site is a triangular shaped piece of land that is situated to the east of Mill Green and immediately to the south of the Old Stack Yard, outside the village framework of Shudy Camps and in the countryside and South Suffolk and North Essex Claydon Landscape Character Area. It measures approximately 0.05 hectares in area and is currently used for the storage of wood products and old machinery without consent. A high leylandii hedge screens the site from The Old Stack Yard. The boundaries to the open fields to the rear and the road frontage comprise young leylandii trees. There is a gated access on to Mill Green.
2. This retrospective application, received on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005, proposes the use of the site for the storage of wood and wood products unrelated to forestry.

### **Planning History**

3. Retrospective planning permission was granted in 1991 (ref. **S/0653/91/F**) for a change of use of redundant agricultural buildings forming part of The Old Stack Yard site to timber recycling, storage and sale. Retrospective planning permission was granted in 1998 (ref. **S/1710/97/F**) for change of use of buildings and yard as an extension to The Old Stack Yard to timber recycling, storage and sale.

### **Planning Policy**

4. Policy **P1/2** of the **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003** restricts development in the countryside unless it is demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
5. Policy **EN1** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004** states that planning permission will not be granted for development that would have an adverse affect upon the character and distinctiveness of Landscape Character Areas.
6. Policy **EM7** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004** supports the expansion of existing firms but only within village frameworks or on suitable brownfield sites next to or very close to village frameworks.

### **Consultation**

7. **Shudy Camps Parish Council** approves the application. Please find the comments from each councillor reported below: -

*Councillor 1-* “Recommend approval subject to conditions. The area for which the planning approval is being sought has been fenced off and used for storage for a considerable period of time. We have not raised any objection in the past and it would be difficult to object now, if the land was being used for the purpose for which approval is being applied for i.e. storage of wood and wood products. However, although this was initially the case, the land in question has now become a dumping ground for old pieces of farm and other machinery and this created an eyesore to the detriment of its rural location. In addition, much of the wood left on the site has rotted, adding to the general untidiness. Furthermore, I understand that action is currently being taken by SCDC regarding non-compliance with one condition of the original planning approval for the main stack yard, in that space is not being provided on site for parking and turning for at least two customer vehicles. This is clearly a road safety issue. My view is that approval should only be granted when the old machinery now cluttering the site has been removed and the conditions on the original approval have been complied with.”

*Councillor 2-* “Approve subject to compliance with strict planning conditions now and in the future.”

*Councillor 3-* “No objection as long as site is cleared up.”

*Councillor 4-* “Approve subject to conditions.”

*Councillor 5-* “No objection in principle, but if granting planning permission allows the growth of what is already an eyesore then it should be refused.”

8. The **Environment Agency** has no objections providing no part of the site would be used for formulation, storage or use of chlorinated organic solvents or timber treatment. It also recommends the inclusion of various informatives should consent be granted.

### **Representations**

9. The occupier of Mill Green House, which is situated opposite The Old Stack Yard, comments that the site is an eyesore and whilst it was initially being used for the storage of wood, it is now a dumping ground for old machinery such as rusty tractors, containers, trailers, train carriages, fork lifts, and metal. He also refers to non-compliance with the condition regarding parking and turning on the original planning consent and highway safety issues and only recommends approval once the old machinery cluttering the site has been removed and the conditions of the original approval complied with.

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

10. The main issue to consider in the determination of this application relate to whether there is a demonstrable need for the proposed use in this particular rural location and the impact of the use upon the character and appearance of the countryside.

11. Whilst it is acknowledged that the adjacent site at The Old Stack Yard was granted planning permission for timber recycling, storage and sale in 1998, the site comprised a number of redundant agricultural buildings and the development plan at the time supported re- use of such buildings for commercial purposes.
12. The site subject to this application was originally open agricultural land prior to its current use for the storage of timber products and old machinery. Whilst the expansion of existing firms is supported within village frameworks and on brownfield sites next to or very close to village frameworks, this application relates to a greenfield site that is located approximately 1 km from the Shudy Camps village framework. The retention of the use of the site for the storage of wood and wood products not related to forestry is not considered appropriate in this rural location and would result in a visually intrusive development that would adversely affect the openness and rural character of the area.
13. The applicant has not demonstrated that the use is essential in this particular rural location, although I have written and requested this information. Any response will be reported verbally at the meeting.

### **Recommendation**

A Refusal of the application for the following reason:

The change of use of land from agriculture to the storage of wood and wood products unrelated to forestry would result in an inappropriate and visually intrusive development that would harm the rural character and openness of the countryside. The applicant has not demonstrated an essential need for the use in this particular rural location. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 that restricts development in the countryside unless it can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location, and Policy EN1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 that states that planning permission will not be granted for development that would have an adverse effect upon the character and distinctiveness of Landscape Character Areas.

AND

- B. In addition that authorisation to be given to instigate formal enforcement action to secure the removal of wood products and machinery and to secure the cessation of the unauthorised use of the land within 3 months of the notice coming into effect. If the Notice is not complied with within the specified period, that prosecutions be authorised subject to a reconsideration of material circumstances at the time.

**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 File References S/2330/05/F, S/1710/97/F & S/0653/91/F

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