

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

S/2322/05/F- Comberton Replacement Dwelling at 14 Green End for Warmwell Homes Ltd

Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 31st January 2006

Site and Proposal

1. This application, received on 6th December 2005, proposes the erection of a two-storey dwelling as a replacement for the existing bungalow on a 0.3 hectare plot with a frontage of 38 metres and a depth of approximately 170 metres.
2. 14 Green End is one of five bungalows built immediately to the north of the village hall. The existing bungalow is of pre-fabricated construction and clearly in need of significant repair, being fenced off with the windows boarded up.
3. The existing bungalow is sited approximately 22 metres from the site frontage and has a length of approximately 11.8 metres. The footprint of the existing bungalow is 78.515 square metres. The proposed new dwelling is to be sited 17.8 metres from the frontage, has a length of 12.2 metres and a footprint of approximately 160 square metres.
4. The current proposals are a re-submission of a previous application refused in October 2005 under reference S/1520/05/F. A number of minor changes have been incorporated into the current proposals, which are considered later in this report. The density remains 3 dwellings per hectare.

Planning History

5. **S/1515/05/O-** Two dwellings and garages following demolition of existing dwelling. This was refused under officer delegated powers in September 2005. An appeal is pending.
6. **S/1520/05/F-** One dwelling and garage following demolition of existing dwelling. This was refused at Committee by notice dated 6th October 2005, following a site visit. There were two reasons for refusal, as follows:
 1. The proposed house would be contrary to Policy SE4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 in that the size, height, bulk and extent across the width of the site would not be in character with the spacious setting of adjoining houses to the north of the site; consequently the proposal would not be sensitive to the character of this part of the village.
 2. The height, bulk and siting of the proposed house close to the north boundary of the site would appear dominant in the outlook from the south facing windows of number 16 Green End and would cause overshadowing and a reduction in light to

that property, contrary to Policy SE4 of the Local Plan 2004, which aims to ensure that development is sensitive to the amenities of neighbours.

An appeal is pending.

7. A tree preservation order covers the existing walnut, horse chestnut and hornbeam on the site (**reference 12/05/SC**).

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan:

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

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan:

9. Policy **SE4** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan identifies Comberton as a Group Village in which residential development and redevelopment up to a maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted 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
 - d) Residential development would not conflict with any other policy of the Plan, particularly Policy **EM8** (loss of employment sites)
10. Policy **SE9** of the Local Plan states that development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the countryside.
11. Policy **HG10** of the Local Plan states that the design and layout of residential development should be informed by the wider context of the local townscape and landscape.
12. Policy **EN6** of the Local Plan explains that the District Council will make orders and notices to protect trees and hedges where it considers that they contribute to local amenity or have visual or historical significance.
13. **Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 3**, "Housing", advocates making more efficient use of land, while at the same time ensuring that the quality of the environment is protected. Considerations of design and layout should be informed by the wider context and development should be designed sympathetically and laid out in keeping with the character of the village.

Consultations

14. **Comberton Parish Council** recommends refusal on the following grounds:
- a) The proposed dwelling is too big to be in keeping with the plot compared to other houses on Green End and their plots.
 - b) The proposed dwelling is too big compared to the bungalow it replaces.
 - c) Disapprove of the suggestion of laurel for the hedge (fast growing and non-compostable and similar hedges have encroached on pathways elsewhere along Green End).
 - d) The proposed dwelling is two storeys high, thus overshadowing neighbouring properties (would prefer 1.5 storeys at the most). Notes that the sun direction shown on the plan is incorrect.
 - e) The proposed dwelling is very wide for the plot it is to be built on

The Parish Council does agree that the land must be developed, however they feel that the current application makes inconsequential changes compared to the previous application.

15. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** recommended two informatives to be added to any approval regarding the demolition of the existing property.

Representations

16. The occupiers of No.12 Green End object on the following grounds:
- a) The proposed dwelling is extremely large, which is not in keeping with the other houses on Green End.
 - b) There would be a loss of privacy to No12 as the upper windows would overlook the garden.
 - c) Unable to see any major changes compared with the previous proposals.
17. The occupiers of No.16 Green End object on the following grounds:
- a) A building of this scale and style is inappropriate for this site. The proposed building would significantly overshadow, overlook and dominate the outlook of adjacent houses. The style is inappropriate for the area.
 - b) The new plan appears to have reduced the ridge height by less than 0.3 metre (approximately 3.5%). The style, floorplan and positioning on the site are similar to the earlier application. The new application indicates that the proposed house would not significantly reduce sunlight to the house immediately to its south - this is incorrect.
 - c) The proposed house would cause severe outlook problems and a massive barrier to light.
 - d) A reduction of 200-300mm from the original proposal has a very small benefit compared with the original submission.
 - e) The increased width of the eastern (rear) 'wing' would make things even worse than the previous application.
 - f) The reduction in height is a virtually insignificant improvement.

- g) The applicant assumes that the 'bay window is not the primary window to the lounge' - but it is on the south side, so his assumption is incorrect.
- h) The proposed application would significantly overlook and overshadow many of the other existing windows of number 16 Green End that have a southern and eastern outlook, as well as the garden area. This is not the case at the present.
- i) The revised plans have not taken into consideration any of the previous reasons for refusal. The new submission does not address the deficiencies identified with the previous submission.

18. The occupiers of No.18 Green End object on the following grounds:

- a) The overall size of the dwelling appears to have not been reduced, but is still extremely large for the site. It will still overpower numbers 12 and 16 Green End.
- b) The height of the proposed dwelling has only been reduced very slightly. The front gable on the western elevation has not been reduced in height and the roof ridge has only been lowered by 200 mm. the eaves on the southern elevation have only been reduced very slightly.
- c) The 'neo-classical' design style remains aesthetically inappropriate.
- d) The applicant still proposes to use laurel for hedging and plant two ash trees in the front garden. The wisdom and suitability of these plantings are questioned.
- e) The floor area of the proposed dwelling has increased in size.
- f) Believe that the proposed dwelling is still too large for the site and the size, height and bulk are out of character with the adjoining and nearby properties. The scale and design of the proposed house is not sensitive to the character of this part of the village.

19. The occupiers of No. 29 Green End object on the following grounds:

- a) The revised plans contain no substantive revisions, and do not meet the issues raised in the rejection of the original plans.
- b) The height and bulk of the proposed house are still too large for this site. The revised plans show a reduction in roof height of 20cm, a trivial change given the overall mass of the house. The northern elevation is particularly severe.
- c) The proposed building is too broad and too deep for the plot, currently occupied by a single storey building matching number 12 Green End. The increased footprint is too great.
- d) It is regrettable that the architect has not sought to reflect the listed building opposite (number 19 Green End). The proposed dwelling is non-descript and fails to respect the built character of Comberton, particularly the adjacent Conservation Area.
- e) The architect appears to have made little effort to address the problems with the original proposals.

20. The occupiers of No. 29 Hines Lane object on the following grounds:

- a) The application is virtually indistinguishable from its predecessor, and thus the grounds for the previous refusal hold true for the new application.
- b) The proposals are dull, unoriginal and eco-unfriendly in design.

- c) The plot could contain an imaginative, low-rooflined, architecturally inspired and environmentally friendly dwelling.
- d) The back garden could be used for the installation of a ground-source heat pump, the south aspect could include solar PV panels and glass for passive solar heating, following a model of carbon neutrality.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

- 21. The site is located within the village framework where there is a presumption in favour of residential development. It is worth noting that the site is located on an edge of the village and is adjacent to the Green Belt.
- 22. The proposal therefore needs to be assessed against criteria in Policy P1/3 of the Structure Plan, and Policies SE4, SE9 and HG10 of the Local Plan.

Amendments to the previous application

- 23. Under reference S/1520/05/F planning permission was refused for the erection of one dwelling on the application site in a decision notice dated 6th October 2005.
- 24. Following this refusal the applicants met with an officer on site to discuss potential amendments to the scheme.
- 25. The modifications to the current scheme are predominantly the lowering of the eaves, which in turn lowers the ridge (approximately 30 cm). The footprint of the building and its position on the site remain similar to the previous proposal. The revised proposals for the dwelling on the site include the repositioning of the en-suite in the master bedroom on the first floor, together with a decrease of the width of the family room on the ground floor (approximately 45 cm). However, there is an increase in the length of both the proposed family room and master bedroom by approximately 78.8 cm.

Impact on adjoining properties

- 26. Adjacent properties are modest in size and design, nearly all with long back gardens resulting in a lower density of development than seen in other villages in South Cambridgeshire.
- 27. In terms of existing boundaries to the site, there is a fence to the north, whilst to the south there is an existing hedge together with overgrown vegetation (approximately 1.5 metres high). To the rear of the property, which fronts onto the Recreation Ground, there is no formal boundary but overgrown vegetation and a mature tree (approximately 6 metres high). There are at least four large trees located to the rear of the site.
- 28. Adjacent dwellings have some views into the application site. Number 12 Green End (which lies approximately 1 metre from the application site's boundary fence) has a partial view into the existing rear garden. Number 16 Green End (which lies approximately 2 metres from the application site's boundary) can view the current site through breaks in the existing vegetation.
- 29. In terms of the proposed new dwelling, provided that a landscaping scheme is agreed, which can revise the species shown on the site plan, there would not be significant amenity issues arising from this proposal regarding the immediate neighbours. There are no overlooking first floor windows on either side elevation.

Two rooflights on the north elevation would serve a bathroom and en-suite and would have a sill height of at least 1.7 metres above floor level.

30. A street elevation drawing has been submitted with the application plotting the line of daylight and sunlight, in accordance with the Building Research Establishment Guide to Good Practice. The applicants state that they have plotted the line of daylight/sunlight as the lounge of the adjoining property has windows directly into the rear garden from the lounge, and that it is not considered that the bay window is the primary window to the lounge. The supporting letter notes that in any case, the proposed new dwelling is not interfering with the line of daylight/sunlight, and that the previous proposals that were refused did not interfere with daylight/sunlight either.
31. It is considered that the proposed dwelling would not cause overlooking or overshadowing sufficient to warrant a refusal of the application.

Character and appearance of the area

32. The site is not within the Conservation Area. The Listed Building at No. 19 Green End opposite is set back from the street. The immediate locality is not noted for any particular streetscape value and no other restraint policies apply.
33. The character of the immediate area is of fairly large plots along Green End, with a mix of bungalow and two-storey dwellings in terms of size, design and materials. In this part of Comberton plots remain with undeveloped back gardens, backing onto the Green Belt.
34. It is not considered that the proposed dwelling would be too large or out of character with the immediate surroundings. There are a mix of dwellings on either side of the appeal site, for example number 12 Green End is a bungalow and number 16 a two-storey dwelling.
35. In conclusion it is considered that the proposed dwelling can be accommodated on the site without being overbearing, without overlooking or overshadowing of existing adjacent properties and reflecting the character and mixed appearance of the area.

Other Issues

36. Comments have been made regarding the landscaping to the site. The Parish Council and neighbours at 18 Green End object to the use of laurel for the hedge.
37. This issue can be addressed via the submission and consideration of a detailed landscape scheme required by a condition of any approval in the normal way.

Recommendation

38. Approve, subject to the following conditions:
 1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
 2. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5a);
 3. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
 4. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
 5. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);

6. 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);
7. Surface water drainage details. (RC5(b));
8. Foul water drainage details. (RC5(c));
9. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery during construction. (RC26);
10. Protection of trees during construction. (RC - To ensure that no damage is done to trees which are to be retained);
11. SC22 - No windows at first floor level in the north elevation of the development. (RC22).

Informatives

1. During demolition and 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.
2. Before the existing property is demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from the Environmental Health Department establishing the way in which the property will be dismantled, including any asbestos present, the removal of waste, minimisation of dust, capping of drains and establishing hours of working operation (to ensure the protection of the residential environment of the area).

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)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
SE4 (Group Villages), **SE9** (Village Edges), and **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Impact on adjoining properties
 - Character and appearance of the area

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/1520/05/F, S/1515/05/O and S/2322/05/F

Contact Officer: Area Team 3