

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 1<sup>st</sup> February 2006

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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**S/2229/05/F - Comberton  
Extension and Modification to Parking Area and Erection of Gates  
Comberton Post Office, for Mr V Patel**

**Recommendation: Approval  
Date for determination: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2006**

**Conservation Area**

**Members of Committee will visit the site on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2006**

**Site and Proposal**

1. The Post Office and stores is situated centrally within the village, fronting Barton Road. The single storey building links to the adjoining dwelling, No. 12, which is within the applicant's ownership. A single access serves a parking area to the front of the shop. The frontage of the site is marked with a low brick wall.
2. The building extends back to the rear of the site, close to the boundary with the adjoining dwelling at Cross Farm, 8 Barton Road, a grade 2 listed building. To the rear of the shop is sited a timber outbuilding which is in a dilapidated condition.
3. The application, dated 5th October 2005, proposes the formation of a disabled car parking space protected with kerbing, and the formation of a pedestrian access through the frontage boundary wall. A small brick planter is to be constructed against the western boundary wall. Gates are to be erected across the existing vehicular access, and, as originally submitted, round-topped railings are to be added to the existing wall to bring it to a height of 1.2m, the gates to be the same as the railing.
4. On the rear elevation, the shop is to be extended by its full width, 15.2m, to provide a sorting office. This will entail the demolition of a small block side addition on the western side of the shop, and the removal of the timber outbuilding at the rear. The extension is to be single-storey, in a design and in materials to match the existing. Pedestrian access will be extended along the western side of the shop to the new sorting office. Gates are to be added to the existing covered delivery area.

**Planning History**

5. An application for similar development was withdrawn by the applicant prior to determination following concerns expressed by the Local Highway Authority (S/1775/04/F).

**Planning Policy**

6. The site lies within Comberton Conservation Area and a Protected Village Amenity Area.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:

7. **Policy P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development) A high standard of design and sustainability for all new development will be required which provides a sense of place and which responds to the local character of the built environment and is integrated with adjoining landscapes.
8. **Policy P3/4** (Rural Services and Facilities) – Local Planning Authorities will support the vitality of rural communities by encouraging the retention and expansion of village shopping facilities, on a scale appropriate to their location and serving a local function, and key community services.
9. **Policy P7/6** (Historic Built Environment) LPA's will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
10. **P8/1** (Sustainable Transport – Links between Land Use and Transport) – LPA's should ensure that new development provides appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:

11. **SH5** (Retailing in Villages) - Proposals for the extension of existing shops within a village framework will be permitted provided:
  - (1) The size and attraction of shopping development is of a scale appropriate to the size of village or other centre;
  - (2) Development would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residential or other development; and
  - (3) The site in its present form does not form an essential part of village character.
12. **EN28** (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building) – where development would damage the setting, well-being or attractiveness of a listed building, planning permission will be refused.
13. **EN30** (Development in Conservation Areas) – proposals in conservation areas will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area, especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. Schemes that do not specify traditional local materials or details that do not fit comfortably into their context will not be permitted.
14. **SE10** (Protected Village Amenity Areas) seeks to protect undeveloped land, the retention of which is of importance to the character and amenity of the village.

**Consultations**

15. **Comberton Parish Council** – Recommends refusal of the application. The Council recognises the valuable asset the shop and the Post Office is to the village community, and approves of the modest extension to the rear of the shop. It also supports the intention to tidy up the car parking area and to provide a separate pedestrian access. However the proposed railings are inappropriate in a conservation area and PVAA, as is the removal of the wall to make new accesses. The Council would support the planning of hedgerow on this boundary instead, and the use of wooden gates rather than metal. It would like to see the car park surfaced with tarmac with rolled gravel.

16. **Conservation Manager** – No objection to the principle of railings on the boundary, subject to discussions about a different design, such as ball-headed, and to agreement of coping details. He recommends a condition to control the surface treatment of the driveway.
17. **Local Highway Authority (LHA)** – The proposed parking arrangement is acceptable. The gates should be set back 5.0m from the highway. An amended plan showing this arrangement has been requested.

### **Representations**

18. One letter of objection has been received, from the occupier of the adjacent dwelling at Cross Farm. His concerns are that:
- The disabled parking space and its raised kerbs will cause difficulties for the manoeuvring of delivery vehicles, which may then have to unload from the road.
  - Metal fencing inappropriate in the Conservation Area.
  - Additional access will add to the access problems near the crossroads.
  - The removal of trees that help to screen the shop from his viewpoint.
  - To noise disturbance from the use of the path adjoining his boundary to access the new sorting office, and to the positioning of the door in the extension that will lead to overlooking of his rear garden area.
  - Objection to the removal of the timber outbuilding.
  - Inaccuracies in the site survey and scales.

### **Planning Comments**

#### ***Extension and car parking***

19. The principle of extending the post office at the rear is acceptable in compliance with Policy SH5. The concerns raised by the neighbouring occupier are noted. However any overlooking could be prevented by appropriate screen fencing and noise disturbance to the dwelling is unlikely to be serious given the distance between the properties, as Members will see on site when they visit.
20. The car parking arrangement has been assessed as acceptable by the LHA, notwithstanding the concerns expressed by the objector.

#### ***Conservation***

21. The appearance of the proposed railings has been criticised by the Conservation Manager, the Parish Council and the local objector. The agent has indicated that this proposal is to be replaced with hedgerow planting, and the gates to be of timber as requested, however at the time of compiling this report the amended drawings had not been received. The further views of the Parish Council to the amended plans will be reported verbally to Members at the meeting, if received. The Conservation Manager has no objection to removal of the timber outbuilding, as proposed.

## Recommendation

22. Subject to amended plans showing the replacement of railings with hedging and proposal for timber gates, and to no objection being received from the Parish Council or the Highway Authority, approval 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(ii));
  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. Gates to be set back 5.0m from the highway.

## Informatives

### 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)  
**P3/4** (Rural Services and Facilities)  
**P7/6** (Historic Built Environment)  
**P8/1** (Sustainable Transport)
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**  
**SH5** (Retailing in Villages)  
**EN28** (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)  
**EN30** (Development in/adjacent to Conservation Areas)  
**SE10** (Protected Village Amenity 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:
  - Residential amenity including noise disturbance and overlooking issues
  - Highway safety
  - Impact upon the Conservation Area and Protected Village Amenity Area

**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 Ref. S/2229/05/F

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