

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 1st March 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0084/06/F and S/0085/06/O - Milton

- i) Change of Use of Land from Agriculture to Recreation Land, and
ii) Erection of Sports Pavilion and Provision of Car-Park, Land at Landbeach Road for
Milton Parish Council**

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 16th March 2006

Members will visit the site on Monday 27th February 2006.

Site and Proposal

1. A rectangular block of arable land, aligned roughly NW - SE, between Landbeach Road and the A10; it has an area of 9.74ha/24.09 acres.
2. Its frontage to Landbeach Road is 220.0m, and is sited a minimum of 320.0m north of the junction with the A10/Milton by-pass. At its south-eastern end, the site abuts the A10 itself at a point where the original A10, and the by-pass, now divide.
3. The site is surrounded by open, arable land. Part of the north-eastern boundary comprises an access track to the Nursery School, Stanton Farm, to the east. (See **History** below).
4. Two applications, both received on 19th January 2006 are to be determined. The first, S/0084/06/F, is for the change of use of the site from agricultural to recreational land. The second, S/0085/06/O, is for the erection of a small pavilion, approximately 15.0m x 15.0m, together with a car-park for 40 cars.

History

5. If approved, access to the pavilion and car-park would be via the present track serving Stanton Farm.
6. Consent was granted in the late 1980's to run a Nursery School from some of the farm buildings. Initially it was proposed to gain access direct from the A10 which, at that time, was still a trunk road.
7. As a result the Department of Transport directed that the application be refused; to overcome this objection the applicant proposed an alternative access across the fields onto Landbeach Road. Consent was granted with no consultation with the Local Highway Authority.

Policy

8. *i) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003*

P1/2 "Environmental Restrictions on Development" seeks to resist development in the countryside unless it can be proved to be essential.

P4/1 "Tourism, Recreation and Leisure Strategy" seeks to promote improved tourism, recreation and leisure facilities,

P9/2a) "Green Belt" aims to protect the character of Cambridge.

ii) *South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004*

GB1 "The Boundaries of the Green Belt, aims to follow **P9/2a)**,

GB2 - Green Belt refers to "Inappropriate Development" in the Green Belt, accepting that essential facilities for outdoor sports can be acceptable,

GB5 states that substantial buildings for outdoor sport and/or car-park will not be supported,

RT1 "Recreation and Tourism Development" states that recreation facilities will be resisted if, inter alia, they will

a) not be in close proximity to and not well related with an established settlement and its built-up area and,

b) Generate significant traffic movements.

iii) *Local Development Framework*

GB1, "Development in the Green Belt,"

GB2 "Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt" rehearse the general aims and restrictions outlined above in both Structure Plan and Local Plan policies,

SF/11 "Open Space Standards" refer to the minimum standard of 2.8ha of open space per 1000 people. 1.6ha of the above should be for outdoor sport, excluding children's play space and informal open space.

Consultations

9. **Milton Parish Council** "approves" both applications.
10. The comments of **Landbeach Parish Council** are awaited; - objections are expected. All comments will be reported verbally.
11. **The Old West Internal Drainage Board** has no objections to the change to recreation use, but asks that soakaways are used for the disposal of roof water from the pavilion and surface water from the car-park.
12. **The Environment Agency** asks for details of surface water and foul sewage disposal to be conditioned as part of any consent.
13. The comments of **The Local Highway Authority** are awaited and will be reported verbally. Objections are likely.
14. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no comments on the pavilion/car park.

Representations - Applicants

15. A letter from Milton Parish Council, dated 13th December 2005, is attached as an Appendix.

Planning Comments

16. The relevant issues here are need, green belt and access, with the pertinent matter being community gain versus highway dangers.

i) **Need**

Using the figures taken from the Local Development Framework of 1.6ha of land for outdoor sport per 1000 people, Milton requires 10.0ha of recreational space.

The two recreation grounds, at Coles Road and the Sycamores amount to approximately 5.7ha - well below the above figure.

Part of the former consists of infilled former gravel pits which no doubt explains the problems of drainage.

If matches and training sessions have to be cancelled because the pitch(es) are "well used and worn", then clearly more space is required.

Members will see that two football and one cricket team already have to play outside the village and, in addition, two additional village teams are expected to play next year ie 2006.

Clearly there is an overwhelming need.

ii) **Green Belt**

Outdoor sporting facilities such as proposed are acceptable in the Green Belt. What can be a problem is the built development which sometimes is also proposed. A small pavilion, ie changing rooms for the various teams, refs/Umpire room, first aid room, store etc. is acceptable, together with "basic" kitchen facilities. A social club-room would not be. Car-parking can be a problem but one for 40 cars, as proposed, is not felt to be unreasonable. Hedging and other planting will help to reduce any impact on the countryside. Other than perhaps low-key bollard lighting for the car-park, I would not wish to see any other lighting proposed.

iii) **Access**

With this section of Landbeach Road subject to the national speed limit of 60mph, the highway authority will be looking for visibility splays of 4.5m x 215.0m.

17. To the south, this would extend beyond the site into third party land, and result in the loss of several small trees and lengths of hedgerow on the field frontage. Whilst this could be replanted back on the line of the splay, it will look somewhat artificial.
18. The problem is to the north where the splay cuts across the field on the opposite side of the road, up to the 30mph signs at the entrance to Landbeach. At present visibility is good from the access roadway, but if the farmer on the opposite side of the road was to plant a hedge and/or agree to something like a D.E.F.R.A. tree planting belt, vision would be severely curtailed.
19. Whilst Policy RT1 of the Local Plan supports sporting facilities "in close proximity to, and well related with, an established settlement and its built-up area," I recognise and appreciate that it is not always possible to find the ideal solution. Clearly there is a (desperate) need for additional sporting facilities in the village and this is the only site which has been offered/is available to the Parish Council.
20. Unfortunately it will mean that the vast majority of users will rely on the motorcar to use the site. It is unlikely that parents would let their children cross the A10, either on foot or bicycle, and then walk/cycle along Landbeach Road, which has no footpaths.

21. Unless the Parish Council can achieve a more satisfactory access, even reaching an agreement with the farmer opposite not to plant any hedgerows and/or trees on part of his field, I have no alternative but to reluctantly recommend refusal.

Recommendation

22. Refusal, both applications:

Whilst recognising the need for additional playing field facilities in the village the site chosen will, because of its relatively isolated position, result in the majority of users arriving and departing by motor vehicle. The necessary visibility splays to provide a safe access to meet the requirements of The Local Highway Authority cannot be met.

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:
 - South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:

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.

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