

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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1<sup>st</sup> March 2006

**S/0031/06/F - Wimpole**  
**Two Houses, The Woodyard, Cambridge Road For Mr And Mrs R J Foster**

**Recommendation: Refusal**  
**Date for Determination: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2006**

Members will visit this site on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2006

### **Departure Application**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The Woodyard, Cambridge Road, Wimpole comprises a 1.8ha of land on the north west side of the A603 (Cambridge Road), to the south west of the built-up area of the village. The site is accessed direct from the A603. The site has been used for the sale of salvaged and reclaimed items such as timber and windows, which have been stored across various parts of the site. There is a storage/workshop building on the site, which also contains areas of water.
2. To the south west and north west of the site is agricultural land. To the south east of the site, on the opposite side of Cambridge Road, is a line of residential properties.
3. This full application, registered on 18 August 2005 proposes the redevelopment of the site by two dwellings.
4. House 1 is located between the existing ponds, directly opposite the entrance to the site from the A603. It is a 4 bedroom property with a maximum ridge height of 7.4m. It has a floor area of approximately 285m<sup>2</sup>.
5. House 2 is located towards the front of the site to the southeast of the larger pond. It is a 4 bedroom house with a maximum ridge height of 7.3m. It has a floor area of approximately 265m<sup>2</sup>.
6. No garaging is provided for either dwelling. Materials are to be agreed.
7. Both dwellings are accessed via the existing entrance, which is shown to be widened to 5.0m for the first 15.0m into the site.
8. The density of the development is 0.9 dwellings per hectare.
9. A supporting letter from the applicants' agent is attached as Appendix 1.

#### **Planning History**

10. In November 2004 a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development (CLEUD) was issued on part of the current application for the use as a yard for commercial storage

and retail sale of salvaged/reclaimed items, namely, timber, windows, window frames and doors (**Ref: S/2615/03/LDC**).

11. Evidence was submitted with the above application demonstrating that the site had been used as described since the 1960's.
12. At the October 2005 meeting (Item 27) an application (**Ref S/1622/04/F**) for the erection of two dwellings on the site was refused on the following grounds:
  1. The proposal is for the erection of two dwellings outside the village framework of Wimpole contrary to the aims of Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy SE8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which restrict development in the countryside to that which is essential in a particular rural location. Although the site can be considered as brownfield land there is insufficient justification in this case for a departure from the above policies.
  2. The proposed scale and siting of House 2, close to the north east boundary of the site, is unacceptable as it is out of scale and character with houses in the vicinity and will threaten the retention of existing boundary planting. As a result the proposed dwelling is likely to have an adverse visual impact of the adjoining countryside, contrary to the aims of Policy SE9 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
  3. It is not considered that the existence of a Lawful Use on part of the site warrants allowing the scale of the proposed development contrary to the above mentioned Development Plan policies.

### **Planning Policy**

13. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure") restricts development in the countryside to that which is essential in a particular rural location.
14. **Policy SE5** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") and Policy ST/7 of the Local Development Framework Submission Draft identifies Wimpole as an Infill village, where development is restricted to not more than two dwellings within the village framework.
15. **Policy SE8** of The Local Plan states that residential development outside village frameworks will not be permitted.
16. **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.

### **Consultation**

17. **Wimpole Parish Council** recommends approval. "Wimpole Parish Council still supports unanimously the application for the housing development on this site. The Parish Council wishes to emphasise the strength of its support for this application. The Woodyard is the main thorough fare of the village of Wimpole, and as such is much more suitable for residential development with a few properties, than for light industrial development, regardless of the certificate of lawful use. A recent village meeting resulted in 100% in favour of the site as a residential development.

18. In view of the support from the parish, the Council is making a submission to have the site included within the Development Framework so that it may be looked at under different development criteria. The site is contiguous with residential properties on the north side of the A603, and faces residential properties on the south side. The resulting imbalance to the village aspect is partly due to the south side of the road having been part in the parish of Orwell, until comparatively recently. In trying to produce a more homogenous parish, there is now an asymmetrical feel to the street scene.
19. The Woodyard is part of Wimpole and the Council wishes to state most strongly its support of the residential development proposed."
20. The letter refers to a petition organised by local residents which is being sent to the Chief Executive.
21. The **Local Highway Authority** has no objection subject to conditions.
22. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** requests conditions restricting the hours of operation of power driven machinery during the period of construction and requiring an investigation of the site to be undertaken prior to the commencement of any development to establish the nature and extent of any contamination of the site. An informative should be attached to any consent restricting bonfires or the burning of waste on site during the period of construction.
23. The **Environment Agency** requests conditions in respect of foul and surface water drainage, and highlights various informatives to be attached to any approval notice.
24. The comments of the **Ecology Officer** and **National Trust** will be reported at the meeting.

### **Representations**

25. None received

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

26. The site is outside the village framework so the key issue to be considered with this application is whether there is sufficient reason to allow two houses on this site as a departure from the presumption against residential development in the countryside. It is also necessary to consider the design and impact of the proposed dwellings.
27. By definition the site is in the countryside, although it adjoins the village framework to the northeast and the framework extends beyond the site to the southwest, on the opposite side of the A603. Part of the site benefits from a lawful use as a yard for commercial storage and retail sale of salvaged/reclaimed items, namely, timber, windows, window frames and doors. This use has operated since the 1960's and the Chief Environmental Health Officer stated at the time of the previous application that the only record it has is of a single complaint which was received in 2003 concerning smoke from alleged fires. The site is well screened from the road, although previously there has been a degree of timber stored in front of the site around the area of the entrance. The lawful use of part of the site is restricted to that described above and although there would be some visual and ecological benefit in principle if the site was redeveloped for residential use, I do not consider any such advantages

in this case to be sufficient to outweigh the policy objection to residential development outside the village framework.

28. No more than 50% of the site is brownfield by definition and the applicants' agent points to guidance that supports the re-use of brownfield land. This of itself however does not outweigh the policy objection to residential development in the countryside, nor to greenfield land being incorporated within the scheme.
29. The revised application does not contain any additional information that would warrant departing from the previous policy reasons of refusal in respect of development outside the village framework.
30. The design and siting of the proposed dwellings has been revised. I am of the view that this addresses concerns expressed at the time of the previous application that the scale and siting of one of the dwellings was out of character with the area and would have had an adverse visual impact on the adjacent countryside.

### **Recommendation**

31. That the application be refused for the following reasons:
  1. The proposal is for the erection of two dwellings outside the village framework of Wimpole contrary to the aims of Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy SE8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which restrict development in the countryside to, that which is essential in a particular rural location. Although part of the site can be considered as brownfield land there is insufficient justification in this case for a departure from the above policies.
  2. It is not considered that the existence of a Lawful Use on part of the site warrants allowing the scale of the proposed development contrary to the above mentioned Development Plan policies.

**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/0031/06/F, S/1622/05/F and S/2615/03/LDC.

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