

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

5th April 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/0303/06/F – Melbourn
Replacement Bungalow and Garage, Greenlow Bungalow, Royston Road for
C R and LG Walls**

**Recommendation: Refusal
Date for Determination: 17th April 2006**

Site and Proposal

1. Greenlow Bungalow is a modest property that sits behind a frontage of a mature hedge the other side of which is Royston Road. The property's curtilage extends back into the undulating landscape with a relatively open boundary to the northeast. The bungalow itself is in a dilapidated condition and has several similarly such dilapidated outbuildings to the rear. The site falls outside of the Melbourn village framework. The closest property is a residential property with commercial kennels that sits the other side of a disused field to the south west of the application site.
2. This full application, received on the 20th February 2006, proposes to demolish the existing dwelling and replace it with a lower 'stealth fighter' shaped dwelling further back within the site. The proposed dwelling has barn like elevations facing the northeast and northwest and has large glazed element to the rear facing a garage that also forms part of the application.

Planning History

3. Planning consent was granted under **S/0569/04/F** for a replacement dwelling that had a 40% increase in floor area in excess of that of the original dwelling but was considered to be compliant with the criteria of HG15 in relation to its scale, height and impact upon the countryside.

Planning Policy

4. South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG15** 'Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside' states that replacement dwellings in the countryside will be permitted where they are in scale and character with the dwelling they are intended to replace and would not materially alter the impact of the site on the surrounding countryside.

Consultation

5. **Melbourn Parish Council** recommends that the application be approved.

Representations

6. One letter of support from the owner/occupier of 'Greenlow House and Kennels', Royston Road, who believes that the new plan will be better suited in character to the area. They are also pleased that the application offers a reduction in height and volume and is set further back behind the boundary hedge. This proposal will have

less impact on the area than the existing property and less than the recently approved replacement plan.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

7. The existing bungalow is in a state of dilapidation and is of no architectural or historic merit. Its proximity to the frontage of the site means that its long ridgeline is a dominant feature above the hedge when viewed from Royston Road. Although the proposed replacement dwelling is lower in height and set further back within the site than the existing and approved replacement dwelling Members need to consider whether the new bungalow is in scale and character with the dwelling it is intended to replace (the original bungalow) and whether the replacement dwelling would materially alter the impact of the site on the surrounding countryside.

Scale and Character

8. Although consent was granted in 2004 for a replacement dwelling that was both taller and of a greater volume than the original dwelling this latest proposal needs to be considered against the original dwelling and not the approved replacement. It is recognised that the height of the new dwelling is approximately one metre lower than the existing bungalow (3.8m and 4.8m respectively). This lower height will reduce the cubic volume of the proposed dwelling, though it will still be greater than that of the original dwelling and the already approved dwelling. In the Agent's report it is stated that the proposed dwelling will have a lower cubic volume than the previously approved scheme. This assertion is incorrect and it would appear to be based on the fact that the calculations of the cubic volume of the proposed dwelling do not take into account the space below the eaves, which on the southern elevations is quite substantial. To compare the dwellings the original has a floor area of approximately 72 square metres compared with 97 m² (approved dwelling) and 213 m² (proposed dwelling). In terms of cubic volume the figures are approximately 240 m³ (original dwelling), 393 m³ (approved dwelling) and 597 m³ (proposed dwelling).
9. In the supporting text of policy HG15 a maximum enlargement figure of 15% of the volume of the original dwelling is stated for replacement dwellings in the countryside. It should be recognised that the Council has already compromised on this figure with the previous planning consent. In terms of the floor area of the proposed dwelling it will result in a floor area and cubic volume increase well in excess of 100% of those of the original dwelling. In the calculations made by the applicant the existing outbuildings are taken as being part of the existing dwelling. The wording of HG15 clearly refers to the original dwellings; therefore I do not consider that the volume of existing outbuildings should be included for the purposes of HG15.
10. Although the proposed dwelling will be larger and set further back within the site there are no issues surrounding loss of neighbour amenity due to the distance between the dwelling and the nearest residential property. As with the earlier application a garage is proposed to the rear of the dwelling. The scale and location of the garage is not considered to be unacceptable and there is no objection to this part of the application.
11. The internal layout of the proposed dwelling is designed in such a way to allow the movement of a wheelchair between rooms and furniture. The reason for this design is due to the fact that the applicants provide respite care for their nephew, who has cerebral palsy and lives nearby. I recognise that the proposed dwelling will only have three bedrooms and is designed with a disabled child in mind, however the dwelling will not be his main accommodation and although the dwelling would make life easier for him and his respite carers, there is no requirement for such a dwelling in the

countryside. Therefore the personal circumstances behind the application are not considered to outweigh the requirement to comply with local planning policy.

12. If members were minded to approve this application and circumstances were to change, then the internal layout of the property could easily be altered either prior to construction (by way of an amendment) or at some future date and additional bedrooms could be created without the need to extend the property. Although it is not believed that this will be the case Members should understand that the floor area of the proposed dwelling would easily lend itself to the accommodation of more than three bedrooms. Such an internal change could also be aided by the infilling of the spaces under the eaves on the southwest and south east facing elevations, which would not necessarily require the specific consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Impact of the site on the surrounding countryside

13. There is no objection to the use of the proposed materials. Although the proposed dwelling will be lower than the original and approved dwellings the increased floor area and design of the dwelling means that the bulk of the overall proposed development will be greater. This is due to the fact that it has long elevations extending along the two site boundaries that are most open to public views. The front boundary of the site is relatively well screened by a mature hedge, which was to be retained by way of a condition attached to the previous approval, and there is no proposal to remove this vegetation. By setting the property further into the site it will become more visually prominent by virtue of the open nature of the northeast boundary of the site, although it is recognised that as part of the proposal it is proposed to cut the dwelling into the landscape and to provide additional planting.
14. It should be noted that there are benefits to this proposal over the previously approved scheme in terms of the view from the front of the site, due to the lower height of the dwelling and the fact that the proposed garage will be located to the rear of the property. The applicants also state that they will be using building materials that will allow greater heat retention and that their vehicular movements will be reduced as a result of the proposed dwelling. However the floorspace increase, cubic volume increase and scale of the proposed dwelling bear little semblance to the original modest dwelling. Therefore the application is not considered to comply with policy HG15 of the Local Plan

Recommendation

15. Refusal

Reasons for Refusal

The proposed replacement dwelling would be contrary to policy HG15 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 as it bear little semblance to the scale of the modest dwelling that it is intended to replace by virtue of the fact that its floor area and cubic volume would both be in excess of 100% of those of the original dwelling and its bulk of built development would materially alter the impact of the site on the surrounding rural landscape when viewed from the northeast.

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/0303/06/F and S/0569/04/F

Contact Officer: Edward Durrant – Planning Assistant
Telephone: (01954) 713082