

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 5th April 2006
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0247/06/O - Willingham
Erection of 6 Houses and Conversion of Storage Building into 3 Flats following
Demolition of Existing Dwelling, 1 High Street, for Mrs A Powell

Recommendation: Delegated Approval
Date for determination: 6th April 2006

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

- 1 This 0.20ha (0.50 acres) site occupies a central position in the village, fronting High Street. The site contains a modern two-storey house, a two-storey height outbuilding ('Apple Store'), and an open-air swimming pool. The large rear garden is bounded with tall conifers. The frontage is marked by a 1.4m high wall with small conifers and shrubs behind. To the north, the side adjoins a terrace of modern dwellings (Stocks Terrace) fronting High Street. To the south, the site is adjoined by a hall with small car park to the rear, and a dwelling on Saxon Way. To the east, the site backs on to rear gardens of dwellings in Saxon Way.
- 2 The outline application, dated 27th January 2006, proposes the demolition of the existing house and the erection of six dwellings in two groups of three, together with the conversion of the outbuilding to provide 2 two-bedroomed flats. The existing access onto High Street is to be widened and provided with visibility splays of 90m to the north and 70m to the south. A section of the existing frontage wall is to be demolished and rebuilt to afford the necessary visibility. Pedestrian access to each of the frontage dwellings is proposed through the boundary wall. Means of access is to be determined at outline stage.
- 3 In discussions, the agent has indicated that a revised plan is to be submitted showing the visibility splay to the south improved to 76m, which is as far as is possible without affecting other buildings fronting High Street. If received, this will be brought to Members attention at the meeting.
- 4 The application is accompanied by illustrative drawings showing a possible arrangement of development, together with suggested heights and appearance. This shows three detached 3 bedroom houses of a similar neo-Georgian design, two storeys in height with a third storey in the roof space. A terrace of three dwellings to the rear are of a contemporary design, also with three bedrooms. These are shown with a low eaves height and without any overlooking windows at the rear, facing towards Saxon Way. Similarly, upper storey windows in the converted outbuilding have been designed to avoid overlooking over adjacent properties.
- 5 Two parking spaces per dwelling and one per flat are proposed within the layout, all served by the single access onto High Street.

6 The development represents a density of 45 dwellings per hectare.

Planning History

7 An earlier application for the erection of 7 houses and the conversion of the storage building to 2 flats was withdrawn by the applicant on 23rd December 2005, prior to determination. The agent agreed to take account of concerns raised by adjoining residents (Planning Reference **S/2147/05/O**).

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

8 **Policy P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 requires compact forms of development through the promotion of higher densities that responds to the local character of the built environment. 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

9 **Policy P5/3 (Density)** Local Planning Authorities should seek to maximise the use of land by applying the highest density possible which is compatible with maintaining local character.

10 **Policy P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas) – small scale housing developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account the need for affordable rural housing, the character of the village and its setting, and the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport provision in the immediate area.

11 **Policy P7/6** (Historic Built Environment) LPA's will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

12 **Policy SE2** (Rural Growth Settlements) – residential development will be permitted provided that the retention of the site is not essential to the character of the village, the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenity of neighbours; and the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity. Development should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.

13 **Policy HG10** (Housing Mix and Design) requires residential developments to have a mix of units making the best use of the site. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape.

14 **Policy TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel) – car parking requirements will be restricted to the maximum levels set out in Appendix 7/1. (For dwellings, Appendix 7/1 gives a level of an average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling, up to a maximum of two per 3 or more bedrooms in poorly accessible areas).

15 **CS10** (Education) Where planning permission is granted for 4 or more dwellings, financial contributions will be sought towards the provision of local education facilities.

- 16 **Policy EN5** (Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows): the District Council will require trees, hedges and woodland and other natural features to be retained wherever possible in proposals for new development.
- 17 **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.

Consultations

- 18 **Willingham Parish Council** – recommends refusal on the grounds:
- a) Overdevelopment of the site.
 - b) Parking: although the proposed parking is within specification, it is considered that actual parking for properties of the sizes proposed would exceed this, and could lead to overspill parking on the High Street.
 - c) Proposed sight lines are inadequate for the traffic which would be exiting onto the already congested High Street.
- 19 **Conservation Manager** – No objection to the principle of the development, subject to further consideration in a detailed application of the design of the frontage dwellings.
- 20 **Council's Chief Environmental Health Officer** – no objection subject to a limitation on the hours of power-operated machinery during construction.
- 21 **Council's Ecology Officer** – comments awaited.
- 22 **Council's Trees and Landscape Officer** – comments awaited.
- 23 **Council's Building Control Manager** – comments awaited on surface water drainage proposals.
- 24 **County Highways** – has requested an amended plan based on a frontage survey to show 2.4m x 90m visibility splays in both directions.
- 25 **County Financial Officer** – comments on any required financial contribution towards local education provision awaited.
- 26 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** – comments awaited.
- 27 **Cambridgeshire Archaeology**- recommends that a programme of archaeological investigation be required by condition.
- 28 **Old West Internal Drainage Board** – no objection provided that surface water is drained via soakaways, as proposed.

Representations

29 Representations (to the current and previous applications) have been received from the occupiers of four dwellings on Saxon Way and one dwelling in Stocks Terrace. The issues raised can be summarised:

a) Need

Development is unnecessary in view of all the recent development in the area.

b) Traffic

- (i) High volume of traffic on High Street with recent new housing developments.
- (ii) Access is on a bad bend nearly opposite a busy shop and pedestrian crossing.
- (iii) Access may not be wide enough. Parked cars on High Street by village hall already reduce visibility.
- (iv) Not enough parking provided, including visitor parking. This will lead to parking on the road.
- (v) Garages may be converted to rooms in the future.

c) Conservation

- (i) Old property in the conservation area should be preserved. Could the existing dwelling be preserved?
- (ii) Over development of a small area.
- (iii) 3-storey compared with 2-storey on Saxon Way.
- (iv) House design on the frontage is the same as any other housing estate – the character of the High Street needs preserving with more traditional properties.
- (v) Plans for houses on Plots 1-3 are confusing – there are 5 potential bedrooms.
- (vi) Proposals for tree felling are not clear.
- (vii) The development will result in the loss of a mature garden which may harm wildlife interests. Bats and owls in the vicinity.

d) Infrastructure

- (i) Infrastructure in the village already stretched to the limit.
- (ii) Surface water drainage issues in the area. Will soakaways be adequate as the area is already prone to flooding?
- (iii) What extra provision for mains drainage is being put in place?

e) Amenity

- (i) Concern that 1st floor windows in flats will overlook adjacent properties.
- (ii) 4-7 Stocks Terrace are extremely close to rear boundary.
- (iii) Suitable planting on the rear boundary will help to maintain privacy.
- (iv) Overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing of the cul-de-sac, contrary to Policy HG11 of the Local Plan 2004.
- (v) Construction noise.
- (vi) Loss of light to adjacent properties, especially in winter.
- (vii) Future extensions should be controlled.

Agent

- 30 The agent has submitted a design statement with the application. He has indicated that concerns of overlooking raised by the occupier of 61 Saxon Way can be met in the detailed designs.

Planning Comments

Conservation

- 31 The proposal will result in a considerable change to the appearance of this part of the conservation area. The existing 2-storey house is modern and undistinguished architecturally, and its replacement will not harm the appearance of the conservation area. The precise design of the replacement dwellings would be the subject of a detailed application. The Conservation and Design Manager has indicated that the principles of the layout proposed are acceptable and that this will not harm the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 32 The comments of the Trees and Landscape Officer are awaited, however the majority of trees on the site are large conifers which do not contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. The opportunity to provide more suitable planting will enhance the appearance of the conservation area.
- 33 If approved, conditions can be attached to require provision for bats and native birds, subject to the comments of the Ecology Officer.

Amenity

- 34 The precise positioning of windows in the houses and flats can be controlled in a detailed application, if outline consent is granted. The submitted illustrative drawings indicate that overlooking can be avoided with careful design. I do not consider that the proposed siting of buildings will give rise to undue loss of light or outlook, or be unduly overbearing to existing properties. Construction noise can be limited by condition.

Highway aspects

- 35 The parking provision proposed is acceptable in meeting the maximum new car parking standard set out in policy TP1. The Local Highways Authority has not raised any concern on this basis. However, the visibility splay that can be achieved is less than required by the Local Highway Authority in the southerly direction. A similar concern has been raised by the Parish Council. The agent has subsequently improved the length of this splay and further comments of the Highway Authority will be reported to Members, if received.

Infrastructure

- 36 Concerns have been raised by nearby residents over the method of surface water disposal. The use of soakaways is recommended by Old West Internal Drainage Board, however the comments of the Council's Building Control Manager are awaited and will be reported to Members, if received.

Recommendation

Subject to no objections being received from the Council's Ecology Officer, Council's Trees and Landscape Officer, Council's Building Control Manager, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, and County Highways, 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 (Rc5aii);
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. Removal of permitted development rights for extensions.(Reason – To safeguard the amenity of adjoining residents);
8. Surface water drainage details;
9. Foul water drainage details;
10. Integral garages not to be converted for any other use (Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
11. B9 (Access road 5.0m for a minimum distance of 15.0m. (Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
12. B10 (Access road) (Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
13. Provision and retention of a common turning head (Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
14. D1 (Vehicle-to vehicle visibility) (Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
15. D3 (Vehicle-to vehicle visibility) (Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
16. D5(a) (Pedestrian visibility 2.0m x 2.0m) (Reason – In the interests of highway safety);
17. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery; during period of construction. (Rc 26);
18. Biodiversity enhancement (bat and bird boxes) (Reason - In the interest of achieving sustainable development);
19. Provision of a legal agreement to secure a suitable financial contribution for local education provision (Reason – To assist in the necessary provision of education facilities arising from the development).

Informatives

Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before development commences, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted to and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer. This is necessary in order to safeguard the amenity of the occupiers of nearby dwellings from disturbance from noise and vibration during the construction period.

Before the existing buildings are demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from the Council's Environmental Health Section, in order to establish the means by which the demolition will take place including the removal of any asbestos present, the removal of waste, minimisation of dust, capping of drains, and establishing hours of working operation, so as to ensure the protection of the residential environment of the area.

During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on the site except with the prior permission of the District Council's Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

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)
 - P5/3** (Density)
 - P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas)
 - P7/6** (Historic Built Environment)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
 - SE2** (Development in Rural Growth Settlements)
 - HG10** (Housing Mix and Design)
 - TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)
 - CS10** (Education),
 - EN5** (Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows)
 - EN30** (Development in/adjacent to Conservation 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
 - Visual impact on the locality
 - Impact upon setting of adjacent Conservation Area
 - Infrastructure

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 files Ref. S/0247/06/O, S/2147/05/O.

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