

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 5th April 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0328/06/F - Cottenham
Erection of House, Land R/O 322 High Street for Mrs E Smith and Mrs M Hardy

Recommendation: Refusal
Date for Determination: 19th April 2006

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. No. 322 High Street faces the northern tip of The Green opposite the entrance to Cottenham Village College and comprises a 1½-storey property gable to the road. The walls are rendered under a pan-tiled roof; it has a jettied first floor and was built in the mid 1980's.
2. To the north-east are Nos. 318 and 316, both double-fronted villas, whilst to the south-west is a red brick farmhouse. All three properties are Listed Buildings.
3. The full application, received 22nd February 2006, proposes the erection of a 2/3 - bedroomed property. The density inclusive of the existing house No. 322, equates to 18 dph. The application site area is 0.095 hectares.
4. Access would be via the present gravel driveway between Nos. 318 and 322, which serves both properties at present.
5. The plot widens to the rear of No. 318 and the proposal is to erect a dwelling, linear in plan form, along the north-eastern boundary of the plot, backing on to the garden of No. 316 next door. The building will be 23.7m in length, the centre section being 1½ -storey with ridge heights of 6.8m and 5.1m, with single storey sections each end. The building will be weather-boarded under a plain-tile roof.

Planning History

6. No. 322 was approved in 1983 and was a replacement, I believe, for two cottages on site (S/1669/83/F).
7. On the adjacent site, No. 316, Members may recall refusing a similar scheme to that now proposed following a visit to the site - August 2002 Committee, item 28 (ref. S/1254/02/F).
8. A revised application (S/0908/04/F), which overcame some of the objections relating to lack of garden to the existing house at No. 316 was refused under delegated powers in June 2004 for the reasons:

1. "The long garden of No. 316 High Street, together with its range of outbuildings, is typical of the character of development along High Street.

The sub-division and development of this plot in the manner proposed will be detrimental to this character and will be contrary to Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) and Policies EN28, EN30 and HG11 (1) and (4) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004). The proposal is also contrary to the aims of the "BUILDINGS" section of the Cottenham Village Design Statement (1994) pages 22 and 23, in that the simple traditional form of buildings to the rear of frontage dwellings is neither maintained nor reflected.

As such the building is too large in mass and footprint resulting in a visually dominant element which would adversely affect the setting of No. 316 High Street, a Grade II Listed Building, would be contrary to the simple character of traditional buildings in the High Street and, as such, would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the Cottenham Conservation Area.

2. The access for the proposed dwelling is between Nos. 316 and 318 High Street. Both these properties lie in close proximity to the highway which results in the access being unable to achieve adequate pedestrian to vehicle visibility splays for vehicles leaving the application site; consequently the proposal is contrary to Policy HG11 (3) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004)."
9. At the February 2005 Committee (item 28) an application (ref. S/2548/04/F), virtually identical to that under consideration at 322 High Street, was refused for the reasons:
1. The long gardens of No. 322, and previously No. 318 High Street are typical of the character of development along High Street. The sub-division and development of this plot in the manner proposed will be detrimental to this character and will be contrary to Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) and Policies EN28, EN30, SE2 and HG11 (1) and (4) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004). The proposal is also contrary to the aims of the "BUILDINGS" section of the Cottenham Village Design Statement (1994) pages 22 and 23, in that the simple traditional form of buildings to the rear of frontage dwellings is neither maintained nor reflected.
 2. As such the building is too large in mass and footprint resulting in a visually dominant element which would adversely affect the setting of Nos. 316 and 318 High Street, both Grade II Listed Buildings, would be contrary to the simple character of traditional buildings in the High Street and, as such, would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the Cottenham Conservation Area.
 3. The present access, only 4.0m in width at its widest, is inadequate to serve the proposed new dwelling. Any increase in use of the current driveway is likely to result in more occasions when a vehicle has to reverse out onto the High Street, in close proximity to the mini-roundabout adjacent, resulting in increased danger to users of the highway.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003):

10. **Policy P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development) seeks to ensure new development responds to the local character of the built environment.

11. **Policy P7/6** (Historic Built Environment) looks to protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004):

12. **Policy EN28** (Development within the curtilage or setting of a Listed Building) seeks to protect a Listed Building from development which would dominate and/or damage its setting.
13. **Policy EN30** (Development in Conservation Areas) seeks to protect the character of a Conservation Area and to retain or enhance its appearance and character.
14. **Policy HG11** (Backland Development) only permits development to the rear of existing properties if it will not be detrimental for reasons of overbearing and overlooking, noise and disturbance, highway dangers or out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
15. **Policy SE2 (Rural Growth Settlements):**
“Residential development and redevelopment will be permitted on unallocated land within village frameworks of RGS provided that (a) the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; (b) the development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours; (c) the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity; and (d) residential development would not conflict with another policy of the Plan, particularly policy EM8.
16. Development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dph unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.”

The Cottenham Village Design Statement (1994):

17. “**Buildings**” looks to ensure that the simple traditional form of buildings to the rear of frontage dwellings is either maintained or reflected in new development.

Consultations

18. **Cottenham Parish Council** whilst approving the application, has concerns with regards to the access to High Street and its width.
19. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** asks for a restriction on machinery use during the period of construction and details of construction if pile driven foundations are to be used.
20. **The Old West Internal Drainage Board** has no comment from a drainage point of view.
21. The comments of the **Conservation Manager** will be reported verbally; previously he objected to the 2004 application.

Representation - Applicant

22. In a covering letter, the agents state (summarised):
 - Building designed to compliment the adjoining barn and its immediate surroundings.

- Whilst the access serves both Nos. 318 and 322, and varies in width between 3.5m to 5.0m., the latter width is adequate for two vehicles to pass; there would be no need for vehicles to have to reverse out onto High Street
 - The garage for No. 322 has been removed and 2 parking spaces per dwelling have been provided
 - Cottenham is a Rural Growth Settlement
 - The design and siting of the house will not adversely affect the street scene or its character, or affect the setting of adjacent Listed Buildings
 - Being only 1½ storeys in height, it will not appear over bearing, nor overlook or overshadow neighbours
 - The Village Design Statement supports such developments
 - The scheme is in line with the aims of PPS1
23. In addition, the agent has made comparisons to the previous refusal, in that:
24. Footprint reduced by 29m² by the removal of garage and dining room
Previous scheme was between 650mm and 1100mm off the boundary; it will now be 2.0m off boundary (NB plans show a gap between 1100mm and 1700mm.)

Representations - Neighbours

25. None received at the time of writing Report, - the consultation period expires 28th March. Any comments received will be reported verbally.

Planning Comments - Key Issues

26. The main issues with this proposal are the effect on the Listed Building/Conservation Area, highway safety/access and effect on immediate neighbours. In addition has this revised scheme overcome the previous reasons of refusal?

Listed Building/Conservation Area:

27. With the exception of the bottom (north west end 7.0m depth) all of the site lies within the Conservation Area. The three properties to the front, Nos. 316, 318 and 324, are all Listed Buildings.
28. Whilst many of the High Street properties have (former) agricultural buildings to the rear, such is not the case with Nos. 318 and 322. There is a smaller range behind No. 316 and an extensive range, used as a gym, behind No. 324.
29. The erection of a new building, with an overall length of 23.7m, would introduce an alien element into this area of back gardens. It would affect the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings and would neither protect nor enhance the character of the Conservation Area. As such it would be contrary to Development Plan Policies P1/3, P7/6, EN28 and EN30.

Highway Safety/Access:

30. The present access is gravelled with a width of 4.0m. 5.0m into the site it narrows to 3.5m for a short distance before widening again. 15.0m back from the front boundary is a pair of gates providing vehicular access to No. 318 (Nos. 318 and 322 were, I believe, previously in one ownership with a right-of-way being granted when No. 318 was sold).

31. The access is similar in width to that at No. 316, see refusal in "HISTORY" above, and is not really adequate for the two dwellings it already serves although visibility is achievable. Two vehicles can, at a pinch, pass in a 4.0m wide gap but it should not be encouraged. To permit a third dwelling would increase noise and disturbance to both neighbours through vehicle manoeuvring and, at the same time, increase the risk of vehicles having to give way and reversing out onto the High Street. At the apex of The Green is a min-roundabout; situated on a Y-shaped junction, as opposed to the more common T-shape; traffic speeds tends to be slightly faster, coupled with an element of confusion by drivers. Reversing out onto such a junction would result in increased highway danger.

Impact on Neighbours

32. As described, above the erection of a third dwelling would increase noise and disturbance to the occupiers of both Nos. 318 and 322 because of the increased manoeuvring of vehicles in a confined area. Additionally the length and massing of the proposed dwelling would dominate, and appear overbearing, when viewed from the rear garden of No. 316 High Street.

Have the revised plans overcome the previous refusal?

33. There is no change to the access arrangements.
34. I agree that two cars could pass in a 5.0m wide driveway but, in reality, vehicles will drive in the centre of such an access, especially as it narrows to 3.5m. Rather than risk damage to a vehicle, the driver is more likely to reverse back onto High Street.
35. Whilst the plan does show parking for 2 vehicles per property, the spaces are not all workable. Firstly a car would have to be able to turn through 90° to access a space. To exit, a reversing distance of 6.0m is required; the plan can only provide 3.6m maximum.
36. Although the building is reduced in length and footprint, there is no fundamental change to its effect on the adjacent Listed Buildings or the character of the area.
37. Noise and disturbance to the occupiers to Nos. 318 and 322 remains unresolved.
38. For the above reasons, I recommend refusal.

Recommendation

Refuse for the following reasons:

1. The long gardens of No. 322, and previously No. 318 High Street are typical of the character of development along High Street. The sub-division and development of this plot in the manner proposed will be detrimental to this character and will be contrary to Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) and Policies EN28, EN30, SE2 and HG11 (1) and (4) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2004). The proposal is also contrary to the aims of the "BUILDINGS" section of the Cottenham Village Design Statement (1994) pages 22 and 23, in that the simple traditional form of buildings to the rear of frontage dwellings is neither maintained nor reflected.
2. As such the building is too large in mass and footprint resulting in a visually dominant element which would adversely affect the setting of Nos. 316 and 318 High Street,

both Grade II Listed Buildings, would be contrary to the simple character of traditional buildings in the High Street and, as such, would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the Cottenham Conservation Area.

3. The present access, only 4.0m in width at its widest, is inadequate to serve the proposed new dwelling. Any increase in use of the current driveway is likely to result in more occasions when a vehicle has to reverse out onto the High Street, in close proximity to the mini-roundabout adjacent, resulting in increased danger to users of the highway.
4. If approved the access would serve 3 properties. At present it is sub-standard in its lack of vehicle-to-vehicle visibility and the increase of its use by 50% would only compound this matter.
5. The use of the access, and the turning of vehicles in such a confined space, would be detrimental to the amenities of the residents of both Nos. 318 and 322 High Street, contrary to Policy HG11, (2) and (3) of the 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 files Ref. S/1669/83/F, S/1254/02/F, S/0908/04/F, S/2548/04/F and S/0328/06/F
- Cottenham Village Design Statement

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