

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 5<sup>th</sup> April 2006

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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### **S/0117/06/F - Fulbourn**

**Extension to Café/Refreshment Area of Children's Activity Centre, Chaplins Farm,  
Babraham Road for Chaplins Farm Ltd**

**Recommendation: Refusal**

**Date for Determination: 21<sup>st</sup> March 2006**

### **Departure Application**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. Small farm of some 18.4 hectares/45 acres on the southern edge of Fulbourn. With the rear gardens of houses in Dogget Lane to the north, the site is open to agricultural land on all other sides with views of the Gogs to the south. Babraham Road forms the western boundary of the farm.
2. At the northern edge of the farm is a single storey building measuring 14.8m x 18.4m (272m<sup>2</sup>), with a ridge height of 4.6m used as a farm shop and children's activity centre with outdoor play area.
3. The full application, received on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2006 seeks to extend the building on its southern side with a seating area measuring 12.0m x 5.7m (68.0m<sup>2</sup>) with a ridge height of 3.2m. It would be clad with dark stained boarding with a red/brown sheet roofing.

#### **Policy**

4. **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, recreation and leisure facilities  
**P9/2a - "Green Belt"** aims to protect the character of Cambridge.
5. **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.

#### **History**

6. Consent granted in March 1986 for the erection of a farm shop and in April 1989 for a farm shop and cafeteria.

7. In December 2004 consent was granted to convert the building into a children's activity centre with outdoor play area. This consists of a large multi-level/multi-function enclosed "climbing frame" occupying an area of 13.0m x 5.5m. In addition there is a "soft play" area for toddlers, a tea-room, services and a reduced farm shop.

### **Consultations**

8. **Fulbourn Parish Council** "approves" the application.
9. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no comments to make.

### **Representations - Neighbours**

10. None received.

### **Representations - Applicant**

11. A letter from the Agent is attached as an Appendix.

### **Planning Comments**

12. The current use of the building, being generally small scale, was felt to be "appropriate development" in the Green Belt as it was within a former agricultural building, did not involve an extension to the building and was considered to be a form of diversification for the farmer.
13. The extension proposed is, by definition, "inappropriate development" and the single issue in respect of this application is whether or not very special circumstances exist to justify inappropriate development.
14. Members will see from the Architect's letter attached - para 3(i) - (v) and para 6, that the facility has been an instant success and this is wherein the problem lies.
15. Because of its success it has need to be expanded, not to enable more children to play, as that is strictly limited by the size/capacity of the "climbing frame", but to provide a quieter environment for parents to wait.
16. From an officer visit, together with photographs, it is clear that the current tearoom is too small.
17. However that is not a planning matter and, in order to resolve the problem, the size/capacity of the "climbing frame" needs to be reduced as to be proportionate to the size of the tearoom.
18. An extension is not the answer; whilst recognising the fact that it would be convenient and desirable for the applicant, I am not satisfied that it is essential, nor that very special circumstances exist to outweigh the harm by reason of inappropriateness
19. My recommendation is therefore, refusal.

### **Recommendation**

20. Refusal, for the following reason:

The site lies in the Green Belt and an area of open countryside on the south side of Fulbourn where there are extensive and open views. An extension to the present building, which is not essential to the continued use of the Children's Activity Centre, is contrary to Policies **P1/2**, and **P9/2a** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003, and Policies **GB1**, **GB2** - Green Belt General Principles and **GB5** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which preclude inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated; none has been demonstrated in this particular case.

**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/0117/06/F, S/2125/04/F, S/0502/89/F and S/0293/86/F

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