

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

---

**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

---

**S/0514/06/F – Stow-cum-Quy  
Erection of vehicle repair and MOT service building  
at Autocare, A1303 Service Station, Newmarket Road  
for E & S Cirenza**

**Recommendation: Refusal  
Date for Determination: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006**

### **Departure Application**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site, measuring 0.1 hectares is within a complex of commercial buildings on a former service station site. The existing building on the site is a one and a half storey industrial building constructed of concrete with a corrugated metal roof. A temporary building has been erected to the rear of the unit, which serves as an office. The District boundary runs along the northern boundary of the site, cutting through the building on its north-eastern corner. The adjacent buildings to the east fall within East Cambridgeshire District. It is sited adjacent to a modern building, which is in use as a garage for commercial vehicles. To the east of this is a single storey office building. To the west of the site is a compound, used for storing small trailers and vans. The site is within the Green Belt and is in open countryside. It is clearly visible from the surrounding roads, including the A14 and Wilbraham Road.
2. This full planning application, received on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2006, seeks permission for a building to the rear of the existing unit. It will measure 14.0m by 15.0m and will have a first floor office. In addition a 10.0m by 5.0m single storey wing will provide office, enclosed parking and a store. The existing building will be clad to match. The overall height will be 6.5m.

#### **Planning History**

3. The building's origin is unclear from the planning history, however it is located within the larger site that was formerly a service station and roadside café. It is likely that the building was associated with this. In 1985 the Council received an application for change of use to vehicle repair workshop (ref. **S/85/1986/F**).

#### **Planning Policy**

4. **Policies GB2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004 (Local Plan) and **P9/2a** Cambridge and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003 (Structure Plan) set out the purpose of the Green Belt and define what is considered to be 'appropriate' development within the Green Belt.

5. **Policy P1/2** of the Structure Plan sets out environmental restrictions on development. In particular, 'Development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location'.
6. **Policy P1/3** of the Structure Plan requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development including minimising the need to travel and reducing car dependency; providing a sense of place; and making efficient use of energy and resources.
7. **Policy P2/6** of the Structure Plan provides for 'sensitive small-scale employment development in rural areas' where it contributes to one or more of the objectives of this policy, including amongst others, farm or rural diversification; re-use of existing buildings; helping to maintain or renew the vitality of rural areas.
8. **Policy P8/1** of the Structure Plan and **Policy TP1** of the Local Plan seek to ensure that new development has sustainable links between land use and transport and to provide appropriate access to the public highway. Where it is not possible for small-scale development under **Policy P2/6** to be located in a highly accessible area or where it can be made highly accessible by public transport the remaining requirements should so far as possible be met. These requirements include:
  - a. reducing the need to travel, particularly by car;
  - b. provides travel choice;
  - c. provides for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users; and
  - d. provides appropriate access to the public highway network without compromising safety.
9. **Policy EM7** of the Local Plan allows for the expansion of existing firms within village frameworks or on suitable brown field sites next to, or very close to, the village frameworks if the firm or business has been based in the Cambridge Area for a minimum of two years prior to the date of any application for development.
10. **Appendix 7/1** of the Local Plan sets out the car parking standards that the Authority will seek for new developments, while **Appendix 7/2** sets out the requirements for cycle parking provision.
11. Policies **CS5** of the Local Plan and **P6/3** of the Structure Plan limit development that will increase risk of flooding unless it can be mitigated against.

### **Consultations**

12. **Stow-cum-Quy Parish Council** recommends approval.
13. The **Environment Agency** has advised that the site falls within flood zone 1 (low risk). It has recommended conditions to address provision for pollution control.
14. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no concerns regarding noise and environmental pollution.
15. **East Cambridgeshire District Council** has not commented.

### **Representations**

16. No representations have been received.

## **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

17. The key issue in assessing these proposals is the location within the Green Belt in an area of otherwise open countryside. Other issues include employment and flood risk.

### ***Green Belt***

18. The site is located within the Green Belt. The development proposed is by definition 'inappropriate'. The proposals have not been justified as a departure from Green Belt policy in terms of any 'very special circumstances'. The building proposed is a significant structure and although to the rear of an existing building, it will be clearly visible from public viewpoints on the A14 and Wilbraham Road. The site is already conspicuous within the countryside and the scale of development proposed will be harmful to the openness, character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

### ***Other issues***

19. The site is an employment site, and will provide opportunities for semi-skilled and skilled employment, although the application does not indicate an increase in employment as a result of the proposal. However, expansion of firms outside of the village framework or on sites that are not well related to village is not supported. This application does not propose small-scale development, is not within or well related to the village and has not been demonstrated as being essential to the particular rural location. The development would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the surrounding countryside. In my opinion these issues do not outweigh the benefit in terms of employment opportunities.

## **Recommendation**

20. The application is recommended for **REFUSAL** on the following grounds:
1. The proposed building is located within the Green Belt where development is by definition 'inappropriate'. The site is set within an open rural landscape. The building proposed will be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and, due to its size, height, materials and siting, will detract from the appearance of the surrounding countryside. The proposals are contrary to policies GB2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, adopted 2004 and P9/2a of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003. No very special circumstances have been put forward to justify an exception to these policies.
  2. The development proposed is not essential to the rural location and will introduce unnecessary development within the countryside. Moreover it is not sustainable in terms of minimising the need to travel or providing a sense of place that responds to the surrounding landscape and as such is contrary to policies P1/2 and P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003.

**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/0514/06/F

**Contact Officer:** Melissa Reynolds – Area Planning Officer

Telephone: (01954) 713237