

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

**S/0472/06/F - Fulbourn
Extensions to Existing offices and Workshop at 20 Home End
for Cedar Audio Ltd.**

**Recommendation: Refusal
Date for Determination: 2nd May 2006**

Conservation Area

Members will visit the site on Monday 8th May 2006.

Site and Proposal

1. The site measuring 0.1 hectares comprises a double fronted building that was formerly a public house. It has been used as offices since the early 1990s when it was converted and extended. It has a small car park to the front (south) and western side of the building, double garage to the side and a patio area to the rear.
2. It is located on a prominent corner plot at the junction of Doggett Lane and Home End. There are three mature trees to the frontage with Doggett Lane and a grassed area to the junction with Home End.
3. To the rear of the building (north) is a detached house (18 Home End). This is sited at a right angle to the office building. To the west, at a slightly higher ground level than the application site, is a bungalow at 2 Doggett Lane. This is built close to the boundary with the site and has its side elevation facing over the car park.
4. This full planning application, received on 7th March 2006, proposes to further extend this office building through the addition of ground floor extension to the front of the existing garage which will be converted into workshop/office, an extension to form a link between the garage element and the main building, a first floor rear extension above the existing western single storey rear projection and a two-storey rear extension between the two rear wings. It was accompanied by a supporting statement, which can be found at Appendix 1.

Planning History

5. **S/2075/05/F** ‘Extensions to Existing Offices and Workshop’ – planning permission was refused for almost identical proposals. The principal difference between this previous scheme and the current proposals is that the refused scheme showed a gable end to the two-storey rear extension instead of a hip.
6. **S/1778/91/F** granted planning permission for ‘alteration, extension and conversions to provide offices together with double garage’. **S/1280/91/CAC** gave Conservation Area Consent for ‘part demolition of former public house and outbuilding’. These applications followed planning application **S/1279/91/F**, which refused permission for

alteration, extension and conversion to provide offices together with double garage and boundary wall'. Earlier planning applications **S/2160/90/F** for 'extension and use as offices' and **S/2150/90/F** for 'five flats' were withdrawn.

Planning Policy

7. **Policy EM6** 'New Employment at Rural Growth and Limited Growth Settlements' of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (Local Plan) makes provision for small-scale development in classes B1 – B8 within village frameworks. Such developments are permitted only where:
 - a. there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions, village character and other environmental factors, and
 - b. the development would contribute to a greater range of local employment opportunities, especially for the semi-skilled and un-skilled, or where initial development is dependent on the use of locally-based skills and expertise.
8. **Policy EM7** 'Expansion of Existing Firms at Villages' of the Local Plan permits expansion of firms within frameworks subject to the provisions of EM3 (Limitations of the occupancy of new premises in South Cambridgeshire) and EM6 (see paragraph 7 above). The firm or business must have operated in the Cambridge Area for two years prior to the date of the planning application.
9. **Policies TP1** 'Planning for More Sustainable Travel' of the Local Plan and **P8/1** 'Sustainable Development – Links Between Land Use and Transport' of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003 (Structure Plan) require new developments to promote more sustainable transport choices and to provide appropriate access to the public highway. **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.
10. **Policies EN30 and EN31** 'Development in Conservation Areas' of the Local Plan and **P7/6** of the Structure Plan seek to limit development that will impact upon the historic environment. In particular, Local Plan policies require developments to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area in terms of scale, massing, roof materials, wall materials, hard and soft landscaping. Traditional local materials and details should be specified and details should fit comfortably into their context.

Consultations

11. **Fulbourn Parish Council** has recommended approval, commenting that it has 'no objection to the application, but as with S/2075/05/F. although car parking spaces have been repositioned, are concerned about the exit which is on a dangerous bend'.
12. **The Conservation and Design Manager** comments:

This application is broadly similar to a previous application on this site (Ref. S/2075/05/F), which I commented on last year. However, the proposal has been modified to address my concern over the two-storey rear extension, and I therefore have no objection to the design of the extensions, but remain concerned that the proposal is too large for the car parking provision. In passing I would also note that the existing garage doors are side hung timber boarded doors and not up and over style doors indicated on the drawings.

Recommendation

The site is relatively confined and the size of the extension would suggest that the applicant may have outgrown the site and should be seeking to relocate to larger premises. While I now have no objection to the design and its impact on the Conservation Area, I remain concerned that there is insufficient parking. The new floor area provided may need to be reduced down still further to bring it into balance with the parking that can be provided on this restricted site.

13. The **Local Highways Authority** comments that while eleven car parking spaces are to be provided, the layout of the spaces is far from ideal as two staff spaces and two visitor spaces are in tandem, which has the potential to result in unnecessary manoeuvring within the site when a vehicle in the space nearest the building wishes to exit the site first. The parking arrangement shown only works if the number of spaces meets the standard number of spaces required for the proposed use. If there is insufficient spaces provided parking will undoubtedly occur within the manoeuvring area and the workability of the layout will fail. If the Council is happy to accept the number of spaces shown it is **strongly** recommended that the spaces, as shown, be suitably permanently marked out on the ground. The access as shown, clearly does not make sense. The access must be a minimum of 5.0 metres wide with pedestrian visibility splays of 2.0 metres by 2.0 metres on each side. This does appear to be over-development of a restricted site.
14. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has recommended planning conditions relating to hours for use of power operated machinery, details of the location and type of any power driven plant or equipment, hours of construction using power operated machinery and details of pile driven foundations. These conditions are recommended to overcome concerns regarding the potential impact of noise upon neighbouring residential properties.

Representations

15. Councillors Neil Scarr and Sandra Doggett requested that the Committee consider this application, as the question of employment sites within Fulbourn is very important with the constant loss of jobs from what was once a major employer at Fulbourn Hospital. They believe a site visit is essential.
16. No other representations have been received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. The key issues in relation to this planning application are whether this revised scheme addresses sufficiently previous reasons for refusal. These issues are car parking, visibility and access, impact upon village character, form and mass of the extensions, impact upon neighbouring residential amenity due to an overbearing bulk and massing.

Highways

18. One car parking space per 25m² gross floorspace is required. The application proposes a total floor area of 471m². This equates to a requirement for 19 car parking spaces. The additional floorspace created is 114m². The application proposes four 'additional' spaces, although these are either tandem spaces or in effect existing areas within the car park. The total of 14 car parking spaces including one disabled car parking space will in practice be significantly short of the 19 that are required for the

site. The site already struggles to accommodate car parking adequately and I remain very concerned about the practicality of providing additional car parking within a smaller area than is currently available. The layout includes tandem parking which in practice is unlikely to work sensibly. The Local Highways Authority, in its comments on the application, supports this view. The Conservation and Design Manager has also raised concerns in relation to the parking provision and its impact upon the Conservation Area.

19. In addition to the above car parking shortage the application includes 12 secure parking spaces for motorbikes and cycles. The Council's standard requires one secure cycle parking space per 30m². This equates to 16 spaces. Despite having made efforts to provide cycle parking and shower changing facilities the application still falls short of standards.
20. The access width has been widened to 5 metres, however the layout fails to provide pedestrian visibility splays either side of this. The splays are shown on the submitted layout plan within the drive itself and therefore will be compromised, resulting in danger to pedestrians.

Conservation Area

21. There is concern about the impact of car parking that is required as a result of the additional floorspace proposed upon the appearance of the Conservation Area. It is clear that the site has been developed to its maximum capacity and that allowing further development will have knock-on impacts that would result in harm to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Neighbouring Amenity

22. This application introduces additional bulk and mass within close proximity of (2 metre separation) the boundary with 18 Home End. Previous applications for this site have considered similar relationships to be unacceptable. I remain very concerned about the effect of the two storey and first floor extensions, which will have an overbearing visual impact when viewed from the neighbouring property.
23. The impact upon 2 Doggett Lane will also increase through the extension forward of the garage to provide workshop/office space. An 11 metre deep building sited approximately 2 metres off the boundary could also be considered to be damaging to the occupiers' amenities, however the impact is reduced due to the difference in ground level between the two sites.

Employment

24. While policies do offer support for expansion of existing firms within villages this should not be to the detriment of highway safety, the environment or neighbours' amenities. The application has failed to demonstrate that the proposed expansion can be achieved within the site without causing such detriment. It is therefore contrary to policies EM6 and EM7 of the Local Plan.

Recommendation

25. **Refusal**

Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposed development would result in an increase in floor space of approximately 114 square metres, requiring 5 new car parking spaces under current parking standards set out in Appendix 7/1 of South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004. This is not achievable to a satisfactory or workable standard and approval on this basis would lead to unusable and impractical parking spaces and potential on street parking that would be detrimental to highway users. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EM6 of South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004, which states that within village frameworks planning permission will be granted for small-scale development in classes B1 provided that there would be no adverse impact to, amongst others, traffic conditions.
 2. The development would result in a significant increase in built form allowing an increase to the level of operations at the site beyond a capacity that the size of this site can reasonably support. On this basis, and as demonstrated in reason for refusal 1 (above), it is considered that the proposal would be an over-development of the site, contrary to Policy EM6 of South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004, which states that within village frameworks, planning permission will be granted for small-scale development in classes B1 provided that there would be no adverse impact to, amongst others, village character. In addition, the proposals will, as a result of car parking requirements, increase the impact of the site upon the Conservation Area with subsequent harm to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to policies EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003.
 3. The rear extension of the scheme, by way of the proposed design, bulk and massing, would be unduly overbearing when viewed from the adjacent dwelling, No.18 Home End. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy EM6 of South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which states that within village frameworks, planning permission will be granted for small-scale development in classes B1 provided that there would be no adverse impact to, amongst others, residential amenity.

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/1778/91/F, S/2075/05/F, S/0472/06/F

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