

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee  
**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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7<sup>th</sup> June 2006

**S/0669/06/O - Melbourn  
Dwelling, Adjacent 8 Portway for Mr D J Thomas**

**Recommendation: Approval  
Date for Determination: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006**

### **Site and Proposal**

1. Portway is a cul-de-sac on the north eastern edge of Melbourn, within the village framework. Entering the street from Cambridge Road there are five pairs of semi-detached houses, facing each other on both sides of the street. The houses, numbers 1-10 Portway with numbers 17-26 opposite, are laid out with wide gardens at the side, giving a low density feel to the street. The houses were built as local authority dwellings, and are all similar in design. However, the uniformity of some of the dwellings has been changed through extensions and alterations.
2. Planning permission has been granted for large side extensions at numbers 3, 7, 20, 21 Portway, and there are smaller scale extensions on other houses in the street. Thus the uniformity of the design of the cul-de-sac has been changed over the years.
3. The outline planning application, received on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2006, proposes the erection of one dwelling on land adjacent 8 Portway. Details of siting, design, means of access and landscaping are not being considered as part of this application. The site is 0.0225 ha. in area and has a frontage of 8.2 metres. The density equates to 44 dwellings per hectare.

### **Planning History**

4. **S/0648/00/O** - Outline application for the erection of one dwelling on land adjacent 8 Portway. This application was refused on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2000 for the following reason:
  1. The proposed development would be unacceptable because it would represent the overdevelopment of the site, having a visually cramped appearance in the street scene, out of character with the spacious nature of development in Portway, and detrimental to the visual amenities of the area. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 1993 Policy H15 which requires such development to be sympathetic to the character and amenities of the locality.
5. An appeal was then dismissed on 14th February 2001.
6. Land adjacent number 4 Portway has been granted permission for one dwelling following an appeal decision on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006. (Ref **S/1484/05/O**).

## Planning Policy

### *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003*

7. **Policy P1/3** states that a high standard and design for all new development will be required which creates a compact form of development through the promotion of higher densities, and provides a sense of place that responds to the local character of the built environment, and pays attention to the detail of forms, massing, textures, colours and landscaping.

### *South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004*

8. **Policy SE2** states that as Melbourn is a Rural Growth Settlement, residential development and redevelopment will be permitted on unallocated land within village frameworks provided that the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenities of neighbours; the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity, and residential development does not conflict with another policy of the Plan. Development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a maximum density of 30 dph unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.
9. **Policy SE8** notes that there will be a general presumption in favour of residential development within village frameworks. Residential development outside these frameworks will not be permitted.
10. **Policy HG10** explains that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency.

## Consultation

11. **Melbourn Parish Council** - Recommends refusal of the application, stating that development would be overdevelopment of the site, and road safety concerns (no footpaths etc).
12. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** - Concerned there could be problems arising from noise during the period of construction. He suggests two conditions in order to minimise the effects of the development to nearby residents and occupiers (one is more appropriate as an informative).

## Representations

13. None received.

## Planning Comments – Key Issues

14. Given the presumption in favour of residential development within the village framework, the deciding factor is whether development on the site would reflect the character of the local townscape.

### ***Appeal Decision on the Application Site***

15. A proposal was submitted to the Council for one dwelling on the application site in 2000, which was refused. An appeal was subsequently dismissed as the Inspector considered that the effect of the proposal would introduce a discordant type of development into Portway. In particular, he was concerned that the proportions of the house would contrast with the existing house and that it would appear cramped because it occupied the entire width of the plot.

### ***Recent Appeal Decision***

16. The siting and means of access for one new dwelling on land adjacent number 4 Portway was granted approval on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006 following an appeal. The Inspector states in his decision letter that due to the extensions that have taken place to dwellings along Portway, that “these have considerably diminished the most distinctive part of the character of Portway as originally conceived and built... the uniformity of the design has also been changed”.
17. The decision letter comments that “Although all the houses in Portway are semi-detached I can see nothing intrinsically wrong with introducing a small detached house into the street scene. My main concern would be the visual impact caused by closing the gap between numbers 4 and 5 Portway. However, the original wide and regular spacing between the houses along Portway has already been significantly altered by the large side extensions built and under construction. These extensions reflect the adaptation of the houses to current needs and a small detached house would add further to the mix of property available”.
18. In this decision letter, the Inspector makes reference to the appeal which was made in 2000, and concludes that the extensions that have been built down Portway since 2000 have introduced such variety into the street scene that previous concerns now carry little weight. It was his view that the extensions have introduced variety in the building line and street scene, and the house that was proposed on land adjacent number 4 Portway would “continue this theme in a different, but not unreasonable way”.

### ***Design, Siting, Means of Access and Landscaping***

19. The planning application is in outline form only, therefore issues of the design of the proposed dwelling and its siting are reserved for a later stage. However, it is considered that the development would not have a significantly detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the street scene along Portway and that these remaining issues can be negotiated and agreed upon if an approval for one dwelling on the site is granted.
20. On either side of the application site there would remain gaps of approximately 6m and 2.5m to the end walls of houses at Nos. 9 and 8 Portway, respectively.
21. Although there are no footways in Portway, the carriageway is of sufficient width (approx 5.5m) to accommodate vehicles and pedestrians from the 24 existing dwellings, together with the proposed and approved dwelling. Neither Inspector in the above-mentioned appeal cases considered highway safety to be a problem.

### ***Conclusions***

22. There is a significant history of planning applications made for dwellings along Portway. The most recent appeal decision letter granted approval for one dwelling on land

adjacent 4 Portway, and, with the comments made by the Inspector in mind, I do not consider there are reasons to resist the current application for one dwelling.

23. I consider, therefore, that the proposal complies with Policies SE2 and HG10 of the Local Plan 2004.

### **Recommendation**

24. Approval subject to conditions

1. Standard Condition B – Time limited permission (Reason B);
2. Sc1- Details to be submitted of Reserved Matters (Reason - The application is for outline permission only and gives insufficient details of the proposed scheme);
3. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
4. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
5. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery during the period of construction (RC26).

### **Informatives**

1. During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.
2. A statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted to and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.

### **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)
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**  
**SE2** (Development in Rural Growth Settlements), **SE8** (Village Frameworks), and **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
  - Character of the area
  - Road safety

**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 Application files ref: S/0669/06/O, S/0648/00/O and S/1484/05/O

**Contact Officer:** Area Team 4