

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 7th June 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0743/06/0 - Willingham
House and Garage Adjacent 27 Station Road, for Mr J Corney

Recommendation: Refusal
Date for determination: 8th June 2006

Site and Proposal

1. The site occupies an area of 0.06ha and is part of the side garden of the applicant's detached house. The site fronts Station Road. The adjoining house to the south, No.27, stands close to the boundary with the application site, but has no windows on the facing elevation.
2. The outline application, dated 7th April 2006, proposes the erection of a house and garage. No details of the siting or appearance of the swelling have been submitted at this stage. All detailed matters have been reserved for subsequent approval. The application has been accompanied by a flood risk assessment.
3. The agent has confirmed that the applicant does not wish to amend the application to be for two dwellings and garages.
4. The proposal represents a density of 16.7 dwellings per hectare.

Planning History

5. A similar application was withdrawn in February of this year to enable a flood risk assessment to be prepared (**S/0071/06/O**).
6. Outline consents have been granted for the development of a house and garage on this plot in 1991, 1994 and 1999 (**S/1976/91/O**, **S/1930/94/O**, **S/0108/99/O**). No reserved matters applications were submitted subsequently, and consequently all of these outline planning permissions have lapsed.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

7. **P1/1** (Approach to Development) – provision of development within settlements will be preferred over the use of land outside the settlement. Development sites involving the use of previously developed land and buildings within existing settlements should be afforded the highest priority.
8. **P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 requires compact forms of development through the promotion of higher densities that responds to the local character of the built environment.

9. **P5/3** (Density) Local Planning Authorities should seek to maximise the use of land by applying the highest density possible which is compatible with maintaining local character. As a guideline, densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable. The supporting text to the policy states: *'It is intended that overall density levels will be significantly higher than the average 25-30 dwellings per hectare in the past'*.
10. **Policy P5/5** (Homes in Rural Areas) – small scale housing developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account the need for affordable rural housing, the character of the village and its setting, and the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport provision in the immediate area.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

11. **Policy SE2** (Rural Growth Settlements) – residential development will be permitted provided that the retention of the site is not essential to the character of the village, the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenity of neighbours; and the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity. Development should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.
12. **Policy SE8** (Village Frameworks) of the Local Plan states that there will be a general presumption in favour of residential development within the frameworks of villages
13. **Policy HG10** (Housing Mix and Design) requires residential developments to have a mix of units making the best use of the site. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape.
14. **Policy CS5** (Flood Protection) – planning permission will not be granted where the site is likely to increase flood risk unless it can be demonstrated that the effect can be overcome by appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures

Consultations

15. **Willingham Parish Council** – recommends approval (no additional comments).
16. **Council's Building Control Manager** – the flood risk assessment is acceptable.
17. **Old West Internal Drainage Board** – no comment on the proposal from a drainage point of view.
18. **Environment Agency** – the site lies within Zone 2 (medium risk) of the Flood Map. The Agency has no further comments to add, and has delegated assessment of flood risk to the LPA.
19. **Highways Authority** – no objections subject to conditions to be attached to any consent issued.
20. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – no objection.

Representations

21. None received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

22. The main issue arising from the application is that of housing density. Policies P1/3, P5/3 and SE2 indicate that, in the Rural Growth Settlement of Willingham, new housing development should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare. This is a material change in policy since the grant of outline planning permission in February 1999. An exception to this approach can be made if there are strong design grounds for doing so, taking into account the local character of the built environment. The average density of development in this part of Station Road is only 9.0 dwellings per hectare. The area is characterised by detached houses set in reasonably-sized gardens. Plots have frontage lengths ranging from 11m to 23m, but typically 15-16m. The application site has a frontage length of 14.0m. The proposal represents a density of 16.7 dwellings per hectare.
23. The development of one house on the site would be in keeping with the existing density of development, and size of existing plots. On the other hand, the site is not on the fringe of the village, where lower densities might be appropriate, nor is it in the Conservation Area, where the pattern of existing development could amount to a consideration of greater weight. Policy H10 encourages a mix of residential units in any area. On balance, I consider that the character of the area would be preserved if the development took the form of a pair of semi-detached dwellings with a shared central access.
24. The applicant has indicated that he wishes the application to be determined as submitted. As the proposal fails to achieve the density of development normally expected in Willingham, my recommendation is for refusal on this ground. In other respects, I consider the proposal to be acceptable, in line with earlier planning permissions on this site.

Recommendation

25. Refusal
 1. The development of one dwelling on a site of area 0.6 hectare fails to make the best use of this land and does not represent a sustainable form of development. No strong design reason has been put forward to set aside the requirement to achieve a compact form of development as contained in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003, notably at Policy P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development), and Policy P5/3 (Density) and in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, notably at Policy SE2 (Rural Growth Settlements) and Policy HG10 (Housing Mix and Design).

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/0743/06/O, S/0071/06/O, S/0108/99/O, S/1930/94/O and S/1976/91/O.

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