

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee

5<sup>th</sup> July 2006

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

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### **S/0800/06/F – Cottenham Proposed Caravan at Fern Farm, Short Drove**

**Recommendation: Refusal  
Date for Determination: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2006**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application site is located to the southeast of the village of Cottenham outside the development framework. The site lies within Dunstal Field forming part of the Cambridge Green Belt.
2. The site is currently being used as part of an agricultural smallholding where livestock (chicken and pigs) are being reared.
3. The application, registered on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2006, proposes the siting of a static caravan to the north east of the smallholding.

#### **Planning History**

4. There is no relevant planning history relating to the application site.

#### **Planning Policy**

##### *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003*

5. Structure Plan **Policy P1/2** relates to environmental restrictions on development whereby development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
6. Structure Plan **Policy P9/2a** states that the purpose of the Cambridge Green Belt is to maintain and enhance its setting and to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the City. Within the Green Belt, new development, including change of use, will be limited to that required for agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport, or other uses appropriate to the rural area.

##### *South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004*

7. Local Plan **Policy GB2** explains that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Development is defined as 'inappropriate' unless it comprises buildings for agriculture or forestry. Any development considered appropriate within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that it does not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.
8. **Policy HG16** states that in the countryside (i.e. outside the village frameworks), new dwellings will only be permitted on well-established agricultural units where it can be

demonstrated that there is a clear, existing functional need relating to a full-time worker, and that suitable existing buildings in the area are not available or the conversion of appropriate nearby buildings would not provide suitable accommodation.

9. Government's **Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7**, "Sustainable Development in Rural Areas" states that, if a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan or other temporary accommodation. It should satisfy the following criteria:
  - i. "Clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new farm buildings is often a good indication of intentions);
  - ii. Functional need (see paragraph 4 of this Annex);
  - iii. Clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;
  - iv. The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and
  - v. Other normal planning requirements, e.g. on siting and access, are satisfied."

### **Consultation**

10. **Cottenham Parish Council** – Recommends approval of the proposal subject to the following:

"If SCDC are satisfied that this can be a viable business then permission be given on a temporary personal basis initially for a period of one year to be reviewed on an annual basis, and that this permission be for non-residential use only."
11. **Cottenham Village Design Group** – "The Design Group is in general opposed to new buildings on open land outside the village framework on the grounds that it is likely to disrupt the locally distinctive open character of the landscape. However, we do recognise that where a very strong need can be demonstrated in relation to agricultural or related activities it is reasonable to permit limited development. Such development should be of good design using locally appropriate forms and materials – unlikely to be achievable with any caravan."
12. **Old West Internal Drainage Board** – No comment from a drainage point of view.
13. **Environment Agency** – The application as submitted does not consider sufficiently foul water drainage.

### **Representations**

14. None received

### **Planning Comments**

15. The retrospective application proposal is for the siting of a static caravan. The site forms part of an agricultural holding. The applicants, who work on the site and live one and a half hours away, require the static caravan for shelter.

16. Whilst it is recognised that the site is in use for the keeping of livestock it is not felt that the applicant has provided proper justification for the static caravan to warrant an approval.
17. The proposal is located within the Cambridge Green Belt. It is considered that the proposed static caravan would have a detrimental impact upon the rural character and openness of the Green Belt. The caravan would not sit comfortably within this rural location and is therefore considered to be an inappropriate form of development.

#### **Recommendation**

18. Recommend that this application be refused, for the reasons given below.

#### **Reason for Refusal**

1. The static caravan is an intrusive feature in the landscape in this open countryside location and is detrimental to the visual quality and openness of the Cambridge Green Belt. Insufficient justification in relation to the need of the proposed caravan has been provided. It is not considered that there are exceptional circumstances to justify the need for this inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies P1/2 and P9/2a of the Cambridge and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy GB2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which aims to protect the Green Belt from development required to serve agriculture, amongst other uses.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- County Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Application file S/0800/06/F

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