

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 2nd August 2006
AUTHOR/S: Head of Planning Services

**S/0938/06/F – Caldecote
Extensions and Conversion of Barn and Cartshed into Dwelling
Erection of Garage/Outbuilding at Manor Farm, Main Street for W Kamper**

**Recommendation: Refusal
Determination Date: 4th July 2006**

Conservation Area

Departure Application

Members will visit the site on Monday 31st July 2006.

Site and Proposal

1. The site lies to the south of St Michael's church, a Grade II* Listed Building and to the north of Manor Farmhouse, a Grade II Listed Building. It lies in the countryside to the south of Caldecote village approximately 2km south of the Caldecote settlement framework, 700m north of the Kingston settlement framework and 1km west of Toft settlement framework.
2. The site contains a group of run down agricultural buildings that historically were curtilage buildings to Manor Farmhouse and are curtilage listed.
3. The full planning application, received 9th May 2006, proposes to demolish some of the buildings, convert a chaff barn and cartshed and erect new buildings to form a single 5 bedroomed dwelling approximately 4.5m-5.5m in height with an inner courtyard and detached triple bay garage and store.
4. The works to the chaff barn include removal of existing roof material, new pitched roof structure above eastern bays, timber weather boarding removed, new windows to be inserted, walls re-clad and new roofing materials, open fronted lean-to to be infilled, new ground floor slab in lean-to, insulated timber floor installed, new mezzanine floor and spiral staircase installed and internal partitions.
5. The works to the cartshed include a new pitched roof structure, timber weatherboarding removed from walls, timber frame supported whilst new brick plinths and oak sole plates constructed, open fronted east facing elevation enclosed with aluminium framed glazed screens, wall re-clad, new concrete slab formed, new openings.
6. The footprint of the barns to be converted is approximately 139m². The finished dwelling would be approximately 498m² of footprint. Taking account of the new garage and store building the converted footprint area will be approximately 23% of the overall footprint of the scheme. I.e. 77% of the development (463m²) will be new build.

Planning History

7. There is no history of relevance to the application.

Planning Policy

8. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (the Structure Plan) states (in part) that development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location or where there could be damage, destruction or loss to areas that should be retained for their biodiversity, historic, archaeological, architectural, and recreational value.
9. **Policy P1/3** of the Structure Plan states (in part) that a high standard of design and sustainability will be required for all new development which minimises the need to travel and reduces car dependency, provides a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment, conserves important environmental assets of the site and pays attention to the detail of forms, massing, textures, colours and landscaping.
10. **Policy P7/6** of the Structure Plan – Historic Built Environment - “Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.”
11. **Policy SE8** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (the Local Plan) – Village Frameworks states (in part) that residential development outside of village frameworks will not be permitted.
12. **EN20** of the Local Plan – Unsympathetic Extensions states (in part) that planning permission will be refused for extensions to Listed Buildings which are not necessary to ensure the continuing use of the building, would dominate or detract from the Listed Building in scale, form, massing or appearance, would imply the loss of building fabric of architectural or historic interest or would harm the well-being or setting of adjacent Listed Buildings.
13. **EN26** of the Local Plan – The Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses states (in part) that in judging applications for planning permission to change the use of listed buildings the Council will consider whether or not the existing use can continue with reasonable utility or life expectancy, all other options for less damaging uses have been explored, the proposed use can take place without the necessity of extensive alterations or extensions which would be harmful to the fabric, character or setting of the building or the proposal would harm the setting and amenity of adjacent buildings.
14. **EN28** of the Local Plan – Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building. This policy states (in part) that proposals will be refused which would dominate the Listed Building or its curtilage buildings in scale, form, massing or appearance, would damage the setting, well-being or attractiveness of a Listed Building or would harm the visual relationship between the buildings and its formal or natural landscape surroundings.
15. **EN30** of the Local Plan – Development in Conservation Areas states (in part) that proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. The District Council will refuse permission for schemes which do not specify traditional local materials and details and which do not fit comfortably into their context.
16. **Policy DP/1** of the Local Development Framework Submission Draft 2006 is concerned with the sustainability of development, DP/2 the design of new

development, **DP/3** development criteria, **CH/3** Listed Buildings, **CH/4** development within the curtilage or setting of a Listed Building and **CH/5** Conservation Areas. These policies do not materially differ from the Development Plan policies highlighted above in so far as they relate to the proposal.

17. **Policy HG/8** of the Local Development Framework Submission Draft 2006 is a new policy concerned with the conversion of buildings in the countryside for residential use. It states:
1. Planning permission for conversion of rural buildings for residential use will not generally be permitted. Planning permission will only exceptionally be granted where it can be demonstrated, having regard to market demand or planning considerations:
 - a. Firstly it is inappropriate for any suitable employment use; and
 - b. Secondly it is inappropriate for employment with residential conversion as a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use.
 2. Any conversion must meet the following criteria:
 - c. The buildings are structurally sound;
 - d. The buildings are not of a makeshift nature and have not been allowed to fall into such a state of dereliction and disrepair that any reconstruction would require planning permission as a new building;
 - e. The buildings are capable of re-use without materially changing their existing character or impact upon the surrounding countryside;
 - f. The form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings;
 - g. Perform well against sustainability issues highlighted by **policy SP/1**.
 3. Any increase in floor area will not be permitted except where it is necessary for the benefit of the design, or in order to better integrate the development with its surroundings. Future extensions of such buildings will not be permitted. Incidental uses such as car parking and storage should be accommodated within any group of buildings, or on well related land where landscaping can reduce the visual impact of the new site.
 4. Development must be in scale with the rural location. Residential uses must be located close to local services and facilities, and in an accessible location with a choice of means of travel, including non-motorised modes. The cumulative impact of the conversion of a number of buildings on adjoining sites or the local area will also be considered.
 5. Residential conversion permitted as a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use, will be secured by planning condition or agreement to ensure the occupation of the dwelling remains directly related to the operation of the enterprise. The dwelling part of the unit must be interdependently linked with the commercial part. A live-work unit should have a minimum of 40m² of definable functional workspace in addition to the residential element. Internal uses may be horizontally or vertically split. The workspace must be flexible, and capable of accommodating a range of employment uses”.

18. **Government Planning Policy Statement 7: “Sustainable Development in Rural Areas”**, states at Paragraph 17:

“The Government’s policy is to support the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building. Planning Authorities should therefore set out in LDDs their policy criteria for permitting the conversion and re-use of buildings in the countryside for economic, residential and any other purposes, including mixed uses.”

Consultation

19. **Caldecote Parish Council** - Recommends approval. It states:

“The Council considers that this proposal should be approved. The proposal retains the style of the existing buildings. It will tidy up the area and offers the community the chance to gain improvements to car parking for the church and connections to the sewer for the church which we are assured the owner is willing to offer.

Wildlife, all development should make due consideration of problems associated with wildlife disturbance.

Consideration of any effect to any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Observation of the Crime and disorder act Section 17.

Any construction should specify good quality materials.

Any rights of way effecting any development should be the responsibility of the applicant to move.

Any access should not be allowed to increase risks.

Conditions should be applied on the following during construction.

No work should be carried out before 8am and should finish by 6pm. (1pm Saturdays)
No work on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Any spoil removed should not be used to raise ground levels and create neighbouring flood problems.

Site traffic should be diverted away from existing roads if possible, roads if used should be kept free of mud and if necessary regularly swept. Wheel washing facilities should be used.

Parking and site compounds should be provided to ensure that disturbance to nearby properties is kept to a minimum.

Planting plans should be agreed before any construction is started to ensure existing planting is preserved if possible”.

20. **Conservation Manager**

“Background

1. The site is to the north of Manor Farmhouse, is within the Caldecote Conservation Area and is located in the countryside.
2. Currently in separate ownership, the buildings were historically in the same ownership and are therefore within the curtilage of Manor Farm. The buildings

comprise a small timber frame barn with a corrugated iron roof, possibly a former granary of 19th or early 19th century date, a collection of poor quality sheds which are of no historic interest and a timber framed outbuilding, formerly an open fronted cartshed with a truncated corrugated iron roof.

3. The boundary between the farmhouse and the farm buildings is defined by a post and rail fence. Along this boundary two modern outbuildings have been erected adjacent to the listed building.
4. The site is visible from the road and although set back from the entrance, the existing barn and outbuildings are prominent within the street scene.

Key Issues

1. The main considerations are the physical impact on the historic fabric and the character of the curtilage listed buildings and the impact on the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse.
2. The demolition of the sheds will be an enhancement and there are no objections to this element of the scheme, however the proposed scheme of conversion to a residential use would involve significant alteration and extension both internally and externally. Flooring over part of the chaff barn and installing a spiral staircase will affect the spatial quality of the interior thereby harming its architectural character and resulting in damage to the historic fabric of this timber framed barn. Externally the changes will be visually more intrusive. New openings and glazing existing openings will puncture the principal components of this agricultural building detrimentally altering its otherwise unaltered character and appearance as a building of special architectural and historic interest. In addition the new door openings may result in the loss of historic fabric.
3. The proposed extensions by virtue of their scale, form, massing and appearance are considered to detract from the special character and appearance of barn and cart shed and erode their historic plan and form. The proposal would visually and physically dominate all elevations of the barn and cart shed and as such would significantly change the appearance of these curtilage listed buildings to their detriment. In addition the design, which introduces untraditional materials and detailing including large glazed areas is not in keeping with the simple character and appearance of these former agricultural buildings.
4. For the above reasons the setting of the listed farmhouse would be compromised and the visual relationship between the farmhouse and its former agricultural buildings would be further eroded.
5. Clearly the best use of a building is that for which it was originally designed. In this case no compelling evidence has been presented to show that some form of agricultural or storage use could not be maintained. It is clear that an alternative non-agricultural use would be difficult to accommodate due to the close proximity of the listed farmhouse and other listed buildings. However conversion to a dwelling is not considered to be an acceptable alternative for the above reasons. Consequently a less intrusive use should be sought which does not require so much alteration and extension to the buildings and which avoids destroying their special character.
6. The proposed location of the garage would have a significant impact on the setting of the listed farmhouse, due to its close proximity and would obscure views of the former agricultural buildings. Although the form and materials are traditional the scale and appearance are not in keeping with a traditional outbuilding and would detract from the setting of the listed farmhouse and the curtilage listed barn

and cart shed. In addition the hard landscaping would result in a domestic appearance, which is not considered acceptable in a rural location and within the setting of listed buildings.

7. Finally the proposed alterations and extension to the barn and cart shed would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the wider Conservation Area. The barn is prominent within the street scene and the Conservation Area and the proposal, which is considered to be visually intrusive, would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area.

Recommendation: Refuse - For the above reasons the proposals are considered to have a significant impact on the character of the barn and cartshed and on the setting of the adjacent listed farmhouse and the wider Conservation Area. The proposals are therefore considered to be contrary to policies EN20, EN26, EN28, EN30, SE8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and policy P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003."

21. **English Heritage** - Comments are awaited

22. **Environment Agency**

The site falls within the low risk (Zone 1) flood zone.

It further comments: "the maximum allowable discharge to a local watercourse would be 3 litres per second, per impermeable hectare of development. This figure shall be divided pro rata by the developed, or positively drained, area (m²) of the site. An acceptable method of foul drainage disposal would be connection to the public foul sewer".

23. **Ecology Officer**

"No objection, however due to the presence of bat activity in the barns and a maternity roost in the workshop (which is not to be altered) a condition is required to provide a scheme of mitigation and compensation for the bats.

Furthermore, a pond is present on site. It is noted that the applicant intends to restore the pond. A condition is required to control this activity (i.e. a scheme of pond restoration). The applicant is also advised to check for great crested newts, why did the ecologists not investigate this? If they are found to be present then a Defra license will also be required.

I accept that no barn owls are present.

I welcome the fact that the applicant has investigated issues relating to protected species prior to submitting an application".

Representations

24. One letter has been received from the occupier of 30 Lyndewode Road, Cambridge. He states:

"I own the small field directly opposite the proposed conversion (known as Church Meadow) and would strongly urge South Cambs to grant the application.

1. The current state of the buildings is an eyesore in a Conservation Area. They are badly in need of repair and it is clear the only viable economic alternative is conversion to domestic dwelling.

2. The location of the site between the church and the Manor Farm lends itself to sympathetic development and would in my view be within the village envelope.
3. The proposed plans are an excellent example of conversion, which blend in well with the surrounding listed buildings.
4. The presence of residents in this proposed location will increase security for my property”.

25. Further representations from the applicants

Please see the comments attached as Appendix 1.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

26. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

1. The principle of residential development on the site.
2. The impact on Listed Buildings and their settings.
3. The impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the street scene.
4. The impact of the change of character of the site on the countryside.
5. The impact on neighbour amenity.

Principle of residential use

27. Residential use is resisted outside of settlement frameworks for sustainability reasons and to protect the countryside for its own sake. The proposal seeks to retain some elements of existing structures but 77% of the proposal is new build and is essentially a new dwelling in the countryside. In addition, the works to the cartshed amount to major reconstruction and the works to the chaff barn are significant as a conversion.
28. There is no policy support for the conversion of barns to residential use in the current 1994 Local Plan. The proposal is therefore contrary to the Development Plan in this respect. There is no policy support for new build for residential purposes in the countryside without agricultural or similar justification. County Structure Plan 2003 requires development in the countryside to be essential in any particular location. I do not consider the application has demonstrated that this development is essential. The new build is therefore contrary to the Development Plan.
29. Emerging policy HG/8 states that conversion to residential use will not generally be permitted but exceptionally where such a proposal satisfies various tests it may be acceptable. This is emerging policy but the tests are relevant material planning considerations:
30. *It must first be demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any suitable employment use.* The application does not demonstrate this.
31. *Secondly it is inappropriate for employment with residential conversion as a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use.* The application does not consider this.
32. *The buildings are structurally sound.*
Clearly most of the buildings are to be demolished in the scheme. The schedule of proposed works describes major works to the Chaff barn and the cartshed (see above).

33. *The buildings are not of a makeshift nature and have not been allowed to fall into such a state of dereliction and disrepair that any reconstruction would require planning permission as a new building.*
Clearly the majority of buildings are in such a poor state that they are to be demolished. The application fails in this respect.
34. *The buildings are capable of re-use without materially changing their existing character or impact upon the surrounding countryside.*
The majority of buildings are not capable of re-use and are to be demolished. The character of the site at present is rural, agricultural and informal, typical of many similar groups of redundant farm buildings in the countryside. The proposal will dramatically alter the character of the site by the amount of building works proposed, the formalisation of the site, the introduction of residential paraphernalia and the definition of boundaries. In some conversion schemes it is possible to retain the informal rural appearance of the site typically by restricting gardens to inner courtyards and by careful elevational treatment. This site will undergo significant change such that the more formal residential use will replace the informal agricultural appearance which will be readily apparent when viewed from the road, the neighbouring properties and from the surrounding countryside. The application fails in this respect.
35. *The form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.* The form, bulk and general design is not considered to be sympathetic to the rural setting and I note the comments of the Conservation Manager in this regard. The application fails in this respect.
36. *Perform well against sustainability issues.* The site is not well related to the village and there are no services or facilities in the vicinity. The occupiers of this dwelling will be entirely dependant on the car. The application fails in this respect.
37. In my opinion the site is not appropriate for residential conversion in principle.

The impact on Listed Buildings and their settings

38. I note the objections of the Conservation Manager in relation to the impact on both the fabric of the buildings to be 'converted' and on the setting of the adjacent listed farmhouse.

The impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the street scene

39. Again I note the objections of the Conservation Manager. The barns are identified as being within a prominent position within the street scene and the Conservation Area. The change in character from informal, rural agricultural to formal domestic would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The impact of the change of character of the site on the countryside

40. The countryside should be protected for its own sake. The proposal will result in the loss of this informal, rural, agricultural character to the visual detriment of the countryside.

The impact on neighbour amenity

41. I am concerned that the proposed triple bay garage building and garden store that is just under 6m tall is to be erected in close proximity to ground and first floor windows in the adjacent farmhouse. Apart from the identified harm this will cause to the setting

of this listed building I consider it will appear overbearing when viewed from these windows and on a site of this size could easily have been positioned so that it did not impact on these neighbours.

Ecology

42. I note the comments of the Ecology officer. There is no objection to the proposal in relation to ecological issues.

Departure

43. The application has not been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan. If Members are minded to approve the application the proposal would have to be so advertised and referred to the Secretary of State, given that the majority of the structure will be new build.

Recommendation

44. Refusal for the following reasons:
1. The proposal involves considerable new-build and seeks only to retain some elements of existing buildings. It is for a new dwelling in the countryside outside of any village framework defined in the Development Plan. No agricultural or similar justification has been given for the development and the proposal has not been demonstrated to be essential in this particular rural location. The site lies in an unsustainable location away from village services and facilities and is not in an accessible location with a choice of means of travel, including non-motorised modes. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies P1/2, P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy SE8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
 2. The barns were historically within the curtilage of the Grade II Listed Manor Farmhouse to the south of the site and are therefore curtilage listed. The proposal involves works both internally and externally to the buildings that will damage historic fabric and the character of these simple rural buildings. It has not been demonstrated that the works are necessary to ensure the continuing use of the buildings or that less damaging uses have been explored. As such the proposal is contrary Policy P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies EN20 and EN26 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
 3. The alterations to the barns, the erection of the new-build elements, the location of the new triple bay garage and storage building close to Manor Farmhouse, the use of inappropriate detailing, including large glazed areas, and materials, the introduction of a formal residential use, hardstanding areas, formal gardens, boundary definition and residential paraphernalia will materially detract from the simple, rural agricultural character of this site to the detriment of the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Manor Farmhouse, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and the visual quality of the street scene and surrounding countryside. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies P1/2, P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies EN20, EN26, EN28, and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
 4. The erection of the triple bay garage building and store will be in close proximity to ground and first floor windows in the north elevation of the adjacent Manor Farmhouse. This building will appear overbearing when viewed from within this property through these windows. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy 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
- Local Development Framework Development Control Policies
- Development Plan Document Submission Draft January 2006
- Planning File reference S/0938/06/F

Contact Officer: Nigel Blazeby – Area Planning Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713165