

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

**S/1198/06/F – Hardwick
Extensions of Bungalow to Form Two Storey Dwelling and Erection of Double Garage
at 67 St Neots Road for S Grain**

**Recommendation: Refusal
Determination Date: 11th August 2006**

Departure Application

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

Site and Proposal

1. The site lies well outside of the village framework for Hardwick within the Cambridge Green Belt and forms a small bungalow in the middle of a row of similar bungalows with pyramid roofs set back approximately 16m from the road. A mature hedge is planted on the roadside frontage and to the rear are a number of outbuildings.
2. The full planning application, received on 15th June 2006 proposes extensions to the bungalow to create a first floor and additional accommodation at the rear to form a 4 bedroom house. The existing bungalow is approximately 5.6m high to the ridge. The bungalow, as extended, would be approximately 7m high. The pyramid roof would be replaced by a pitched roof with gable ends to the front and rear.
3. The floor space will be increased by 92% over the existing. The age of an existing extension at the rear is not known. If this is not original and was erected as an extension after 1948 the floor space will be increased by 116% over the original.

Planning History

4. There is no history on this site of relevance to the application. Various planning permissions have been granted that extend properties along St Neots Road.

Planning Policy

5. **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.
6. **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 provides a sense of place and 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.
7. **Policy P9/2a** – Green Belt of the Structure Plan states that a Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge which will define the extent of urban growth. The purposes of this Green Belt are to:

1. Preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre;
2. Maintain and enhance the quality of its setting;
3. 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, cemeteries, or other uses appropriate to a rural area.

8. **Policy HG13** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (the Local Plan) – Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside states (in part) that extensions to dwellings in the countryside (i.e. outside village frameworks defined in this Plan) will be permitted where:
 - (2) the extension does not exceed the height of the original dwelling;
 - (3) the extension does not lead to a 50% increase or more in volume or gross internal floor area of the original dwelling;
 - (4) the proposed extension is in scale and character with the existing dwelling and would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings;
 - (5) the proposed extension has regard to the criteria in Policy HG12 of this Plan.
9. **Policy HG12** of the Local Plan states (in part) that extensions to dwellings will not be permitted where:
 - (1) the design and use of materials would not be in keeping with local characteristics;
 - (2) the proposal would harm seriously the amenities of neighbours through undue loss of light or privacy, being unduly overbearing in terms of its mass, or would adversely affect surrounding properties by virtue of its design, layout, location or materials;
 - (3) there would be an unacceptable visual impact upon the street scene.
10. **Policy GB/2** of the Local Plan states (in part) 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:-

3. Extensions and alterations to dwellings provided that the criteria in policy HG13 are met and that the overall impact of any extension does not result in the dwelling having a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

This follows advice in Planning Policy Guidance 2, Green Belts, which states at Paragraph 3.6: "provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building, the extension or alteration of dwellings is not inappropriate in Green Belts."

11. **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 and **GB/1** development in the Green Belt. These policies do not materially differ from the Development Plan policies highlighted above in so far as they relate to the proposal.

Consultation

12. **Hardwick Parish Council**
Comments are awaited

Representations

13. No representations have been received. Councillor Stewart has requested that the application be considered by Committee.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

14. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
1. The impact of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, countryside and street scene.
 2. The impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbours.
 3. The impact of the proposal on the stock of small and medium sized dwellings in the countryside.

Green Belt, countryside and street scene

15. The bungalow sits between similar bungalows on either side as part of a row of five all of which are modest in scale with distinctive flattened ridge pyramid roofs. They are set back from the road and many have a good hedge on the front boundary but they are clearly visible in the street scene and do read as a row of very similar modest bungalows. The proposal to increase the height and significantly increase the bulk, extending this back into the plot, on this bungalow will introduce an incongruous element in the row that will harm the visual quality of the street scene, the openness of the Green Belt and the visual quality of the surrounding countryside.

The development is inappropriate in the Green Belt as defined in Policy GB/2. The application fails to demonstrate very special circumstances that would justify this inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

16. There may be scope for some extension to the dwelling to the rear to provide more modern standards of accommodation but I am concerned that the bulk and height of the proposal will only harm the visual quality of the area and would be contrary to the aim of protecting the street scene and the countryside held within policy.
17. The proposed extension is both higher than the existing dwelling and is not in scale and character with it. It would materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings. As such I consider it to be contrary to Policy HG13 referred to above. The application does not demonstrate any other material circumstances that would demonstrate a justification for departure from this policy.

Neighbour impact

18. The additional height and bulk of the roof will impact on a side window to No. 69 St Neots Road. This window would appear to be the only window serving this habitable room. I am concerned that the proposal will result in a loss of light to this room and that it will appear overbearing when viewed from within it.

Loss of a small dwelling

19. Policy HG13 puts an upper limit of 50% on extensions to ensure that the stock of small and medium sized dwellings in the countryside is maintained.
20. The existing floorspace = 79m² which includes a rear extension of 16m². It is not known if this extension is part of the original dwelling or when it was added. However the total floorspace of the existing plus the extension would be approximately 152m² which represents an increase of 73m² over the existing floorspace = 92% increase. If the existing extension was built after 1948 the increase = 116%. In either case the extension well exceeds the 50% limit in Policy HG13.
21. I do not know how many bedrooms the existing dwelling has as this is not shown on the plans but a bungalow of this size is likely to be a 2 bed property and is certainly very modest. The proposal will result in a 4 bedroom 2 storey property and this small dwelling will be lost. This is contrary to Policy HG13 and the application does not demonstrate any other material circumstances that would demonstrate a justification for departure from this policy.

Departure

22. The application has not been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan. If Members are minded to approve the application it will have to be so advertised.

Recommendation

23. Refusal for the following reasons:
 1. The bungalow is positioned in a row of similar properties. The extension will significantly increase the height and bulk of the dwelling resulting in an incongruous and dominant element to the street scene. The proposal is not in scale and character with the existing dwelling and will materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings causing harm to the visual quality of the surrounding countryside and the openness of the Cambridge Green Belt. Very special circumstances have not been demonstrated to justify inappropriate development in the Cambridge Green Belt. In addition the creation of a 4 bedroomed house through the addition of approximately 92% of additional floor area will result in the loss of this small dwelling in the countryside. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies P1/2, P1/3 and P9/2a of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies GB/2 and HG13 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
 2. The proposed extension will seriously harm the amenities of the occupiers of the adjacent property, No. 69 St Neots Road, through undue loss of light and by being unduly overbearing because of its mass when viewed from the side east facing window of this property. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies P1/2 and P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy HG13 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

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/1198/06/F

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