

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6th September 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

S/0824/06/F – BASSINGBOURN-CUM-KNEESWORTH Conversion into 3 Flats, 57 High Street, for Penbale Ltd

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 22nd June 2006

Conservation Area

Members will visit this site on Monday 4th September 2006.

Site and Proposal

1. The Limes Farmhouse, 57 High Street, Bassingbourn is a Grade II Listed Building located on the north side of the High Street, opposite the junction with Knutsford Road. To the either side and the rear of the property is residential development. The building is currently vacant but was last used as a day care centre although previous planning consents have related to its use for flats (see History below).
2. This full application, registered on 27th April 2006, proposes the conversion of the building into 3 flats. The ground floor would comprise a one-bedroom and a two-bedroom flat, with a three-bedroom flat being provided at first and second floor level.
3. Four car parking spaces are shown being provided within a hardsurfaced area to the east of the building. A fenced garden to flat 1 is provided to the west of the building with additional communal space to the rear.
4. The application is accompanied by an outline specification and schedule of works for the conversion scheme.

Planning History

5. In March 2006 a planning application (**Ref: S/0052/06/F**) for conversion into 4 flats was refused under delegated powers for the following reason.
6. “The proposal fails to demonstrate how adequate off-street parking provision and on-site turning facilities can be accommodated within the site. It is likely to lead to a significant increase in numbers of vehicles reversing from the site onto the public highway and manoeuvring of vehicles within the public highway over that associated with the existing single residential use. This intensification will represent a danger to highway safety, exacerbated by the presence of a bus stop close to the entrance to the site where there will be a significant increase in conflicts between bus and passenger movements and the manoeuvring of vehicles from the site. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy TP1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and Policy P8/1 of the approved County Structure Plan 2003, which aim to ensure that adequate car parking is provided whilst providing access from the highway network that does not compromise safety.”

7. Listed Building consent was granted for the conversion into 3 flats (**Ref: S/0824/06/LB**) in June 2006.
8. In July 2004 an application (**Ref: S/0925/04/F**) for extension and conversion into 4 flats was refused on the grounds of inadequate parking provision and adverse impact on the Listed Building and Conservation Area.
9. In 1995 planning consent was granted for the change of use of the ground floor of the building into 2 one-bedroom flats (**Ref: S/0318/95/F**). The approved drawings indicate that at that time the upper floors of the building were already in use as a further flat.

Planning Policy

10. **Policy P7/6** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") states that Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
11. **Policy P8/1** of the County Structure Plan relates to sustainable development.
12. **Policy SE3** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") identifies Bassingbourn as a Limited Rural Growth Settlement where residential development and redevelopment up to a maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings will be permitted on unallocated land within the village framework 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, local features of landscape of ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours; the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity and; residential development would not conflict with another policy of the Plan, particularly Policy EM8 (loss of employment sites).
13. **Policy HG7** of the Local Plan sets out the Councils policy in respect of the provision of affordable housing.
14. **Policy HG10** of the Local Plan states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes, including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs.
15. **Policy EN26** of the Local Plan sets out the criteria against which applications for the conversion of listed buildings to new uses will be judged.
16. **Policy EN28** of the Local Plan seeks to protect the setting of Listed Buildings.
17. **Policy EN30** of the Local Plan requires that development in Conservation Areas should preserve or enhance the character of those areas.
18. **Policy TP1** of the Local Plan – Planning for More Sustainable Travel states that car parking will be restricted to the maximum levels set out in Appendix 7/1 of the Plan. An average of 1.5 car parking spaces per dwelling should be provided.

Consultation

19. **Bassingbourn Parish Council** recommends refusal. "No objection to the conversion into 3 flats. Parking however does remain an issue with insufficient parking on site.

20. The **Conservation Manager** has no objection and comments that the scheme is similar to the approved scheme S/0051/06/LB and the impact on the character of the interior will be no greater. As there are no external alterations no conditions are suggested other than details of any hard landscaping.
21. The **Local Highways Authority** recommends refusal. It is concerned that the parking layout does not work.

Representations

22. None received

Planning Comments – Key Issues

23. The key issues to be considered with this application are the impact of the proposed conversion on the Listed Building, the provision of affordable housing, and parking provision/highway safety.
24. Listed Building consent has already been granted for the alterations to the building that are required to form three flats. There can therefore be no objection to the planning application on these grounds. The Conservation Manager is content that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area. The Parish Council has not objected to the conversion works.
25. In respect of the provision of affordable housing the applicant points out that the cost of repairs and maintenance to the roof and elevations will exceed normal costs and that preliminary discussions with Housing Associations would indicate that conversion and maintenance costs would preclude a development of this sort from conforming with Housing Association requirements. I am of the view that further information on the costs of the scheme should be submitted by the applicant. Whilst I accept that it would be difficult to provide one of the flats as an affordable dwelling the Authority needs to investigate whether it is possible to secure a commuted sum from the development towards the cost of affordable housing elsewhere.
26. Both the Parish Council and the Local Highway Authority have objected to the application of the grounds of inadequate parking provision. This lack of adequate parking and turning formed the basis of previous refusals on this site. The current application proposes the creation of three flats, a reduction of one from the previously refused scheme. The submitted drawing shows the provision of 4 parking spaces in the area to the east of the building, accessed from High Street adjacent an existing bus stop and shelter. From the drawing it is apparent that the fourth parking space would prove impractical to use and that in effect only three usable spaces can be provided, one for each flat. Turning within the site would be difficult.
27. Although the number of parking spaces that can be provided within the site is below the average required in the Local Plan, I believe that there are factors that should be considered in this case which argue in favour of consent being granted. The site is located close to the centre of the village and behind a bus stop. The site therefore has good access to existing facilities in the village and public transport.
28. In addition it is evident that the building has seen a number of previous uses but most relevant in my view is the 1995 consent for the use of the ground floor as two flats at a time when there was already a flat at first floor level. The current application for use as three flats is therefore no greater than the total number of flats that could have been

resulted from the 1995 consent, although the overall number of bedrooms has increased.

29. When considering these issues it is my view that support should be given to the application with the provision of 3 workable parking spaces. Members will have the opportunity to view the relationship of the site to the centre of the village and the bus stop to assess any highway safety implications of the proposal.

Recommendation

30. That consent is granted subject to safeguarding conditions, including the investigation as to whether it would be appropriate to request a commuted sum in lieu of the provision of an affordable unit in this case.

Informatives

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:**
 - P7/6** (Historic Built Environment)
 - P8/1** (Sustainable Transport - Links between Land Use and Transport)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
 - SE3** (Limited Rural Growth Settlements)
 - HG7** (Affordable Housing on Sites within Village Frameworks)
 - HG10** (Housing Mix and Design)
 - EN26** (Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses)
 - EN28** (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)
 - EN30** (Development in Conservation Areas)
 - TP1** (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Highway 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 Files Ref: S/0824/06/F, S/0825/06/LB, S/0052/06/F; S/0925/04/F & S/0318/95/F
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings

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