SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee 6th September 2006
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Development Services

S/1415/06/F - MELBOURN
House, Land Adjacent 6 Portway for Mr and Mrs Read

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 11th September 2006

Site and Proposal

1. Portway is a cul-de-sac on northeastern edge of the Melbourn village framework that is characterised by pairs of ex-local authority semi-detached properties many of which have generous gardens to the side. Abutting the southwestern boundary of Portway there is the newer and more densely planned residential estate of Armingford Crescent. The once spacious and uniform character of Portway has been altered by the extension of various dwellings in the cul-de-sac.

2. The full planning application, received on the 20th July 2006, proposes to erect a detached three-bedroom dwellinghouse on land adjacent to number 6 Portway. The proposed dwellinghouse will have two parallel parking spaces at the front of the plot and have a hipped roof incorporating a two-storey gable end extending to the rear. A minimum gap of 1m will be kept between the dwelling and the side boundaries of the site and the external materials are to be agreed subject to consent being granted. The proposed dwelling equates to a density of approximately 33 dwellings per hectare.

Planning History

3. On June 7th of this year Members voted to approve an outline application for a dwelling adjacent to number 8 Portway, in line with the officer recommendation (S/0669/06/O). A previous outline application for a dwelling at the aforementioned site was refused by the LPA in 2000 (S/0648/00/O) and later dismissed at appeal.

4. In between the two applications above an appeal was upheld for an outline application for a dwelling adjacent number 4 Portway (S/1484/05/O). This appeal decision has subsequently become a material planning consideration in the determination of applications for dwellings in Portway. Another application S/2127/05/F was also recently approved for the conversion of a significant extension to the side of 21 Portway into a separate dwelling.

5. An outline application submitted in 2005 (S/2425/05/F) for a dwelling adjacent 6 Portway was withdrawn earlier this year in favour of the submission of this full application.
Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

6. **Policy P1/3** states that a high quality of design will be required for all new developments and promotes more compact forms of development through higher densities.

7. **Policy P5/3** requires Local Authorities to increase the density of new housing developments in order to maximise efficiency in the use of sites.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

8. **Policy SE5 ‘Rural Growth Villages’** sets out the requirements for new dwellings in rural growth village frameworks considering issues of impact upon character and amenities of the locality.

9. **Policy SE8 ‘Village Frameworks’** sets out the requirement for new dwellings to be located within village frameworks.

10. **Policy HG10 ‘Housing Mix and Design’** sets out the requirements for residential developments to make the best use of sites in addition to being informed by the wider character and context of the surrounding area.

Consultation

11. **Melbourn Parish Council** – Recommends that the application be refused for the reasons previously stated, narrow road, no footpath, increase in vehicular usage if permission granted and safety concerns for children.

12. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – Has no objection, though recommends that any consent granted be conditional to limit the impact upon neighbour amenity through the hours of operation of power operated machinery.

Representations

13. None received, though it is recognised that the period for representations still had several days to run before the deadline of this report.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

14. Although previously resisted by the Local Planning Authority the principle for further dwellings adjacent to the existing properties in Portway has been considered acceptable in terms of the impact upon the character of the area. Moreover given the greater densities of the adjacent residential area and recent planning decisions in favour of other developments in Portway the principle behind this latest application can no longer be considered unacceptable.

Design

15. The character of Portway is presently defined by the pairs of hipped roofed semi-detached properties that line either side of the public highway. The terracing of these semi-detached properties is an option and has been permitted at number 21, though the visual impact of the additional bulk of development on the street scene does little to maintain the open feel of the area. It is therefore considered that in cases where
there is sufficient land to accommodate a detached dwelling, without harm to neighbour amenity or the character of the area, then detached properties are the best way to accommodate further dwellings.

16. Given the fact that there will be a distance of over two metres between the proposed dwelling and number 6, and the fact that the south-eastern neighbour has a single storey extension adjacent the plot, the proposal still allows for a good degree of visual separation between the new dwelling and the two adjacent properties. The gable end to the rear of the proposed dwelling is a unique feature in Portway, though is not considered to be unacceptable on design grounds, and is considered appropriate as it retains a hipped roof, in keeping with the other properties in Portway.

**Neighbour Amenity and Highway Issues**

17. In terms of the impact upon neighbour amenity the fact that the new dwelling will respect the existing building line means that its physical bulk will not have an unacceptable impact on either neighbouring property by virtue of being unduly overbearing. The rear windows in the first floor of the development will face those of properties in Armingford Crescent, and the vegetation along the rear boundary of the site is less substantial than that of the neighbouring properties. However, given the distance between the windows of the proposed property and those of number 12 Armingford Crescent (in excess of 20 metres) any loss of neighbour amenity is considered acceptable, and the repositioning of the proposed dwelling to increase the distance between the two properties would be unreasonable.

18. During the determination of the two previous applications approved by the Local Planning Authority the issue of whether Portway could accommodate additional dwellings was raised by the Parish Council. The view of the Local Highway Authority has consistently been that Portway, although lacking pavements, is acceptable to accommodate the additional vehicular movements created by an increase in the density of the cul-de-sac and the highway is sufficiently wide to accommodate vehicles and pedestrians. At no point in the history of planning refusals in Portway has highway safety been considered an issue either by the Local Planning Authority or the Independent Inspectorate.

19. Taking into account the concerns of the Parish Council about the suitability of Portway to accommodate additional dwellings and the recent planning history relating to the area I see no reason why the Local Planning Authority should not support this application.

**Recommendation**

15. Approval – Subject to the following conditions -

1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
2. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5aii);
3. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
4. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
5. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
6. The parking areas shown at the front of the new dwelling, hereby approved, and number 6 Portway shall be provided before the new dwelling is occupied and thereafter retained exclusively for the parking of vehicles. (Rc In order to provided and retain sufficient space within the site for the off road parking of vehicles.
7. Sc5f – Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas (Reason – To minimise disturbance to adjoining residents);
8. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery;
   (Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents.)

Informatives

Two informatives from the letter of the Chief Environmental Health Officer of the 7th August 2006.

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:
     P1/3 (Sustainable design in built development) and P5/3 (Density);
   - South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE2 (Development in Rural Growth Settlements), SE8 (Village Frameworks), HG10 (Housing Mix and Design).

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 and increased vehicular movements.

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/1415/06/F; S/0669/06/F; S/2425/05/F; S/2127/05/F, S/1484/05/O; and S/0648/00/O

Contact Officer: Edward Durrant – Planning Assistant
   Telephone: (01954) 713082