

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6th September 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

S/1235/06/RM – ORWELL

Siting, Design and External Appearance of Buildings for Light Industrial Use (Class B1(B) and (C) Only), Including Development of Civil and Engineering Contractors Workshop Yard and Ancillary Offices and the Means of Access Thereto, Land Off Barrington Road, for John Cobb & Sons Ltd

Recommendation: Delegated Refusal/Approval

Date for Determination: 21st September 2006 (Major Development)

Site and Proposal

1. This application, registered on 22nd June 2006, seeks reserved matters consent for the siting, design and external appearance of buildings for light industrial use (Class B1(b) and (c) only), including development of civil engineering contractors workshop yard and ancillary offices and the means of access thereto.
2. This 0.7ha site is located to the east of Orwell village on the road to Barrington. It currently contains a series of small buildings and yard associated with John Cobb and Sons Ltd, a civil engineering contractor and before that the site was used as a highways depot. To the west of the site is a large modern office building occupied by Mills and Douglas. To the east of the site, set back from the road, is Lilac Farm. To the rear and opposite the site is agricultural land. There is hedgerow planting on the front, rear and east boundaries of the site.
3. The proposal is to erect two industrial buildings, each with a ground floor area of 540m², with a total of an additional 220m² of mezzanine office floorspace above. Each building has an eaves height of 5m and a ridge height of 6.5m. Material proposed are grey metal cladding for the roof, silver horizontal cladding to the walls with brick plinth.
4. Block A is sited parallel to Barrington Road and is towards the centre of the site. Block B is sited parallel to, and within 3m of, the east boundary of the site. The last four bays of Block B will incorporate the requirements of John Cobb and Sons Ltd for a small office within one bay, with the remaining area acting as workshop and vehicle servicing. The contractors' yard itself is located at the rear of the site.
5. The vehicular access is to be relocated from the eastern end of the site frontage to the western end. A total of 49 car parking spaces are provided. The Councils adopted car parking standards would require a maximum provision of 52 spaces.

Planning History

6. In 2003 outline planning consent was renewed for the erection of a building for light industrial use (Class B1(b) and (c) only), including development of civil engineering contractors workshop yard and ancillary offices (**Ref: S/1729/03/O**). The consent contains restrictions limiting the amount of built development to no more than 1300m² gross external floor area, and stating that the height should not exceed 8m.

7. The outline consent which forms that basis of the current reserved matters submission was originally granted in 1997 (**Ref: S/0045/96/O**).

Planning Policy

8. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (“The County Structure Plan”) state that development in the countryside will be restricted to that which can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
9. **Policy EM6** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (“The Local Plan”) states that within village frameworks, or on suitable brownfield sites next to or very close to the village frameworks of Rural Growth Settlements or Limited rural Growth Settlements, planning permission will be granted for small-scale development in Classes B1 – B8 provided that there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions, village character and other environmental factors and; the development would contribute to a greater range of local employment opportunities, especially for the semi-skilled and unskilled, or where initial development is dependant on the use of locally-based skills or initiatives.
10. **Policy EN1** of the Local Plan states that planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect on the character and distinctiveness of Landscape Character Areas.

Consultation

11. **Orwell Parish Council** recommends approval but comments “to minimise light pollution from the security lights.”
12. The **Local Highways Authority** comments that the submitted drawing does not reflect that agreed as part of the outline consent and should be revised. Amended drawings have been requested.
13. The **Trees and Landscapes Officer** comments that the 3m allowed for landscaping along the east boundary of the site is insufficient for the proposed industrial development in a countryside setting. A distance of 10m should be provided to allow for a tree belt consisting of mixed broadleaves. Along the front boundary an additional 2m clearance should be provided between the existing hedge and proposed car parking. Amended drawings have been requested.
14. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has considered the implications of the application in terms of noise and environmental pollution and concludes that there are no significant impacts from the Environmental Health standpoint.
15. The **Environment Agency** states that its comments made in respect of the 2003 application remain pertinent.

Representations

16. None received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. The principle of the development of this site has been accepted through the outline consent. This application seeks reserved matters consent for the siting, design and external appearance of the buildings, and the means of access. These are therefore the key issues to be considered. The issues of the scale of development, in terms of

permitted floor area and maximum ridge height, has been set at the outline stage. This submission accords with the outline consent in those respects.

18. The site is within the countryside and long distance views are obtained when approaching Orwell from the east. It is therefore important that any scheme allows room for adequate planting along this boundary of the site in particular. At the present time Block B is shown as being located within 3m of the east boundary of the site. I agree with the comments of the Trees and Landscapes Officer that this distance is not sufficient to allow adequate planting of this boundary to help assimilate the development into the landscape, particularly given the long distance views that are available of the site when approaching from Barrington, and that considerable additional clearance needs to be afforded to this boundary.
19. At the front of the site the proposed car parking is shown to be located close to the existing front boundary hedge and the Trees and Landscapes Officer has requested that an additional 2m clearance be provided.
20. The applicant has been advised of these concerns and I am expecting a revised layout to be submitted before the meeting.
21. The Local Highway Authority has commented that the details of the access to Barrington Road do not accord with those agreed at the outline stage. These comments have been passed onto the applicant and again I anticipate that revised details will be submitted prior to the meeting.
22. I am disappointed that the design of the proposed buildings in this rural location follows a fairly standard approach, I am also of the view that the choice of colour of materials to be used may not be appropriate and that in this case the use of darker colours is likely to better assimilate the buildings into their surroundings. This point is being discussed with the applicant's agents.
23. As submitted I am of the view that approval should not be granted for the reserved matters on the basis of the unacceptable visual impact that the development as currently proposed will have on the rural character of the area, and that the details of the vehicular access do not satisfy the requirements of the Local highways Authority.
24. I am hoping that revised drawings will be received prior to the meeting which will enable officer to reconsider this view.

Recommendation

25. That reserved matters consent is refused as submitted for the reasons outlined in the above paragraphs. If satisfactory revised drawings are received prior to the date of the meeting and in time to enable the application to be determined within the 13 week deadline, I will seek delegated powers of approval.

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 File Refs: S/1235/06/RM & S/1729/03/F
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings

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