

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th October 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director/ Head of Planning Services

S/1238/06/F - OVER

**Change of Use of Redundant Farm Building A, Part Rebuild Part Refurbish
To Accommodate Agricultural Veterinary Practice,
Highgate Farm, Willingham Road for Mr B Papworth**

Recommendation: Approval

Date for determination: 11th October 2006

Departure Application

Site and Proposal

1. The site lies on the western fringe of Willingham, in the Parish of Over. It has a frontage and access onto the C-class Road. The site is a former pig farm with a farm owner/ manager's bungalow. A number of the former agricultural buildings have been converted at different times to business and retail use, but several buildings remain in use for ancillary storage of farm equipment and supplies. The existing converted buildings are served by two accesses that are located to the west of the current part of the site. A private road, Over Haden, runs along the eastern boundary of the site, which provides access to the application site and several dwellings to the north. There is a mature Horse Chestnut on the western corner of the junction of this road with Over/Willingham Road.
2. The application, dated 29th March 2006, as amended by plans received 16th August and 6th September 2006, and ownership certificate received 16th August 2006, proposes the part rebuilding/ part refurbishment of an existing former pig building to provide premises for an agricultural veterinary practice. A second part of the application, relating to a retrospective use of a second building for a small car repair business, has been withdrawn following the closure of this enterprise. The proposed veterinary building will have the marginally larger footprint and floor area compared to the existing. The ridge height on eastern part of it will be increased from 2.7m to 3.0m, to match the remaining building. This part will be rebuilt to match the remaining, with shiplap boarding and brick plinth. Car parking for 21 vehicles will be provided on site. Access will be via Over Haden, which is to be widened and improved for the first 15m from its junction with Over/Willingham Road.

Planning History

3. No previous planning history on these buildings.

Planning Policy

4. The site lies beyond but close to the village framework boundary.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

5. **P1/1** (Approach to Development) For development on the periphery of settlements, previously developed land and buildings should be preferred over the use of land that has not been developed previously. Development should be located where travel distances by car can be minimised, walking and cycling encouraged and where good transport accessibility exists or can be provided.
6. **P1/2** (Environmental Restrictions on Development)- development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
7. **P2/6** (Rural Economy) – sensitive small-scale development in rural areas will be facilitated where it contributes, *inter alia*, to supporting new and existing businesses; to farm or rural diversification where appropriate to the rural area; to the re-use of existing buildings; towards helping to maintain or renew the vitality of rural areas.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

8. **SE9** (Village Edges)- development on the edge of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the countryside.
9. **EN3** (Landscaping and design standards for new development in the countryside) – new development in the countryside should reinforce local distinctiveness in terms of scale, design, layout, materials and landscaping.
10. **EM6** (New Employment at Rural Growth and Limited Rural Growth Settlements) – Within village frameworks and on brownfield sites very close to the village frameworks of RGS and LRGS, planning permission will be granted for small-scale developments in classes B1-B8 provided that:
 - a) There would be no adverse impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions, village character and other environmental factors, and
 - b) The development would contribute to a greater range of employment opportunities or where initial development is dependant on the use of locally-based skills and expertise.
11. **EM7** (Expansion of Existing Firms at Villages) – expansion of existing firms within village frameworks or on suitable brownfield sites next to or very close to the village framework will be permitted subject to the provisions of Policy EM3 and EM6.
12. **EM10** (Conversion of Rural Buildings and Future Extensions) – outside village frameworks planning permission will be granted for the change of use and conversion of rural buildings to employment use subject to a number of provisions including:
 - (a) The buildings do not require major reconstruction;
 - (b) The conversion will not prejudice village vitality;
 - (c) The appearance after conversion is in keeping with the surroundings;
 - (d) The conversion does not materially change the material character of the building or the surrounding countryside;
 - (e) Safe access and satisfactory provision for parking and turning of vehicles can be achieved without detriment to the setting of the building or the surrounding landscape;

- (f) Scale and frequency of traffic generated can be accommodated on the road system without undue effects.
13. **Paragraph 5.49** states: “Because most rural buildings in South Cambridgeshire are small the potential scale of activity of converted buildings will usually be similarly modest. Any elements of increased floorspace contained within conversion proposals will be strictly controlled and usually limited to that which may be necessary to achieve an enhanced design or integrate the scheme with its surroundings”.

Consultations

14. **Over Parish Council** – Refusal – Over-industrialisation of the site. There is already a business park within Over which currently has spare capacity. This appears to be creeping development from Willingham towards Over. Concerns re inadequate visibility splays in an area where traffic is approaching the village at high speed.
15. **Willingham Parish Council** – No objection in principle, but making no recommendation as the site is in Over Parish.
16. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – No objection in principle. Recommends conditions and informatives to control the hours of use of power operated machinery and the details of power driven plant and equipment.
17. **Local Highway Authority** – initially concerned at further business uses at this site, and requesting a consolidation of accesses using the existing accesses onto Willingham Road only. Specific concerns about visibility splays have been discussed with the applicant. The amended plan received 6th September is considered acceptable from this point of view and the Highway Authority has lifted its objection.
18. **Environment Agency** – No objection, subject to a recommended condition and informatives requiring a scheme of pollution control to be submitted and approved.
19. **Willingham Combined Charity** – The Charity uses this road to access its land and does not expect it to be obstructed at any time.

Representations

20. A resident of Over Haden (also known as Mere Way) has expressed concern about the means of access. This road is only single track, it has no street lighting and is privately maintained. The applicant should use his existing accesses onto Willingham Road, where visibility would be better.

Planning Comments

21. The proposal lies outside the village framework, but it is close to it and it is located amongst an existing group of buildings. The renovated/refurbished building would not have any more impact on the appearance of the countryside in this location than the existing. The proposal conforms with Structure and Local Plan policies P1/1, P2/6, EM6 and EM7. Because rebuilding is proposed, the proposal does not conform with the first criterion of Policy EM10. I do not consider this to be a serious non-compliance in this instance, given these other considerations. Such policies encourage the reuse of redundant rural buildings for economic use, contrary to the concerns expressed by Over Parish Council.

22. The concerns of the Local Highway Authority have been met in the amended plan. The use will generate only small volumes of traffic, particularly when compared with the former use as a pig farm. I consider that the parking provision should be reduced to take account of the removal of the car repair business from the application, which can be the subject of a condition to the planning permission, if issued.

Recommendation

23. Approval of the application, as amended by plans date stamped 16th August and 6th September 2006, (drawings no. 2554/06/04a and site location plan) subject to the following conditions:
1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
 2. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
 3. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
 4. Scheme of pollution control (Rc To ensure a satisfactory method of surface/foul water drainage and to prevent the increased risk of pollution to the water environment);
 5. Visibility splays to be provided and maintained (Rc In the interests of highway safety);
 6. Improvements to the access to be carried out before the use commences (Rc In the interests of highway safety);
 7. Details of parking to be submitted and agreed (Rc In the interests of highway safety);
 8. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery, during the period of renovation/construction and following the approved use commencing (Rc26);
 9. Sc27 Control of emissions (Rc27(a)).

Informatives

As recommended by the Environment Agency and the Chief Environmental Health Officer.

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:**
P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development)
P2/6 (Rural Economy)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
EM6 (New Employment at Rural Growth and Limited Rural Growth Settlements)
EM10 (Conversion of Rural Buildings and Future Extensions)
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
 - Need for further industrial units

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 Ref. S/1238/06/F

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