

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th October 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

S/1548/06/F - FOWLMERE
Extensions at the Chequers Inn, High Street
for Beaumont Pubs Ltd

S/1547/06/LB - FOWLMERE
Removal of 4 Stores and Replacement by Five Bedrooms with Shower Rooms
and Staff Sitting Room/Kitchen Stores, Bin Storage Area and Covered Area with
Pitched Roof. New 2.1m High Picket Fence Inserts
for Beaumont Pubs Ltd

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 27th September 2006

Members will visit this site on Monday 2nd October 2006.

Conservation Area and Listed Building

Site and Proposal

1. This application, registered 2nd August 2006 seeks consent for extensions to the Chequers Inn, High Street, Fowlmere for the erection of kitchen and staff accommodation. The former measures 5m x 4.5m under a double span plain-tiled pitched roof, one wing of which would extend a further 4.5m to provide an open-sided covered area. The latter would replace stores on the west side and would extend some 28m along the west boundary to provide office, staff sitting room/kitchen and 5 no. staff rooms.
2. The application site is located inside the village framework for Fowlmere, within the Conservation Area and is a Listed Building.
3. Located to the north of the site is the adjoining car park and public house garden. It is bound to the east and west by residential dwellings and to the south by the High Street. The site is accessed via the High Street.
4. The site comprises approximately 0.2ha, which is made up of lawn and hard standing located to the north of the public house. The building is located hard against the public footpath in the south west corner of the plot.
5. The application is accompanied by a supporting planning statement and Design Statement.

Planning History

6. The history of this site is quite extensive dating back to the late 1950's for the siting of caravans. Various applications have been submitted for extensions to the building, of which a kitchen extension was approved in 1975 under reference **S/0009/75/F** and

additional extensions applied for in 1983 and 1988 under references **S/0395/83/F** and **S/1321/88/F**, again approved.

Planning Policy

7. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 relates to sustainable design in built development and requires a high standard of design for all new development, which responds to the local character of the built environment.
8. **Policy P3/4** of the Structure Plan 2003 states that Local Planning Authorities will support the vitality of rural communities by encouraging the retention and expansion of village shopping facilities on a scale appropriate to their location and serving a local function, and key community services.
9. **Policy P7/6** 'Historic Built Environment' of the Structure Plan 2003 states Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
10. **Policy EN28** 'Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building' sets out the requirements for development within the curtilage or setting of listed buildings.
11. **Policy EN30** 'Development in Conservation Areas' of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for development within Conservation Areas.

Consultation

12. **Fowlmere Parish Council** made recommendations for refusal. For the extensions to the kitchen it stated:

“ The meeting has no objection to this section of the application as the new construction will greatly improve an unsightly existing structure. The meeting is concerned about the extractor unit and ask that the Environmental Health Officer be consulted to ensure there is no noise or odour problems for neighbours”.

With reference to the staff accommodation block it stated “The meeting would in principle support a single storey extension but feel this application is far too extensive and would ask for this section to be redesigned to be more proportionate and sympathetic to the Listed Building. Any new design should incorporate evidence of thorough sound proofing against neighbouring boundaries. The meeting wish to know the exact distance of the gap between the existing fence and the proposed building wall”

13. The **Conservation Manager** has no objections and its comments are as follows: “The site comprises a late 15th or early 16th century, grade II listed building with 17th century additions and 20th century additions and alterations. The building is timber framed and plastered with a plain tiled roof and comprises a two storey main range with a one and a half storey range to the east, formerly the 17th century kitchen. In the 20th century the building was altered and extended to the rear with several flat roofed extensions and a conservatory.
14. Demolition of the stores will be an enhancement and relocation of the cold store nearer to the kitchen will be more practical. The proposed extension to the kitchen to provide a cold store and storage for linen and freezers in addition of a bin store will increase the massing of the existing extension but the impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building is not considered to be significant. Roofing the

extension and part of the existing flat roofed extension with a double gable will mask the existing extract and skylight and will result in a more traditional roof form that will enhance the existing extension.

15. The applicant has demonstrated that there is a need for staff accommodation and that the most cost effective way of providing this is on site. The scheme has been carefully considered so that it reads as a range of outbuildings and although it will increase the massing of the existing extensions, it is modest in scale, traditional in form and design and will not damage the special character and appearance of the Listed Building or its setting. The Parish Council has raised concerns about the extent of the proposal and the impact on the neighbour. While the Conservation Team has no objection in principle to the proposal, a reduction in the number of rooms or the omission of the office or sitting room/kitchen would possibly reduce the impact on the neighbour and would be supported.
16. The only comment regarding the design is of the roofing material on the proposed extensions. There is a hierarchy of roofing materials and whereas the roof of the main building is covered in plain tiles it would be appropriate to have pan tiles, however this could be dealt with by condition.
17. By virtue of the above comments the proposed extensions are considered to preserve and enhance the character of the wider Conservation Area”.
18. Conditions are suggested to seek details and approval of proposed windows and doors, stained black weatherboarding and all external joinery, proposed roof tiles and a sample panel of brickwork to be constructed on site to enable the Local Planning Authority to agree the type of brick, the bond, the joint detail and the mortar mix.
19. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no objection to the development and has provided conditions and informatives required for construction and foundations.
20. Further consultation with the EHO following neighbour objections regarding the extractor units, noise and disturbance was also commented on. Its response states in part
 - (a) That there are no records of complaints regarding the existing extraction unit serving the kitchen and given that the extension is not proposed to allow for intensification of cooking facilities, but act as an increased storage area, no reason is seen for the renewal or replacement of the existing system.
 - (b) From an Environmental Health standpoint it is not possible to confirm that the erection of the accommodation block along the western boundary will necessarily have an adverse affect on nearby residents. The Building Control department would be responsible for ensuring that the buildings comply with the relevant standards in respect of construction and insulation.

Representations

21. There have been three letters of objection received from neighbouring residents.
22. The occupier of “Laurel Hurst”, High Street located to the west, immediately adjacent the site raises concerns regarding the following:
 - (a) Noise and nuisance, particularly late at night close to the writer’s kitchen, dining room and children’s bedrooms;

- (b) Lack of detail and clarity in the plans submitted;
 - (c) Provenance use and relevance of historical buildings;
 - (d) Weak grounds for justification;
 - (e) Context of the planning application, in terms of scale and use along the full length of the writer's eastern boundary;
 - (f) Development and potential use in the future for bed and breakfast accommodation creating further noise, nuisance and disturbance;
 - (g) Unacceptable scale dominating the rear aspect of the Listed Building and the rear garden of "Laurel Hurst";
 - (h) Out of character with the Listed Building;
 - (i) Proposal involves change of use of the garden;
 - (j) Out of keeping with the Conservation Area status.
23. The occupier of "The Cottage", High Street located next door but one, neighbours to "Laurel Hurst", have raised concerns regarding the following:
- (a) Change of character to the gardens of the properties on the High Street;
 - (b) Weak grounds for justification;
 - (c) Employment in Fowlmere and other Public Houses in the villages;
 - (d) The loss of garden space within the grounds of the public house;
 - (e) Detract from the character of the site and the Listed Building.
24. The occupier of "Stoneyfield", High Street located to the rear of the site immediately adjacent the car park area has raised the following concerns:
- (a) Positioning and efficiency of the extraction system, times of operation and smell;
 - (b) Scale and height of the accommodation block;
 - (c) Scale in relation to the character of the Listed Building;
 - (d) Loss of garden;
 - (e) Unacceptable levels of noise;
 - (f) Visual loss to east aspect of neighbour's garden at "Laurel Hurst";
 - (g) Weak justification.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

25. The main issues in relation to this application are: the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Listed Building; and impact on neighbours. Whilst the existing outbuildings are of no merit, provided their replacement and redevelopment does not harm the setting of the Listed Building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and/or the amenity of neighbours, the development should not reasonably be resisted, given the policy presumption of supporting essential rural services.
26. There is no doubt that the existing outbuildings and kitchen area of the public house are of very little architectural merit to the Listed Building, neither preserving or enhancing, and the proposed scheme is very different in form. The existing outbuildings comprise random concrete block work with corrugated metal roofs; the kitchen is currently flat roofed with a highly visible extractor unit and raised roof light. That said it is a functional building with a large plot with adequate space for the proposed scheme.
27. The design, and the roof in particular, is broken up into different elements to reduce the bulk of the proposal. In particular the accommodation block located close to the occupiers of "Laurel Hurst" has flat roof elements along the boundary that take the

development further away than first impressions may give. The roof is pitched away from the boundary and the visual impact considered to be minimal.

28. The design of the proposed kitchen extension helps mask the existing extractor unit and will result in a more traditional roof form that will enhance the existing extension. The accommodation block takes on the form of a range of single storey outbuildings, which can be conditioned to use traditional materials. Flat roof elements of the scheme are hidden within the development where necessary to link the buildings together.
29. Although the mass of area used has increased, the scale in relation to the existing building is modest. The design of the extensions is considered to be acceptable.
30. The accommodation part of the development will have some impact, particularly on the amenity of the occupiers of "Laurel Hurst", in terms of potential noise. There are 7 small windows located in the proposed west elevation of the accommodation block that I am apprehensive about. The openings on this elevation are for light and easy access to maintain the rear of the building, and I am informed a drain also. The windows are not for visual gain as there is a currently a fence on this boundary that restricts views and potential overlooking; I am informed by the agent that these windows are to be fitted with obscure glass and double-glazed. The removal of these windows would lessen any noise that may be heard from the rooms and in particular the staff sitting room/kitchen area. The development is not considered to result in serious visual harm to the amenity of neighbours and the issues regarding noise can be addressed with further amendments to the design and attenuation of the building. Omitting these windows would be preferable, however the Party Wall Act 1996 would enable work to be carried out efficiently from the neighbouring property if necessary. This is not a material planning issue but can be a contentious issue between landowners.
31. Further discussions with the Agent prior to the Committee meeting have enabled concerns to be raised and negotiation has already taken place to address the loss of the windows on the west elevation of the staff area with a possibility of relocating them within the roof slope, facing in towards the garden using conservation style roof lights; this will provide the ventilation and light source required by the client. Other discussions have involved moving the kitchen/staff area further along the accommodation block, away from the neighbouring property to reduce any noise impact it may have. This is still being negotiated, although the agent informs me that this may not be an option the client wants to pursue. I have also been informed that there will be no cooking facilities available in the kitchen area other than that of a microwave and no additional extraction units will be necessary.

Recommendation

32. Subject to the receipt of amended drawings in terms of the elevations and noise attenuation of the proposed accommodation block, approve both applications subject to conditions recommended by the Conservation Manager and related to hours of work during the period of construction and to implementation of an agreed scheme of noise attenuation in the proposed accommodation block.

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/1548/06/F, S/0009/75/F, S/0395/83/F and S/1321/88/F

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