

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

10th May 2006

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0559/06/O - WILLINGHAM

Proposed Residential Development at Land Rear of 2 Short Lane and Adjacent 23 Long Lane For Mr RJ and Mrs JL Laffling

Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 16th May 2006

Site and Proposal

1. This application, received on 21st March 2006, proposes the erection of five dwellings on a 0.15 hectare site to the rear of 2 Short Lane at a density of 33/ha. The application is in outline form, with only the proposed access being determined at this time. The siting, design of the dwellings and landscaping are to be agreed at a later date.
2. The proposals are for the removal of old and dilapidated greenhouses on the site and the erection of two three-bed semi detached dwellings (93 sq m each), and three four-bed detached dwellings (112 sq m each). The density equates to 33.3 dph.
3. Long Lane is characterised by a mixture of bungalows and two-storey dwellings along the lane frontage, many having long rear gardens, with greenhouses and other outbuildings located to the rear.
4. The site is currently overgrown garden land, and was previously in horticultural use. The site lies within the village settlement limit, and contains no specific Local Plan designations.

Planning History

5. **S/0824/80/O**- Planning permission was refused for residential development on the site by Decision Notice dated 12th July 1982. The three reasons for refusal stated the following:
 1. The access to the site is inadequate other than to serve a small development of no more than three dwellings, which if built would result in a piecemeal development poorly related to the existing development surrounding the site.
 2. The application, if approved, would set a precedent for the development of other restricted sites within Willingham served by inadequate accesses.
 3. There is sufficient land with planning permission in Willingham to satisfy the short-term needs of the village.
6. **S/0338/84/O**- Planning permission was refused for storage and offices on the site by Decision Notice dated 11th April 1984. The two reasons for refusal stated the following:

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1. The introduction of a commercial use of the scale proposed would be detrimental to the amenities of the surrounding residential properties by reason of general disturbance and the increased traffic generated.
 2. The proposed access to the site is inadequate and below the standard required by reason of its restricted width and visibility.
7. **S/2007/05/O** - Residential development on the application site. This application was refused by decision notice dated 9th January 2006. This decision notice contained three reasons for refusal:
1. Inadequate information has been submitted to demonstrate that vehicle to vehicle visibility splays to a private access road (if serving in excess of one dwelling) can be achieved within the application site area. A frontage survey is required indicating the proposed splays in their entirety so that the extent of effect of the splays on land edged blue can be established. The applicant has not demonstrated that adequate visibility splays can be achieved within the application site.
 2. Inadequate information has been submitted to demonstrate how foul and particularly surface water drainage from the site will be undertaken, and whether contaminated land is present on any part of the site.
 3. Given the location of the application site, its configuration and relationships to adjacent dwellings insufficient information has been submitted on the number, size and scale of dwellings to be accommodated on the site. Development of the site with fewer than five dwellings would, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, represent inefficient use of the land contrary to Policy SE2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

8. **Policy P1/3** explains that a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development will be required which creates a compact form of development through the promotion of higher densities, and provides a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment and pays attention to the detail of form, massing, textures, colours and landscaping.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

9. **Policy SE2** states that Willingham is designated as a Rural Growth Settlement, and residential development and redevelopment will be permitted on unallocated land within village frameworks provided that:
 1. The retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village;
 2. The development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours;
 3. The village has the necessary infrastructure capacity;
 4. Residential development would not conflict with another policy of the Plan.

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10. **Policy SE8** notes that there will be a general presumption in favour of residential development within village frameworks. Residential development outside these frameworks will not be permitted.
11. **Policy HG10** explains that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape.
12. **Policy HG11** relates to criteria to be considered in the consideration of applications for backland development.

South Cambridgeshire LDF Submission Documents

13. **Policy ST/5** states that Willingham has been selected as a Minor Rural Centre. Residential development up to a maximum scheme size of 25 dwellings will be permitted within village frameworks.
14. **Policy DP/3** states that all development proposals must provide appropriate access from the highway network, and have car parking kept to a minimum (as far as is compatible with its location and maximum car parking standards).

Consultation

15. **Willingham Parish Council** - Recommends refusal of the application on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site; lack of adequate detail; concern over the visibility splay on to Long Lane (as it is used as a pedestrian school route and as the proposed houses fronting Long Lane are sited close to number 23, which would make it difficult for vehicles exiting from the proposed development to see pedestrians approaching from the south). Members also wished to draw attention to two old cooking apple trees on the property, probably part of an orchard formerly on the site. It is suggested that it be checked whether these trees are an old Willingham variety before any permission was granted leading to their removal.
16. **Local Highways Authority** - Notes that a common turning area should be provided at the end of the private drive. Such a facility should be provided prior to the occupation of any of the dwellings and thereafter maintained. It is noted that the application site area edged red satisfactorily includes such adjacent land or number 2 over which the visibility splay crosses. Unfortunately the layout plan gives no indication of how the visibility splay is to be provided ie the plan identifies a close boarded fence within the splay but is this to be removed, lowered, set back behind the splay?
17. **Old West Internal Drainage Board** - It is stated in the application that surface water will be disposed of via soakaways. Providing that this method of surface water disposal is used to accommodate all the run-off from the site, the Board's surface water receiving system will not be affected by this proposal. If any other method of surface water disposal is used in connection with the proposal, the Board must be re-consulted.
18. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** - Concerned that problems of noise could arise from the development during the period of construction and suggests a condition to minimise the effects.

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19. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue** - Is of the opinion that additional water supplies for firefighting are not required.
20. **County Financial Planning Officer** - Contributions are required of £2,750 per dwelling. Therefore, in the case of this application contributions are required of £13,750. This will help provide facilities at the village school, the secondary school at Cottenham and various community facilities and amenities.
21. **Environment Agency** - No objections.
22. **County Archaeology Officer** - The application site lies within an area of archaeological potential, and excavations carried out nearby in 1997 revealed features ranging from pre-historic to medieval in date, and it is possible that additional (as yet unknown) archaeological features may survive on the site that could be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development. It is therefore recommended that the site is subject to a programme of archaeological investigation to confirm the presence or absence, date, character and significance of any archaeological deposits that may be present. This programme of work can be secured through the inclusion of a negative condition in any planning consent.

Representations

23. The current owners/occupiers of numbers 8 and 10 Short Lane state that, under Local Plan Policy HG11, proposed development should be in keeping with the intrinsic character of the surrounding village. It is therefore proposed that any development is kept solely lane facing, and not developed to the rear. This would keep it with the pattern and character of development in the vicinity of the application site.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

Principle of residential development on the site

24. There are no policy objections relating to the development of the application site for residential dwellings. As this application is in outline form only, with just the means of access to be determined at this time, design, siting and landscaping of the site will be agreed at a later date.

Density of development

25. The application proposes the erection of five dwellings on the site. Two (to the front of the site) are to be semi-detached, whilst the remaining three are to be detached. It is considered that in order to comply with Policy SE2 of the Local Plan, which states that development should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare, five dwellings are required on the site.

Visibility splays and access to the site

26. Long Lane is a one-way street running from north to south. The application drawings therefore indicate the visibility splay of 2.4m x 70.0m to the north of the site. No serious concerns have been raised in relation to the visibility splay by the County Highways Authority, although clarification has been sought from the applicant's agents as to the fence situated within the visibility splay.
27. The application proposals provide an appropriate means of access in relation to distances of the access itself and the length of the road to serve the new dwellings. It

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is suggested by the County Highways Authority that a condition be attached to ensure there is a common turning area provided at the end of the private drive, and for this to be provided prior to the occupation of the dwellings.

Neighbour amenity

28. The application site currently has an existing hedge (approximately 2 metres high) along its northern boundary with the rear gardens of dwellings located down Short Lane. Along the southern boundary there is an existing wooden fence (approximately 2 metres high), whilst along the eastern boundary of the site there is an approximately 2 metre high panel fencing with sporadic hedging and vegetation. A number of concerns have been raised regarding neighbour amenity of the existing dwellings located in the vicinity of the application site, especially in relation to number 23 Long Lane.
29. Number 23 has two first floor windows located in its northern elevation which are both obscurely glazed. There is also a kitchen window, small obscurely glazed window and side door to the dwelling on the ground floor. There is an existing wooden fence between number 23 and the application site. In the eastern elevation of number 23 Long Lane there is a bedroom window at first floor level, and a further one located on the first floor of the southern elevation of the dwelling's side extension. There are existing patio doors to the rear of number 23.
30. There is an existing fence and landscaping between the application site and properties located down Short Lane. It is therefore considered that, with appropriate design of the new dwellings to be considered at reserved matters stage, no significant amenity issues will arise.

Site contamination

31. In a letter dated 11th April 2006 from the applicant's agents, it was confirmed that the application site has been in the ownership of the applicant for 20 years and used as a market garden during that time. The green-houses were used to grow salad products. There has been no contamination of the site during the applicant's ownership.

Conclusions

32. On the basis of the above, I recommend that this application be approved, subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Approve, subject to:

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. 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);
7. Before the dwellings, hereby permitted, are occupied a common turning area shall be provided at the end of the private drive and shall thereafter be maintained.

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8. Surface water drainage details;
9. Foul water drainage details;
10. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery during the period of construction.
11. No development shall take place on the application site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of remains).

Informatives

1. Where soakaways are proposed for the disposal of uncontaminated surface water, percolation tests should be undertaken, and soakaways designed and constructed in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or CIRA Report 156), and to the satisfaction of the Local Authority. The maximum acceptable depth for soakways is 2 metres below existing ground level. If, after tests, it is found that soakaways do not work satisfactorily, alternative proposals must be submitted.
2. An acceptable method of foul drainage disposal would be connection to the public foul sewer.

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)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE2** (Development in Rural Growth Settlements), **SE8** (Village Frameworks) and **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:
 - Residential amenity
 - Highway safety
 - Visual impact on the locality and density of development

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- South Cambridgeshire LDF Submission Documents – January 2006
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Reference: S/0559/06/O, S/0824/80/O, S/0338/84/O and S/2007/05/O.

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