

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

S/1502/06/LB & S/1503/06/F - BABRAHAM
Internal and External Alterations to Barn and Cartsheds and Conversion to 6 Guest Bedrooms for The George Inn at the Black Barns, High Street

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 19th September 2006

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Officer recommendation does not accord with the recommendation of the Parish Council.

Members will visit the site on 4th December 2006

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.016 ha application site is located on the south-east side of High Street, within the village framework for Babraham and within the Conservation Area. The application relate to a Grade II Listed 16th Century, four bay, timber framed and weatherboarded barn with a corrugated iron roof. Attached to the barn is a range of single storey open-fronted cartsheds, also weatherboarded, and with a pantiled roof. The barn has two large openings in the north-east and south-east elevations but few openings elsewhere.
2. Located to the north-east of the site is the car park for The George Inn, a Grade II listed building. This is bounded to the north-west and south-west by Chalk Farmhouse, also a Grade II Listed Building and to the south-east by open land.
3. The applications, registered on 25 July 2006 seek consent for internal and external alterations and conversion of The Black Barn and cartsheds to provide 6 guest bedrooms for The George Inn. The roof of the barn would be replaced with a slate roof. Vehicular access would be gained from the existing access from High Street that serves the dwellings to the rear of the site.
4. Additional information date stamped 4th September states that the applicant owns the driveway up to Chalk Farmhouse and the owners of Chalk Farmhouse have the right of way over this driveway. It proposes a circular one-way system from the driveway and archway adjacent to the barn to the proposed car park and exit via Honeysuckle Lane. Amended plans date stamped 25th September showing the land/driveway up to Chalk Farmhouse is owned by the applicant and alterations to fenestration and details of the buildings. A letter dated 23rd October 2006 confirms that the Transport Report prepared by Hannah Reed and letters dated 27th July and 29th August 2006 are withdrawn from consideration as part of the application. Revised traffic mitigation measures would be provided on site: a one way system will encourage guests'

vehicles to enter the site via the archway and exit via Honeysuckle Lane with the help of appropriate signage, mirrors and traffic calming measures (speed bumps).

5. The original application is accompanied by a supporting planning statement, a structural survey, a transport report (now withdrawn) and a barn and bat survey.

Planning History

6. Recent applications **S/0494/06/LB** and **S/0495/06/F** for the conversion of the barn and cartsheds were withdrawn.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

7. **Policy P1/3** "Sustainable Design in Built Development" of the Structure Plan 2003 requires a high standard of design and sustainable for all new development which, amongst other criteria, responds to the local character of the built environment.
8. **Policy P7/6** "Historic Built Environment" of the Structure Plan 2003 states that Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

9. **Policy RT10** "Development for Holiday Accommodation" of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for conversion of buildings to holiday accommodation considering issues of condition of the building, impact upon the character of the area and any surrounding buildings, and impact on character and amenity of the locality.
10. **Policy RT12** "Tourist Accommodation within Frameworks" of the Local Plan 2004 states that the District Council supports proposals for the conversion to guest houses within the defined frameworks of the village.
11. **Policy EN13** "Protected Species" of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for development affecting protected species.
12. **Policy EN14** "Protected Species in Farm Buildings" of the Local Plan 2004 encourages developers to retain, enhance or provide roost sites for bats or barn owls in the conversion of farm buildings.
13. **Policy EN26** "The Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses" of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for the conversion of listed buildings to new uses.
14. **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.
15. **Policy EN30** "Development in Conservation Areas" of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for development within Conservation Areas.
16. **Policy CS5** "Flood Protection" sets out requirements for development liable to flooding.

Consultation

17. **Babraham Parish Council** recommends for refusal and states:

“Do not object to any internal alterations to this building and would like to see this building used, but think this is inappropriate. Car parking is problematic and access to the suggested car parking is very narrow and dangerous, less rooms and access to the apartments through room 3 would then allow parking in front of the pub. This though would cause extra parking problems in the village because the pub car park is already too small”.

The Parish Council raises objections to the amendment (the applicant’s agent letter dated 23rd October 2006) in relation to the revised traffic mitigation measures and states that “The Parish Council continues strongly to object to the muddled and unenforceable traffic management measures proposed by the applicants.”

18. **The Conservation and Design Manager** supports the application.

“Given the location of the building and its close proximity to Chalk Farmhouse and The George Inn, a commercial or office use is probably not appropriate and there is no objection to the proposed change of use to bedrooms for The George Inn. The proposal will ensure the repair of the building and result in a viable use, which will retain its character and appearance without the necessity for extensive alteration.

The proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Buildings and will preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

In principle there is no objection to the proposals but the following amendments are required:

- a) Replace the new small window on the north-west elevation with a three-light high-level window under the eaves and fitted between the existing studs.
- b) Recess the glazing and the boarding on the south-west of the cartsheds behind the existing timber posts and extend the glazing to the ground.
- c) Retain the character of the north-east gable of the barn by expressing the opening as a pair of doors with vertical boarding and separate framed lights at the top.
- d) Simplify the large glazed opening on the south-west elevation by omitting the transoms on either side of the door.
- e) Replace the proposed ceiling above rooms 1, 2 and 3 with a sloping ceiling over the corridor and either a sloping or flat ceiling over the shower rooms.
- f) Include details of the ventilation and soil and vent pipes in order that the impact of the proposals on the exterior wall of the north-east elevation.

With regard to the parking, details of the materials and the demarcation of the parking bays are required; tarmac is not acceptable”.

Further comments are awaited to confirm that the withdrawal of the Transport Report overcomes concerns regarding the impact upon the Listed Building of the originally proposed traffic mitigation measures.

19. **Local Highway Authority** has no objection/ comment to make on the proposal as presented.

20. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections in principle although does express concerns about potential noise disturbance to residents during the demolition and construction period. As such, it is recommended that conditions restricting hours of use of power operated machinery be applied to any planning consent and requiring details of method for construction of any driven pile foundations and preventing burning of waste on site. Condition to conduct an investigation regarding potential land contamination is required. It is also recommended that informatives be included on the decision notice if approved.
21. **Ecology Officer** has considered the submitted barn and bat survey and requests conditions and informatives to be attached to any consent, in regard to timing of works to avoid the nesting season, to ensure a scheme of nest box provision and to provide details of measures for bat mitigation.
22. **Environment Agency** states that the application site falls within "Floodzone 1" of the Flood Risk Standing Advice matrix and the Agency has no comment.
23. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** would not wish to see the "visual buffer" of the cherry trees between No 31 and the public house lost. Any works in the vicinity of these trees should use "no-dig" construction. They are afforded protection by virtue of their location in the Conservation Area.

Representations

24. Occupiers at Nos 27, 28 and 31 Brick Row object to the circular one-way system applied to the proposed guest rooms. Their concerns relate to the intensification of vehicular movement on Honeysuckle Lane and the highway safety to children, pedestrians and delivery vehicles. The proposed development would set a precedent for development on land at the rear of The George Inn.
25. Occupiers at No 29 Brick Row supports the barn conversion but questions the circular one-way traffic system that would affect highway safety and cause noise and disturbance to existing residential properties.
26. Occupier at Fidelis Flat, High Street objects to the proposal and states that the archway has poor vehicle-pedestrian visibility and the proposed use would cause dangers to the elderly and children. The proposed parking plan will be insufficient for cars to turn around and there is a deep ditch at the side of the driveway that would prevent cars turning. Cars from the guest rooms would then park along the driveway.
27. Occupiers at No 30 Brick Row supports the conversion of the Black Barn but objects to the revised traffic mitigation measures. Honeysuckle Lane, which is used as the rear parking access for Brick Row residents, is extremely tight and the visibility is poor in both directions. Appropriate signage and mirrors would compromise what is already only just acceptable for the current usage. The revised mitigation measures with a one-way system at its entrance via the archway and a two-way access at its exit at Honeysuckle Lane would have huge implications on day to day activity for residents at Brick Row. The traffic activity of the proposed guest rooms should be confined to the Black Barn creating a turning circle within the courtyards and using mirrors and signage.
28. Occupier at Chalk Farmhouse objects to the proposed development:
 - a) Narrow access to the application site which is currently unsafe for drivers, pedestrians, particularly children;

- b) The existing archway serves at least 9 vehicles in associated with the occupants of 3 houses and 2 flats;
 - c) Chalk Farmhouse has 4 cars and the office premises at Chalk Farmhouse have 5 cars. Including visitors, there is a minimum of 18 vehicle movements through the archway access. Additional vehicle movement from the proposed guest rooms would increase the possibility of accident and injury;
 - d) The proposal would have an adverse impact on loss of privacy to the adjacent offices and would cause noise disturbance and security issues;
 - e) The revised traffic mitigation measures to encourage guests to leave the proposed guest rooms via Honeysuckle Lane would be dangerous as they would not expect vehicles to exit from Chalk Farmhouse or any oncoming vehicles driving through the archway to High Street;
 - f) The increased vehicle traffic in Honeysuckle Lane, would harm road safety, especially children, cyclists and pedestrians;
 - g) The archway in both directions is completely blind and would cause dangers to road users and the appropriate signage encouraging vehicles to enter one way and leave another does not help the situation; and
 - h) The proposed mitigation system is unenforceable and the solution to the problem is to have the entrance at the front of the building, near the entrance to the George.
29. The Director of Operations at ACE Study Tours supports the application given that there is a shortage of guest accommodation in the area without travelling into Cambridge or Saffron Walden. The proposal would offer a small number of rooms without a detrimental effect on the local community and traffic through the village.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

30. The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- a. Whether a new use for the barn is necessary and whether a residential use is most appropriate.
 - b. The impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building and the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings.
 - c. The impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
 - d. The use of the archway access and Honeysuckle Lane as entrance and exit for the guests' vehicles.
 - e. The impacts on the adjacent office premises at Chalk Farmhouse.

Whether a new use for the barn is necessary and whether a residential use is most appropriate

31. Given the location and relationship of the listed public house, it is clear from the information submitted with the application that an agricultural use for the barn is no longer viable. Given the listed status and historic importance of the barn, it is considered essential to establish a viable new use for the building in order to ensure its retention as a contributor to the historic character of the area. The use of the barn for employment or commercial purposes presents both highway safety issues and

potentially a detrimental impact upon the amenities of occupiers of adjoining residential properties. In the past the owners have tried to find a new use for the barn but the only interest has been for a temporary storage use, which would not generate sufficient revenue to secure the long-term future of the barn.

32. Officers, therefore consider that a residential use, is the only viable way of securing the retention of the building. It is, therefore, necessary to consider whether the long-term preservation of the building can be achieved without compromising its fabric, character or setting, or the setting of the adjacent listed buildings.

The impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building and the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings

33. The Conservation and Design Manager supports the application, as amended, and considers the proposal would not harm the special character and appearance of the building or the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, subject to careful consideration of materials and joinery details. Externally, the existing openings would be utilised and new openings would be minimal, thereby reducing the impact on the character and appearance of the building and minimising the loss of historic fabric. Internally the alterations, which include the insertion of partition walls would be reversible and there would be no significant loss of historic fabric.

The impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

34. The proposals are considered to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The use of the archway access and Honeysuckle Lane as entrance and exit for guests' vehicles.

35. The barn and cartsheds are to the southwest of The George Inn pub. The roof of the barn runs across the archway and links to the roof of the granary of Chalk Farmhouse. The cartsheds are to the south-east of the barn with bays facing the amenity area, the driveway leading to dwellings at Honeysuckle Lane, and the office premises at Chalk Farmhouse. The site is accessed via the archway access or via Honeysuckle Lane around the back of the pub. The access fronting the barn (including the grass verge at the side of the barn) is 3.7m wide and 4.5m wide at the junction leading to the entrance/exit of the pub. Visibility splays are limited from the archway access. The access fronting the barn is also used by the occupiers of Chalk Farmhouse and the office premises at Chalk Farmhouse.
36. The original submission included a transport report with traffic mitigation measures. The proposed measures included widening the existing access to the barn involving the loss of the grass verges on both sides of the drive and the replacement of the verge adjacent to the barn with a footway surfaced with coloured bit-mac, edged by a low rise kerb. In addition, it was also proposed to add a surface feature of rippled concrete or similar and built out slightly on the area to the west of the arch with cobbles. The Conservation Manager considered that, given that the scale of the traffic movements will be relatively low, the proposed traffic mitigation measures were unnecessary and inappropriate. Any alterations to upgrade or widen the existing driveway would have a significant detrimental impact on the setting of the listed barn and on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
37. Although Honeysuckle Lane has good visibility facing High Street, the width of the access entrance only measures 6.5m for a distance of 4m and the rest of this internal road is 3m wide running to the rear of the pub and leading to the archway adjacent to the barn. Honeysuckle Lane serves 14 dwellings, No 34, Brydges house, Whorwood

House, Blake House, Stanley House, Fidelis (2 flats), Fortis (2 flats), and Nos 27-31 High Street (car parking areas are at the rear of the gardens). It is considered that this lane is substandard as a shared access to the residents. The applicant has confirmed that it owns Honeysuckle Lane and the strip of amenity area adjacent to the car parking of The George Inn. The option of widening the entrance/exit of Honeysuckle Lane adjacent No 31 Brick Road in order to meet the highway requirement to formalise Honeysuckle Lane as a shared access serving the existing dwellings and the proposed guest rooms has been considered. As there is a row of cherry trees along Honeysuckle Lane that form a significant part of the landscape in the area, I do not support the removal of the cherry trees in order to widen the access.

38. As indicated above, traffic mitigation measures to widen the existing access to the barn and an alternative option to widen Honeysuckle Lane as a shared access have been explored; however, they are unacceptable due to the impacts on the historic built environment.
39. I note the objections raised by the residents and the Parish Council relating to highway safety and the intensification of the use of the existing archway and Honeysuckle Lane by additional vehicle movements associated with the proposed guest rooms. However, in view of the lack of objection from the Local Highway Authority and the existing and likely continued low speed of traffic using the archway and Honeysuckle Lane, on balance, I support the application as amended (to withdraw the originally proposed transport mitigation measures to widen the existing driveway to the barn) and to not require the widening of Honeysuckle Lane at its junction with High Street to ensure that the proposal does not detract from the setting of the listed barn and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The impacts on the adjacent office premises at Chalk Farmhouse

40. The office premises at Chalk Farmhouse have 5 windows facing the concrete driveway and the proposed car parking area of the guest rooms. The distance between the cartsheds and the offices is approximately 12m. Given that the existing windows at the office are not serving domestic use, it is considered that the loss of privacy and disturbance does not warrant a refusal.
41. The minimum distance between the edge of the proposed car parking spaces and the office premises is 5.5m which is considered to be just adequate for vehicle manoeuvring.

Recommendation

42. Approval of both application as amended by drawings number RC_A100, RC_A101, RC_A201 and RC_A202 date stamped 25 September 2006 and letter dated 23rd October 2006

Proposed conditions

S/1502/06/LB

1. The works to which this consent relates shall be started not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this decision notice.
(Reason - To ensure the consideration of any future application for works will not be prejudiced by planning and listed building consents that have not been acted upon).
2. The proposed works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans and specification of works noted thereon, except where modified by the conditions of this consent.

(Reason – To ensure compliance with the approved plans).

3. Before work commences, arrangements shall be made by the applicant to enable the Local Planning Authority (normally the Council's Conservation Officer) to meet the owner or agent and the contractor on site to discuss the conditions of this Consent and the manner of works.
(Reason – For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the proper control of works).
4. Precise details of the proposed windows and doors to a scale not less than 1:20 shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority and the work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason – To ensure the use of details appropriate to this listed building).
5. The proposed weatherboarding and all external joinery shall be stained black to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason – To ensure a traditional finish to the external joinery and weatherboards).
6. Any works of repair and replacement, which are agreed on site with the Local Planning Authority, shall precisely match the original to the Local Planning Authority's satisfaction.
(Reason – To ensure that such works are in keeping with the character and appearance of this listed building).
7. Before work commences on site, precise details of the following items shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority and the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - a. The position and details of soil vent pipes, mechanical extracts and flues.
 - b. Details of floor finishes
 - c. Details of the material and method of insulation for the walls and roof.
(Reason – To ensure detailing appropriate to this listed building).
8. The barn roof shall be covered in natural quarried slate to the written approval of the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason – For the avoidance of doubt).
9. No member nor part member of the timber frame nor roof timber shall be removed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason – To protect the fabric of these listed buildings).
10. All mortars, plasters and render shall be lime rich to specifications submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason – To ensure the use of the appropriate mix of traditional lime plasters and mortars).

S/1503/06/F

1. Standard Condition A – Reason A
2. No power operated machinery shall be operated on the site, during the course of construction, before 08.00 hours on weekdays and 08.00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18.00 hours on weekdays and 13.00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays) unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions – RC 26
3. No demolition, removal of vegetation or development shall be carried out on site between the 1st March and 31st August inclusive in any year, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and a scheme of mitigation is implemented. (Reason - To avoid causing harm to nesting birds that have been

identified as using habitats both within the buildings and the surrounding vegetation to comply with Local Plan 2004, Policy EN13: protected species.)

4. No development shall take place until details of the provisions to be made, and the timing of the works, for nesting birds, particularly barn owls, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - Local Plan 2004, Policy EN14 encourages the provision of features for protected species within farm buildings. Planning Policy Statement 9, Key Principals ii and v also support the inclusion of appropriate biodiversity features within new developments.)
5. No development shall take place until full details of measures for bat mitigation and conservation have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These measures should include:
 - (a) Timing of the works in order to minimise the risk of disturbing hibernating bats (as highlighted in the Barn Owl and Bat Survey by C. Vine, February 2006.
 - (b) Inspection of existing buildings on site within one month prior to their demolition or alteration to determine presence or absence of roosting or hibernating bats,
 - (c) No building containing bats shall be demolished or altered until the bats have been safely excluded using such measures as have been previously submitted to and approved by the Council;
 - (d) Provision prior to demolition or alteration of existing buildings and the commencement of development, of a new bat roost / hibernacula constructed to a design and in a location previously approved by the Council;
 - (e) A statement outlining the advice taken by the applicant from a professional ecologist experienced in working with bats.
The works shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timing of the works, unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority. (Reason – for ecology purposes).

Informatives

1. During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on the site except with the prior permission of the District Council's Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.
2. Bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Habitats Regulations, 1994. This protection covers both the bats themselves and the places that they use for shelter. They can only be disturbed, or their places of shelter interfered with, under a licence issued by Defra. Further information on bats can be found at www.english-nature.org.uk
3. Nesting birds receive protection under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As such it is an offence to damage or destroy any nest that is in use or is being built; or to take or destroy eggs.
4. The applicant's attention is drawn to the 'General surface water drainage information' issued by the Environment Agency in relation to surface water drainage (<http://www.pipernetworking.com/floodrisk/operational5.html>).

Reasons for Approval

S/1502/06/LB

1. The proposed works would not adversely affect the special character or appearance of the building.
2. The proposed works would not result in any significant loss or harm to the historic fabric.
3. The proposed works would not have an adverse impact on the setting and appearance of the historic building.

S/1503/06/F

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
P7/6 – Historic Built Environment
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
RT10 – Development for Holiday Accommodation
RT12 – Tourist Accommodation within Frameworks
EN13 – Protected Species
EN14 – Protected Species in Farm Buildings
EN26 – The Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses
EN28 – Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building
EN30 – Development in Conservation Areas
CS5 – Flood Protection
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
 - Privacy and security
 - Noise and disturbance
 - The impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building and the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings
 - The impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

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
- Listed Building Files Reference: S/1502/06/LB and S/0494/06/LB
- Planning Files Reference: S/0495/06/F and S/1503/06/F

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