

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

10<sup>th</sup> January 2007

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

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### **S/2070/06/F - CROXTON**

#### **Removal of Condition 1 of Planning Permission S/2580/04/F to Allow for The Permanent Retention of Portable Building at Whitehall Farm for Cambridge Coatings Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2006**

#### **Notes:**

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

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The Whitehall Farm industrial estate measures approximately 2.6ha and contains a former farmhouse and several warehouse/office buildings. It is situated at the junction of the A428 Trunk Road and C182, to the west of the village of Croxton. Positioned in the north-western corner of the site, in front of an existing warehouse unit, is located a single storey portable building, measuring 12.3m long, 8.8m wide, and 3.2m in height. Adjacent to the northern site boundary is located strong, mature landscape belt that screens the site from the surrounding countryside.
2. This full application, received 27<sup>th</sup> October 2006, proposes the permanent retention of the portable building, which benefits from a temporary consent at the time of writing this report (which will expire on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006), to provide a canteen, rest room, toilet and changing facilities for the employees of Cambridgeshire Coatings Ltd, who work in the adjacent warehouse building.

#### **Planning History**

3. **S/2580/04/F** – temporary consent granted for period of 2 years for siting of portable building to be used as a toilet, disabled toilet, washroom area and canteen.

#### **Planning Policy**

4. **Policy EM6** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (“The Local Plan”) states that on suitable brownfield sites next to or very close to the village frameworks of RGS and LRGS, planning permission will be granted for smallscale development 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 local employment opportunities, especially for the semi-skilled and unskilled, or where initial development is dependent on the use of locally-based skills and expertise.

5. **Policy EM7** of the Local Plan states that development for the expansion of existing firms within village frameworks or on suitable brownfield sites next to or very close to the village frameworks will be permitted subject to the provisions of Policy EM3 and EM6. A firm or business will be considered as “existing” if a significant element of its operations has been based in the Cambridge Area for a minimum of two years prior to the date of any planning application for development.
6. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (“The County Structure Plan”) states that inter alia development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
7. **Policy P2/2** of the Structure Plan states that inter alia development will be located so as to maximise the use of previously developed land and buildings.

### **Consultation**

8. **Croxton Parish Council** recommends refusal and comments “the Parish Council objects to the proposal for the permanent retention of the portable building as by definition permission should not be granted to what is a temporary building. However, the Parish Council has no objection to a further temporary permission being granted (3 years).”
9. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** comments “I conclude there are no significant impacts from the Environmental Health standpoint.”
10. **Environment Agency** – makes no comment.

### **Representations**

11. No representations have been received.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

12. The applicant is proposing to permanently retain the portable building as it provides an essential health and safety function for staff operating in the adjacent warehouse unit. According to the submitted details, a risk inspection was undertaken in June 2006, which identified a need to provide suitable washing and changing facilities for staff, as well as a place for employees to eat meals where there would be no risk of contamination. The risk inspection report went on to advise that the existing production and storage buildings are unsuitable for this role. Furthermore, according to the submitted information, failure to provide these facilities would place the company in breach of the legal requirements imposed by the Health and Safety Executive. The Council’s Environmental Health officer has stated that there are no significant impacts from the proposed development from an environmental health standpoint. Given the applicant’s apparent essential need for these facilities, I am of the opinion that the proposed development would therefore not be contrary to countryside policies within the development plan.
13. Although the structure, the subject of this application, is portable, the site is well screened from external views. The structure would only be visible from within the industrial estate. Typically temporary consent would be considered preferable for portable buildings visible from public views and where they would detract from the character of an area were they to deteriorate. However, given that the site is screened from external views, no adverse impact on the character and appearance of

the countryside would arise should the building fall into disrepair. Furthermore, given the applicant's essential need to provide the facilities contained within the structure, it is in their interests to maintain the building. Given the essential need identified, it would be reasonable to impose a Condition requiring the removal of the unit if it was no longer occupied by the applicant company.

14. Given the applicant's essential need for the services provided by this structure, the fact that the current temporary consent for the portable building expired on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 and the Parish Council's willingness to accept a further temporary consent, should members be minded to refuse permanent consent for the portable building, officers would request that consideration be given to granting a further temporary period of consent for the siting of the building.

### **Recommendation**

15. Approve subject to the following conditions:
  1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A).
  2. The portable building, hereby permitted, shall not be occupied or used other than by Cambridge Coatings Ltd.  
(Reason - To ensure the removal of the unit if it is no longer required by the applicant Company.)
  3. When the portable building, hereby permitted, ceases to be occupied by Cambridge Coatings Ltd, it shall be removed from the site.  
(Reason - To ensure the removal of the unit if it is no longer required by the applicant Company.)

### **Informatives**

#### **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)  
**P2/2** (General Location of Employment)
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**  
**EM7** (Expansion of Existing Farms at Villages)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
  - Character and Appearance of the Countryside
  - Essential Need in a Rural Location

**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/2070/06/F, S/2580/04/F

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