

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee 10 January 2007
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director/Head of Planning Services

S/1114/06/F - OVER

Erection of 28 dwellings, provision of playing field for Over Primary School and new front and side boundary walls – Land r/o High street, Long Furlong, The Lanes and adj Papworth Close for Camstead Homes Ltd

Notes:

This application has already been refused but is being reported to the Planning Committee in the light of impending changes to planning policies and to assist in the Council's defence of an appeal against the refusal of planning permission.

Background

1. The application was refused following the meeting of the Planning Committee of 6 September 2006 (agenda item 19). The reasons as set out in the decision notice dated 7 September 2006 are as follows:
2. In order to provide a safe vehicular access to the proposed development, off-site traffic calming measures are required in the High Street Conservation Area, including a 60m long raised table. This, together with the associated proliferation of bollards and necessary signage will damage the character of the historic road pattern compromising the purpose of the Conservation Area and resulting in a significant visual intrusion into the street scene and the setting of the enclosing historic buildings. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policy P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which seeks to protect the Historic Built Environment and the character of the Conservation Area.
3. The proposed access involves the demolition and replacement of an historic wall abutting 17 High street, a Grade 2 Listed Building, part of which is contemporary to the dwelling and forms part of its historic curtilage. As the development in its totality will not enhance the setting of the listed building or preserve or enhance the Conservation Area, its removal and replacement would be contrary to Policy P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies EN18, EN20, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which seeks to protect the character of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings and their settings.
4. Notwithstanding the above, the erection of a walled compound to enclose the proposed pumping station, measuring 10m x 8m, would detract from the character of the Conservation Area contrary to the policies given in Reason for Refusal 1.
5. A concurrent application (under reference S/1113/06/LB) seeking listed building consent to demolish the front boundary wall of 17 High Street and the rebuilding of a front and side boundary wall on a revised alignment was also refused. This was on the basis that demolition was unjustified in the absence of an approved scheme for redevelopment of the site to the rear.

6. Appeals have been lodged against both refusals and are to be heard by way of a public inquiry. This is scheduled to last for two days on 30 and 31 January 2007. The Council will have submitted its proofs of evidence 9 January 2007 in line with statutory requirements.

Change in Development Plan Policy

7. At the time the application was considered, Over was designated as a Limited Rural Growth Settlement under Local Plan Policy SE3. This supports the principle of residential development within village frameworks up to a maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings. In the circumstances, officers raised no objection to the proposal in numerical terms and the application was accepted on this basis.
8. The then emerging Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document proposed to “downgrade” Over to a Group Village. The inspectors’ Report was still awaited and Members were advised that they should consider the application on the basis of the existing Local Plan.
9. The Inspectors’ Report was received on 9 November 2006. It confirms that Over is generally a less sustainable location for new development than Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres. It should be therefore be designated as a Group Village under Policy ST/6. As amended, the policy states that:

The following villages are selected as Group Villages:

... Over ...

Residential development and redevelopment up to an indicative maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village frameworks of Group Villages, as defined on the Proposals Map.

Development may exceptionally consist of up to about 15 dwellings where this would make the best use of a brownfield site.

10. Paragraph 9.3 of the Inspector’s Report specifically states, “...The Village of Over is much smaller than the rural centres and has fewer services. The nearest CGB stop will be at the northern end of Swavesey, about 1.5km from the centre of Over, and relatively inconvenient for the latter settlement...”
11. The Inspector’s Report is binding on the Council. It is proposed that Full Council will endorse the Core Strategy on 25 January 2007, whereafter the Core Strategy will form part of the development plan. The Core Strategy will therefore be in place before the appeals are heard.
12. Under Policy ST/6, the proposal for 28 dwellings clearly exceeds criterion 2. It also clearly exceeds criterion 3 (where exceptionally up to about 15 dwellings will be allowed) were it to be accepted that the provision of the playing field, the proposed eight affordable dwellings and other aspects of the development are justified as an “exception” in this case. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy ST/6.
13. The Council’s case has been prepared on the basis that as the Core Strategy is likely to be adopted before the appeal is heard, Policy ST/6 is entitled to be given full weight. Over is no longer considered to be a particularly sustainable settlement and this means that the site is not suitable as a matter of principle to accommodate the proposed 28 dwellings.

Recommendation

14. The Committee is asked to confirm that it wishes the Council's case to proceed on this basis. Conflict with Policy ST/6 would effectively be an additional reason to oppose the development.

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

- Planning Files S/1113/06/LB and S/1114/06/F
- LDF Core Strategy DPD Submission Draft January 2006
- Report of the Examination into the South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy DPD 9 November 2006

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