

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

4<sup>th</sup> April 2007

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

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### **S/0048/07/O - ICKLETON**

**Dwelling – Land r/o 9/17 Grange Road for Rowe Build and Development Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

#### **Notes:**

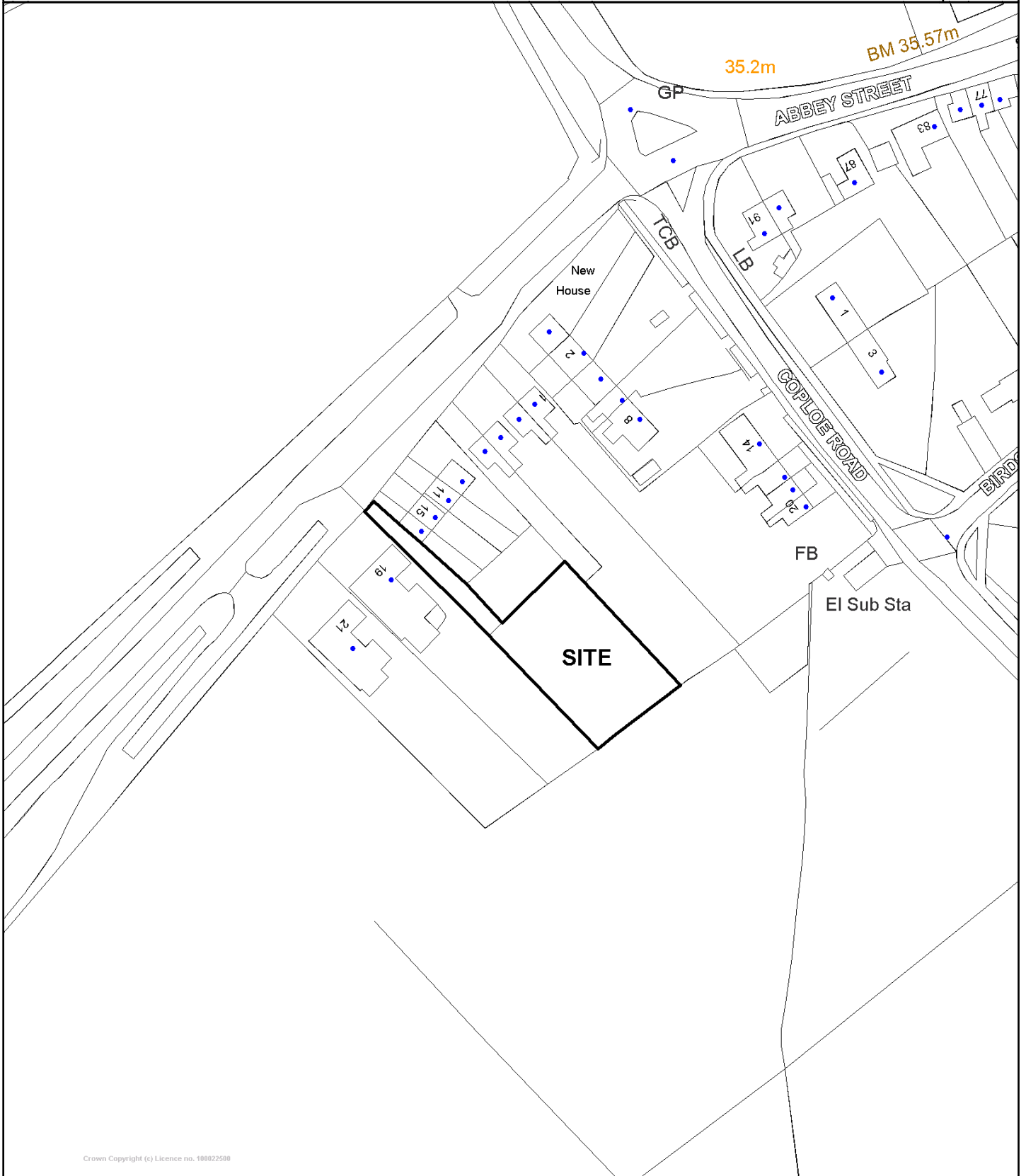
**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the recommendation of approval is contrary to the response of the Parish Council.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application site is a 0.093 hectare parcel of grassed land located on the south side of Grange Road to the rear of a terrace of four cottages, Nos. 9 - 17 Grange Road. Between the site and the rear gardens of Nos. 9 - 17 is an area of hardstanding used as parking by occupiers of the cottages, this being accessed via a narrow driveway sited between Nos. 17 and 19 Grange Road. To the north-east of the site are the rear gardens of dwellings fronting Grange Road and Coploe Road whilst, to the north-west, are two substantial bungalows (Nos. 19 and 21 Grange Road). Open countryside lies beyond the south-eastern boundary of the site. The land is enclosed by fences along its north-western and south-western boundaries and by hedges along the remaining boundaries.
2. The outline application, submitted on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007, seeks consent for the erection of a single storey dwelling on the site. Details of layout, scale and access are included, with details relating to appearance and landscaping reserved for further consideration. The submitted layout plan shows that the dwelling would be sited near to the north-western boundary of the plot and positioned sufficiently far away from all boundaries to ensure the retention of existing fences and hedges. The proposed dwelling would be single storey in scale and the application has been accompanied by sketch elevations showing a 5.2 metre high hipped roof timber and pantile property. Access to the site would be via the existing 30m long vehicular access serving the parking court for Nos. 9 – 17 Grange Road. The density of the development equates to 10 dwellings/hectare.

#### **Planning History**

3. **S/0617/97/F** – Application for erection of two bungalows on this site following the demolition of No.17 Grange Road was refused for the following reasons:
  - a. The proposed development, by reason of its siting rear of dwellings in this edge of village location where development is predominantly linear fronting Grange Road and Coploe Road would be out of keeping with the character of the area



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and would introduce new buildings into what is at present open land behind existing dwellings.

- b. The use of the proposed access between and close to the side of the existing dwellings at 15 and 19 Grange Road to serve the two new bungalows and three existing houses would give rise to noise and disturbance in the quiet rear garden areas of those properties.

### **Planning Policy**

4. Ickleton is identified within **Policy ST/7** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007, as an infill village. This policy states that residential development and redevelopment within the village framework will be restricted to no more than two dwellings (or exceptionally up to 8 if it would lead to the sustainable recycling of a brownfield site bringing positive overall benefit to the village).
5. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 stresses the need for a high standard of design and a sense of place which corresponds to the local character of the built environment.
6. **Policy SE9** of the Local Plan requires development on the edges of villages to be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of the development on the countryside.
7. **Policy HG11** of the Local Plan states that development to the rear of existing properties will only be permitted where the development would not:
  - a. Result in overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of existing residential properties;
  - b. Result in noise and disturbance to existing residential properties through the use of its access;
  - c. Result in highway dangers through the use of its access;
  - d. Be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
8. **Policy EN13** of the Local Plan states that where development may have an effect upon protected species, the Council will impose conditions to reduce disturbance to a minimum and to provide adequate alternative habitat to sustain at least the current levels of population.

### **Consultations**

9. **Ickleton Parish Council** objects to the application, stating:

“The Parish Council felt the application relating to this backland development would:

  - a. be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity;
  - b. have an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of existing properties; and in particular,
  - c. be out of keeping as our village has a strong linear character,
  - d. the access is too narrow for construction and emergency service vehicles e.g. fire engine.”
10. **The Building Inspector** states that the distance from the highway to the front door exceeds the 45 metres given as the maximum distance for access for fire engines.

However, a fire vehicle can reverse up to 20 metres so this would then give an overall distance of 65 metres which is not exceeded. If the vehicle is to reverse, the access road should be at least 3.7 metres wide and have a minimum carrying capacity of 12.5 tonnes. It is unclear from the plans if this is available.

11. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections subject to a condition restricting the hours of use of power operated machinery during construction being attached to any consent in order to minimise noise disturbance to neighbours.
12. **The Ecology Officer** notes that vegetation clearance has been undertaken recently. Concerns expressed by a neighbour that the site may have provided habitat for various protected species including slow worm and dormouse are not accepted as neither of these species has been recorded in South Cambs within the last 50+ years. There are considered to be no significant matters relating to protected species. It is requested that the remaining two trees along one of the boundaries of the site be retained, that new planting should include native shrubs and that a condition be used to secure a scheme of nest box provision.
13. The comments of the **Environment Operations Manager** will be reported verbally at the committee meeting.

### **Representations**

14. Letters of objection have been received from the occupiers of Nos. 9, 11, 15, 17 and 21 Grange Road. The main points raised are:
  - a. The dwelling will be overbearing and out of keeping with the character of the area;
  - b. Loss of views of countryside/Coploe Hill from adjoining properties;
  - c. Increased traffic and noise to rear of Nos. 9 – 17;
  - d. The side windows of No.17 open directly onto the access;
  - e. Emergency vehicles, and other large vehicles such as delivery, service and refuse vehicles, will have difficulty reaching the dwelling as the access is narrow (less than 3 metres) and has a light load bearing structure;
  - f. Lack of parking for construction vehicles;
  - g. Visitor cars may park in the space serving Nos. 9 – 17;
  - h. Poor visibility from parking area serving Nos. 9 – 17 of oncoming traffic;
  - i. Due to the narrowness of the access, construction vehicles will need to park on the grass verge alongside Grange Road and transfer materials to smaller vehicles capable of accessing the site. This will result in noise, disturbance and dust for occupiers of adjoining properties;
  - j. The plot is a wildlife haven. There are lizards, grass-snakes, slow worms, dormice and owls;
  - k. Who would pay for damage to the access resulting from construction traffic?;
  - l. The proposal could result in damage to the structure of No.17;
  - m. The development would increase surface water run-off;
  - n. Services would have to be taken along the access road thereby denying access to residents during digging and laying;
  - o. Loss of value of adjoining properties.

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

15. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
  - a. Impact upon the character of the area;
  - b. Affect upon the amenities of adjoining residents;

- c. Access/highway safety/parking matters;
- d. Impact on wildlife;
- e. Drainage issues.

***Impact upon character of area***

16. The roads in the immediate vicinity of the site, Grange Road and Coploe Road, have a strong linear character on their south and west sides respectively. The creation of a backland plot would undoubtedly be out of keeping with this pattern of development, and, as referred to within paragraph 3 above, the 1997 application to erect two bungalows on this site was refused partly on the basis that it would be out of keeping with the character of the area. However, I do not consider this issue, in itself, represents a sufficiently sound basis on which to refuse the application and it is therefore necessary to consider whether the proposed development would be visually harmful to the character of the area.
17. Short distance views of the site, other than straight down the point of access, are constrained by the frontage development along Grange Road and Coploe Road. There are some long-distance views of the site from the higher ground on the bridge over the M11 to the south-west and from the southern stretch of Coploe Road. From both viewpoints, the proposed dwelling would, in my opinion, be just visible but, as it would be a single storey building, the dwelling would be viewed against a backdrop of other properties within the village and would not therefore be an unduly harmful intrusion into the countryside. There are no public footpaths crossing the land to the rear/south and the main visual impact of the dwelling would be upon the private views and outlook from the cottages at Nos. 9 – 17 Grange Road. Whilst I am sympathetic to the concerns expressed by the occupiers of these properties, the loss of a private view is not a material planning consideration and, given that the proposal is for a single storey dwelling, I am satisfied that it would not harm the outlook from adjoining dwellings.
18. Bearing the above points in mind, I consider that a single storey dwelling would not be so harmful to the character of the area that the application could justifiably be refused on this basis. A two-storey dwelling would, however, be harmful in this location and I therefore consider that any approval should be conditional upon the dwelling being single storey only.

***Residential amenity***

19. The proposal is for a single storey scale dwelling and I am therefore satisfied, given its distance from surrounding dwellings, that it would not be overbearing to, or result in overlooking or overshadowing of surrounding dwellings. Residents of Nos. 9 – 17 Grange Road have expressed concern about noise and disturbance arising from the use of the access, particularly to No. 17 which has ground and first floor windows in its south side elevation.
20. If the proposal involved the creation of a completely new access, I concur that its impact upon the amenities of nearby residents, particularly the occupiers of Nos. 17 and 19 Grange Road, would be entirely unacceptable. However, the access exists and is presently used by the occupiers of four properties to gain access to an existing parking court and, in light of this situation, I find it difficult to argue that the noise and disturbance associated with just one additional dwelling would be so harmful as to warrant a refusal.

### ***Access/highway safety/parking issues***

21. The submitted layout plan shows that there would be sufficient space within the plot to enable at least two vehicles to park and turn. I am therefore satisfied that the development should not give rise to parking within the space serving Nos. 9 – 17 Grange Road.
22. Local residents have expressed concern regarding the width of the existing access and consider it to be too narrow for emergency, service and delivery vehicles. The Building Inspector has also advised that the access does not appear to be wide for fire engines. According to the submitted block plan, at its narrowest point the access is some 3.4 metres wide. However, there is a thin strip of planting on the southern side of the access so that the actual available width is, I would estimate, around 3 metres. The access then gradually widens to 4 – 4.5 metres where it joins the communal parking court area. Clearly the access is not of a sufficient width to enable two vehicles to pass. However, there is an approximately 7 metre deep grass verge adjacent to the highway and the point at which the access travels between Nos. 17 and 19 is in excess of 15 metres back from the road. As such, there is room for vehicles to be able to pass clear of the highway before the access narrows.
23. With regards to the standards relating to access for emergency vehicles, it is clear that the required 3.7 metre width cannot be achieved without encroaching on neighbouring land. I am therefore awaiting clarification from the Building Inspector as to whether there are any alternative solutions (eg – an on site sprinkler system) that would overcome this problem.

### ***Other issues***

24. A copy of the response received from No.17 Grange Road, which referred to the wildlife value of the site, was forwarded to the Council's Ecology Officer. However, no objections were raised to the principle of developing the site, subject to safeguarding conditions.
25. With regards to concerns relating to surface water run-off, a condition requiring the submission and foul and surface water drainage details should be attached to any permission.
26. Issues relating to maintenance of the access track, disturbance to residents during the construction period, damage to surrounding property, and loss of value are not material planning considerations and the application could not therefore be refused for any of these reasons.

### **Recommendation**

27. Providing the Building Inspector raises no objections in principle to erecting a dwelling on the plot on account of the inadequate access width, approval:

### **Conditions**

1. Standard Condition B (Reason - B);
2. Sc1 Reserved Matters c (appearance) and e (landscaping) (Rc1);
3. The dwelling, hereby permitted, shall be single storey only (Reason – To ensure the development would not be obtrusive in this edge of village location);

4. Sc5b – Surface water drainage details (Rc5b);
5. Sc5c – Foul water drainage details (Rc5c);
6. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
7. No removal of vegetation (dead or alive) or development shall be carried out on site between the 15<sup>th</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> August inclusive in any year, unless a mitigation scheme for the protection of bird-nesting habitat has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Furthermore, a scheme of habitat enhancement and nest box provision shall be provided and be fully implemented prior to completion of the development (Reason – To avoid causing harm to nesting birds that will be using the site and its vegetation for nesting and to ensure compliance with Policy EN13 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004);
8. During the period of construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the premises 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 (Rc26).

## **Informatives**

### **Reasons for Approval**

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy**, adopted January 2007:  
**ST/7** (Infill Villages)
  - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**  
**P1/3** (Sustainable design in built development)
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**  
**SE9** (Village Edges)  
**HG11** (Backland Development)  
**EN13** (Protected Species)
2. The proposal is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
  - Residential amenity;
  - Impact on character of area;
  - Highway safety;
  - Impact on wildlife;
  - Lack of parking.

## **General**

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
2. During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.
3. The landscaping scheme required by condition 2e should include the retention of existing trees. In addition, new planting should include native shrubs along boundaries to compensate for those recently removed.
4. With regards to Condition 7, measures for habitat enhancement might include the provision of specialist nest boxes in association with the new dwelling upon retained trees. Retained trees and shrubs can be under planted with native spring flowers such as primrose, garlic mustard, crocus and hedge woundwort. Large stumps and dead wood should be retained on site within the boundaries for its value for invertebrates. The Ecology Officer can provide further advice on such measures.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File Refs: S/0048/07/F and S/0617/97/F

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