

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th July 2007

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

S/0764/07/F - BARRINGTON

Extensions, Alterations and Change of Use from Office to Residential and Function Facility, Barrington Hall, Haslingfield Road, Barrington for Mr M Sutcliffe and Mrs H Fernandes

Recommendation: Approve subject to Conditions

Date for Determination: 19th June 2007

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the officer recommendation is contrary to that of Barrington Parish Council. Councillor Bird also requested that this application be determined at Committee.

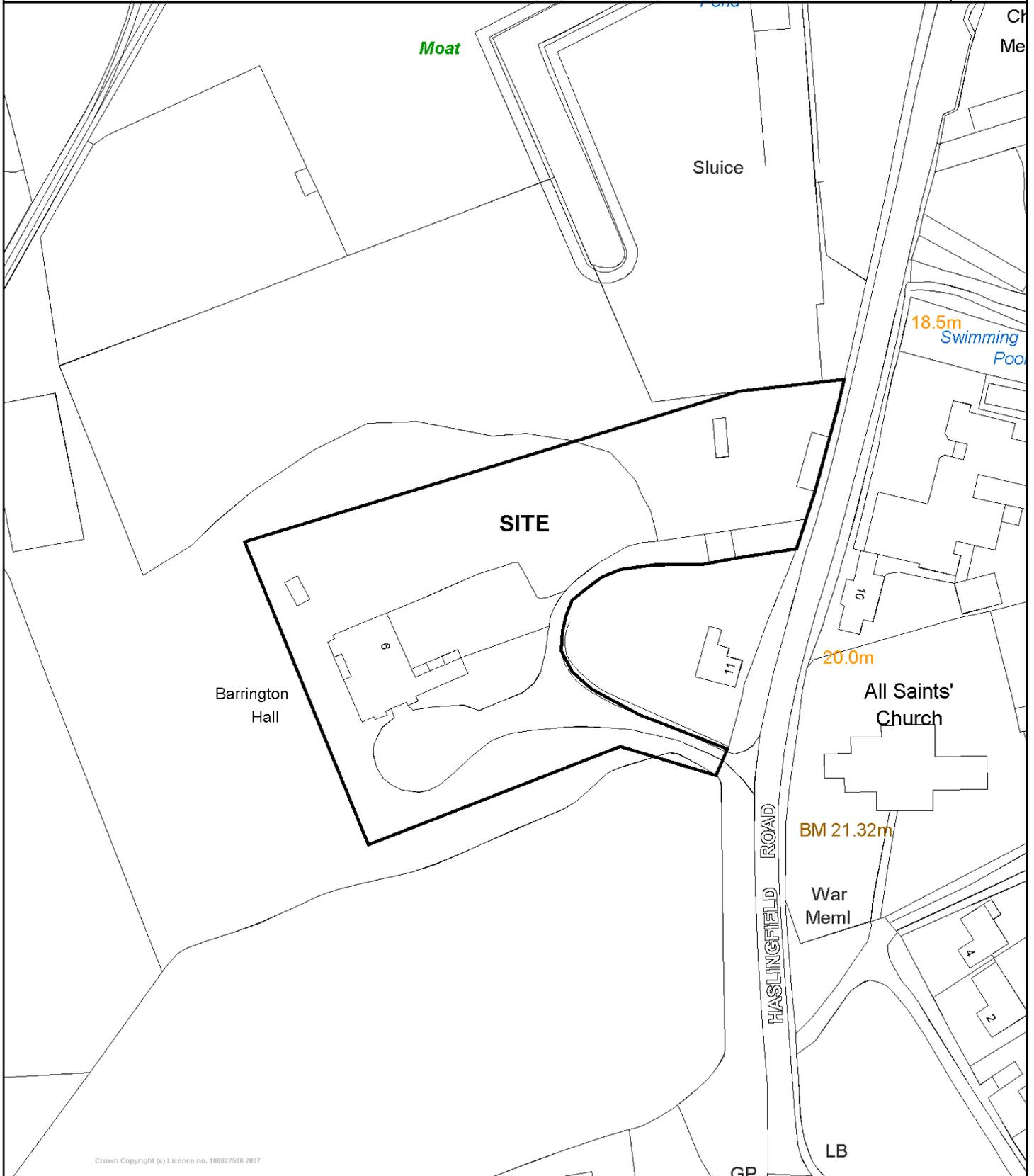
Members will visit this site on Monday 2nd July 2007

Conservation Area

Listed Building

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.94-hectare application site is located to the west of Haslingfield Road opposite All Saints Church on the outskirts of the Village Framework for Barrington. The site comprises a large 3-storey Grade 2 Listed Building with smaller associated lodgings located 55 metres to the east of the main building and approximately 15 metres north of the entrance. The application site does not refer to all the grounds owned by the applicant, comprising some 3.7 hectares. The aforementioned buildings are predominately bound by trees and shrubs to the north, south and west and a mixture of fencing and wall on the eastern boundary, fronting Haslingfield Road, all of which is outside of the application site edged red.
2. The application received 24th April 2007 proposes extensions, alterations and a change of use from office to part residential and function facility. Access to and from the site is from Haslingfield Road, directly opposite the village church. This scheme includes the access to the main building from Haslingfield Road and proposes a single storey extension 13m x 8.3m in area to the eastern elevation for the erection of a swimming pool, at lower ground level, internal alterations to the listed building and a change of use to part of the ground floor of the building. The intention is to use this for business and social gatherings such as weddings, parties and conferences. Numbers ranging from 30 to a maximum of 240 people are proposed, using associated external marquees also, the largest of which is estimated to be approximately 21 metres x 9 metres in area.



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Planning Committee July 2007

3. The application proposes a maximum of 32 events (with an average of 160 guests) per year, the majority of which to be held at the weekend and 70 events (with an average 60 guests) per year, majority on weekdays. The applicants intend to cater for these using the existing kitchen area or outside caterers depending on the requirements of the individual groups. The planning statement refers to the possible number of new staff to be employed for managing the enterprise, quoting approximately 20 staff. It also states that the commercial activities will be restricted to the ground floor.

Planning History

4. Barrington Hall has been used as offices for over 20 years, the most recent tenants, Global Graphics, IT specialists, departed from the premises in December 2006 when the lease expired. The owners of the property have been residing in the associated aforementioned lodge. There have been an array of earlier planning applications dating back from 1965, however the majority of which are not directly related to this currently outstanding application.
5. An application submitted late 2006, planning reference **S/1993/06/F**, comprised the same proposed development. This was withdrawn in December 2006 following negotiations and considerations, not just in terms of planning but also directly linked with the conservation and preservation side of the works proposed.
6. The changes to this application are predominately to the building itself. Based on lengthy discussions between the agent, Conservation and Planning Services. The current application now includes comments with respect to the earlier issues raised by local residents and the Parish Council.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

7. **Policy P1/2** 'Environmental Restrictions on Development' states that developments in the countryside will be restricted unless demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
8. **Policy 4/1** 'Tourism, Recreation and Leisure Strategy' requires that new or improved tourism, recreation and leisure developments protect or improve the local environment, landscape and residential amenity.
9. **Policy P7/6** 'Historic Built Environment' states Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

10. **Policy HG13** 'Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside' sets out requirements for development of dwellings outside of village frameworks having regard to impact of the site on the surrounding countryside in addition to the visual impact of developments on neighbour amenity and the street scene.
11. **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.

12. **Policy EN30** 'Development in Conservation Areas' of the Local Plan 2004 requires development within Conservation Areas to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of such areas

Consultation

13. **Barrington Parish Council** – Recommends refusal. The comments state that the application should be read in conjunction with the earlier letter dated 23rd November 2006 in respect of the earlier withdrawn application. This comprised various restrictions and issues to be addressed and are as follows
- (a) The permission for change of use granted only to the current owners
 - (b) No firework displays to be held
 - (c) Music to cease at 23:30 hours
 - (d) Acoustic limitation to be given to amplified music
 - (e) Enhanced sound baffling to be installed around the marquees or no music in the marquees
 - (f) Maximum 24 weekend functions and only 12 evening functions
 - (g) No Sunday functions
 - (h) Traffic survey to be carried out to confirm promised reductions on current levels
 - (i) Traffic to the Hall to be controlled to avoid school entry and leaving times
 - (j) Current noise level to be established as a baseline for comparison and the applicants to ensure that all current sound nuisance regulations are complied with
 - (k) A believable enforcement mechanism to be set up to monitor compliance with agreed levels of noise.
14. The response for the current application reads as follows: -
15. *"The Parish Council remains content with the return to residential accommodation to floors 2 and 3, but cannot accept the change of use to function facility as presented in the application. The concept of holding functions in marquees brings forward the potential for a number of problems to the village as a whole.*
16. *Traffic – A substantial increase in the volume of traffic to and from the site. Safety queries with regard to the proximity of the site to Barrington School and the Church Farm industrial units, together with the existing heavy commuter road use through the village and goods vehicle already coming through the village to Cemex and the real possibility of an increase in this latter traffic due to change of fuel usage: Haslingfield Road is a problem now.*
17. *Noise – Neither the siting of the marquees nor the existence of some trees will reduce the potential for noise nuisance, to the immediate vicinity residents and further a field within the village. We refer to the measures being offered by Cemex to abate their*

traffic noise nuisance as part of their former proposed site development. Nuisance from late night vehicle departures as well as the music from functions will likewise have their effect.

18. *Parking – The site must provide substantial parking facilities for any function requirements. What is currently proposed does not appear to be realistically sufficient. The Green Charity cannot allow parking on the village green, which is illegal.*
19. *At the public meeting held by the Parish Council in 2006, there was not majority support for this change of use. Subsequently the Parish Council has received letters of protest relative to this application in greater numbers.*
20. *Based upon its own assessment of what this application offers to the village and the benefit it might bring to the locality, the Parish Council opposes this application.”*
21. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** – Comments for this application have not yet been received, however in the earlier 2006 application raised no objections. In light of the number of objections raised they were again consulted on noise related issues and their response was as follows
22. “Should the applicant intend to hold wedding or other celebration functions, they will firstly be required to submit an application to the Councils Licensing Department.
23. At this stage the environmental health officer will observe what proposals are outlined on the application and have the opportunity to submit a representation to the Licensing Officer under the Licensing Act 2003, stating conditions recommended to mitigate potential public health issues, should a license be subsequently granted. I have no further comments to make in respect of this application at the present time”.
24. **Conservation Manager** has no objections to the scheme. A separate Listed Building Application (S/0765/07/LB) has been submitted and the internal changes and extension has been recommended for approval by Conservation Team.
25. **The Local Highways Authority** did advise in relation to the previous application that although there is no objection in principle from the highway point of view it would strongly recommend the access should be widened to a minimum of 5 metres for a minimum of 15 metres measured from the channel line of Haslingfield Road. In light of the gateposts being listed and the applicant unable to move the existing gatepost the LHA was again consulted. It was happy for the gateposts to remain in situ subject to the access being widened within the site and that there was adequate space clear of the highway for two cars to pass safely before entering. This is achievable.
26. Comments received for the current application ask for similar. However the LHA has asked for a minimum of 18 metres rather than the aforementioned 15 metres
27. **The Disability Forum** raised concern over the following points
 - (a) Markings for disabled parking needs to be shown on both sides
 - (b) Swimming pool and the need for a hoist
 - (c) No disabled shower facilities – a wet room with manoeuvring space required
 - (d) Toilet doors must open outwards

- (e) Seats in the showers, rails, centrally located toilets
- (f) The platform lift shown does not show clearly where it goes – upper ground floor?
- (g) For conferences – loop systems will be required
- (h) Ramps in and out of building

Representations

28. There have been numerous letters received regarding this application. In total, at the time of writing this report thirteen letters of support have been received and thirteen letters of objection. It is the Change of Use element of the application that is largely objected to and there are many concerns related to those shared by the Parish Council. In light of the large numbers of correspondence received I have bullet pointed each objection, as many are repeatedly listed.
- (a) Strong objection to the hall being used for weddings and parties
 - (b) Traffic increase – more noise, highway safety concerns, drunk driving
 - (c) Inadequate parking facilities, increase in the use of the private motor car, unsustainable
 - (d) Noise pollution – from any music, fireworks (also listed as a danger to the surrounding thatched cottages), carrying of noise due to the wind movements, loud drunken behaviour.
 - (e) Increase in insurance costs
 - (f) Restrict use to the current owners if granted and should cease if they wish to sell.
 - (g) Owners over ambitious and not considering the needs of the village, no benefit to the village as a whole.
 - (h) Loss of peace and privacy
 - (i) Functions occurring the same time as local residents want to enjoy their own gardens
 - (j) Creation of a commercial village
 - (k) S106 Agreement should be included to restrict use
 - (l) Detrimental impact on the village and the Conservation Area
 - (m) No control over the management of guests. Police involvement
 - (n) Number of proposed functions is still too high
 - (o) Environmental health issues and potential increase in the rat population
 - (p) No noise assessments included in this application as required by the Parish Council in earlier application

- (q) Unreliability in the judgement of the applicant and the proposed change of use
- (r) Inaccuracy of the proximity of surrounding properties and the screening of the garden
- (s) Quality of life reduced
- (t) Loss of value to properties
- (u) Not enough screening for noise protection
- (v) Impact on the village green and the use of the green for parking
- (w) Overstretched sewage works

29. The letters of support include the following points:

- (a) Asset to the village
- (b) Bring wider variety of visitors to the village
- (c) Will restrict an undesirable firm taking over the building that does not care about the village or the building.
- (d) Upgrading the hall is beneficial to its listed status
- (e) Possibility to employ some of the local villagers, particularly the younger generation without the need to travel.
- (f) Refurbishments are expensive and the function use will help maintain the building and its grounds as an important village feature and family home
- (g) The Hall was previously used as offices and the increase in traffic is unlikely to include the same rush hour movements.
- (h) Applicants are both involved in the village community and not the kind of people to allow late drunken parties at the home till the early hours of the morning.
- (i) More than adequate parking facilities not to effect the surrounding village
- (j) Feel assured that the applicants will put in the correct sound barriers to protect neighbouring properties
- (k) Applicants have been part of local meetings and have answered questions openly. No reason not to believe them as local residents themselves
- (l) Larger enjoyment of the Hall
- (m) Proximity of the church will encourage its use for weddings, a benefit to the church and the community
- (n) Possibly less hazardous use of the road, away from peak hour traffic
- (o) Hall should be used better

- (p) A good and historic site for local events
 - (q) Fireworks not a problem providing they are dealt with safely and before 2300hours
 - (r) Good restoration of its original character
30. The agent for the applicants has produced a full and comprehensive planning statement with the application including a draft business plan (attached electronically.)

Planning Comments – Key Issues

31. The key issues with respect to this application are the impact of the change of use element of the proposed application and whether the extension work would harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the character and setting of the Listed Building. The assessment is whether the change of use will have a negative impact on its surroundings, including noise pollution, assessment of the traffic movements, provision of parking facilities and impact on the Conservation Area.

Noise Impact on neighbours

32. Specifically this relates to the proposed wedding and/or party functions potentially involving music and the associated movements of people using this facility. The proposed figures have already been provided in the report. However with reference to music and the volume the applicant has agreed to put a time restriction on music of 2300 hours and to use a volume limiter on any form of music played externally.
33. The size of the site and the surrounding tree boundary will also act as a natural noise buffer. The applicants are happy to comply with restrictions made by the Local Planning Authority and Environmental Health should there be any problems with the aforementioned approaches.

Highway Safety

34. The concerns of the Highway Authority can be addressed with some extension work to the existing access after the gate piers within the site edged red. The gate piers at the entrance are grade 2 listed and the entrance area before passing them is acceptable in size for two cars to pass. The distance between the gate and the back of the highway is over 7 metres and acceptable to the LHA.
35. The new proposed use is very different to that of the existing. However an assessment has to be made on whether the new proposed use will have more impact on traffic movement than the existing use. The agent has included in Appendix A of the Design and Access Statement workings for the existing and proposed use in terms of traffic generation. In conclusion it states that there will be a significant reduction in the movement of cars at peak times, particularly those that conflict with school times. In the event that this is still a concern the applicants could alter conference times to 30 minutes outside of the rush hour traffic to reduce traffic build up. It estimates the existing use generated 12,000 journeys per year (90% at peak times) with the proposed use generating approx. 8000 journeys (30-40% at weekends.)
36. It is apparent that there will be potentially more movements over the weekend period if the change of use for functions is granted consent. The use during the week will be

significantly less than that of the previous use as offices and although the calculations are estimated using best knowledge, it is clear that the traffic movement is variable, but is it unacceptable? I am of the view that it is not.

Parking Provision

37. The parking provision for this scheme is also detailed in Appendix A. At present there are 45 parking spaces for the previous office use, this occasionally resulted in overflow parking on The Green and into the Church Car park. The proposed use will at times need significantly more space for parking. The applicant has tried to minimise the impact of the parking areas on the surrounding land and buildings given that for ½ the year it will be used primarily by just the resident family. Drawing No. 811/10A shows 46 parking spaces, 4 disabled parking spaces and an area for overflow parking, this does not show a specific number, though based on the size of the area it is likely to cater for approximately another 30 – 36 spaces, equating to roughly 76 spaces. With reference to the current parking standards, this would be an acceptable figure given the area to be used for functions covers 480m² and the maximum requirement equates to 1 space per 8m.sq. Deliveries, utility and staff vehicle use has not been included, but this can be clearly accommodated. The large driveway allows for turning clear of the highway. I am of the opinion that parking provision is sufficient for the proposed use.

Impact on the Conservation Area.

38. Many objectors refer to the negative impact this scheme will have on the Conservation Area. The scheme is aiming to preserve the original quality of the Listed Building; the primary objective of Policy EN30 is to preserve and enhance. I am of the opinion this will positively enhance the Conservation Area rather than letting the hall fall into disrepair. Conservation Areas are not designated because of the 'peace and tranquillity' of them, but due to the historic and architectural importance of buildings spaces and landscape within them. The majority of these designated areas are primarily located around the main through road of South Cambridgeshire villages, covering a hive of varying activities, buildings and materials. Barrington is no different. I am of the opinion that the change of use and extension will not have an adverse impact on the character of the Conservation Area or the character and setting of the Listed Building.
39. In conclusion I am of the view that the proposed change of use and extension will not have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area, Listed Building, Highways or the amenity of the surrounding properties providing the correct measures are carried out to ensure noise pollution is not a problem and restrictions are put in place regarding the intensity of the uses at this site.

Recommendation

40. Approve subject to conditions covering the following matters;

Conditions

Time restriction on music – To ensure neighbour amenity is not unduly effected by noise

Restriction on number of events per year – to ensure the intensity of events remains consistent

Noise mitigation measures – for neighbour amenity

Further information regarding the siting of marquees in relation to sound measures – to address noise issues and mitigation measures. Limitation on the land to be used for the siting of marquees
+ any conditions required by the Local Highways Authority

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)
P7/6 (Historic Built Environment)
P4/1 (Tourism, Recreation and Leisure Strategy)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
HG13 (Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside)
EN30 (Development in/adjacent to Conservation Areas)
EN28 (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)
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 including noise disturbance
 - Highway safety
 - Impact upon character and appearance of Conservation Area and setting and character of the Listed Building

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 Files Ref: S/1993/06/F, S/0764/07/F and S/0765/07/LB

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