

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

1<sup>st</sup> August 2007

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

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### **S/1034/07/F - COMBERTON**

**Extension and Raising the Roof Line at Foxes Bridge Farm, Royston Lane for Mr & Mrs S Tebbit**

**Recommendation: Refusal**

**Date for Determination: 24<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

#### **Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination as recommended by the Local Councillor.**

**Members will visit this site on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2007.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. Foxes Bridge Farm is located to the eastern side of Royston Lane, accessed by its own road to the farmhouse, and associated farm buildings. There is also a day care childrens nursery and seasonal student accommodation within converted farm buildings.
2. The application site forms the curtilage to the farmhouse. The dwelling is a two-storey detached property, currently hosting four bedrooms. Its main garden area is to the south, which leads onto open paddock land beyond. To the north of the dwelling is a small courtyard, beyond which is an office and garage, linked to the educational aspect of the site. To the east are agricultural buildings.
3. The north element of the dwelling has a small facing gable to create headroom for one of the bedrooms. The rest of the north elevation has a low ceiling height, meaning the large landing area can only be practically used as a storage area. The dwelling has been previously extended in the past (see site history).
4. The full application, registered on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2007, is for a two-storey extension to the southern elevation to create a family room and an additional bedroom to be used by a helper for the daughter of the applicant, who has been diagnosed with cerebral palsy and epilepsy. The extension would measure 3.3m by 4.9m, with a height of 6.2m to the ridge. The application also seeks to raise the roofline of the property. The west to east ridge of the roof would be raised from 5.9m to 6.7m. A new gable would also be created to the north elevation, creating no new floor space but allowing increased headroom in the family bathroom. A new front entrance would also form part of the scheme.



Drain

site

Fox's Bridge Farm

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Scale 1/1250 Date 17/7/2007

Centre = 538511 E 255187 N

August 2007

## Planning History

5. **S/1056/90/F, S/0488/92/F and S/1131/92/F** – all applications for two-storey side extension to the dwelling, with extension to north elevation. The different applications appear to represent minor changes in design, and one of the schemes was implemented on the site.
6. The site has various other previous applications, none of which relate to the farmhouse itself.

## Planning Policy

7. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ('the County Structure Plan') states development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
8. **Policy P1/3** of the County Structure Plan requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development and which provides a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment. This policy is supported by **Policy DP/2** of the Emerging Local Development Framework Development Control Policies, Submission Draft 2006 (LDF).
9. **Policy P9/2a** of the County Structure Plan declares that within the Green Belt, new development will be limited to that required for agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport, cemeteries, or other uses appropriate to a rural area. This is supported by **Policy GB2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (Local Plan) that states planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. These policies are supported by **Policy GB/1** of the LDF, which states there is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Cambridge Green Belt, and **Policy GB/2** of the LDF, which states any development considered appropriate within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that it does not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.
10. **Policy HG13** of the Local Plan allows extensions to dwellings outside of village frameworks to be permitted where the proposed extension is in scale and character with the existing dwelling, would not exceed the height of the original dwelling, would not materially change the impact of the dwelling on its surroundings, and where the extension does not lead to a 50% increase or more in volume or gross internal floor area of the original dwelling. This Policy is echoed by **Policy HG/6** of the LDF. This policy adds that in exceptional circumstances, material considerations may justify an exception to changes in height and 50% increases.

## Consultation

11. **Comberton Parish Council** – recommends approval and notes the application would improve the appearance of this house in the Green Belt.

## Representations

12. **Cllr Harangozo** – Requested application to go to Committee with a site visit. Also passes on an invitation for the Committee Members to look inside the dwelling to see the current limitations of the current size of the property.

## **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

13. The key issue regarding the proposal is whether the proposal is inappropriate development within the Green Belt and if so, whether there are any very special circumstances sufficient to overcome the presumption against such development.
14. Policy GB2 of the Local Plan lists developments that are inappropriate within Green Belts. Extensions and alterations to dwellings are appropriate, provided that the criteria in policy HG13 are met and that the overall impact of the extension does not result in the dwelling having a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. As explained, policy HG13 states extensions to dwellings in the countryside will be permitted where the extension does not lead to 50% increase or more in volume or gross internal floor area of the original dwelling.
15. The dwelling has currently been extended by 120% of gross floor area (gross internal floor area and volume cannot be calculated accurately due to the poor quality of the original plans of the dwelling). The proposed extension would increase this to a 149% increase in gross floor area. Such an increase therefore is contrary to Policy HG13. This is also the case with criteria 2, which seeks extensions to not exceed the height of the original dwelling. The ridge height increases from 5.9m to 6.7m, and therefore this element is again contrary to HG13.
16. As a result, the proposal is defined as inappropriate development within the Green Belt as stated Local Plan Policy GB2. Such development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt in that it does not meet the criteria set out in these policies. Although the property has been previously extended, the principles of Green Belt policy and the need to maintain openness still apply to the site. Further development on the site would lead to a harmful erosion of the Green Belt and a further encroachment into the surrounding countryside. This therefore contradicts the purposes of the Green Belt.
17. The applicant has supplied a justification statement in order to overcome Green Belt policy, therefore attempting to provide very special circumstances for the development. A letter from Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children has been provided detailing the medical problems of cerebral palsy and epilepsy suffered by four year old Hattie. The additional bedroom would be available for a carer to stay on site. There is a need for the carer to be in the dwelling during periods where both parents are working full-time on the adjacent farm, in order to provide a quick response to any medical emergency that may affect Hattie.
18. Whilst I am very sympathetic to the individual circumstances of the applicant, it is not considered enough to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. I therefore conclude that there are no very special circumstances in this case, and that the proposal is by definition inappropriate within the Green Belt.

## **Recommendation**

19. Refusal

Foxes Bridge Farm lies outside the Comberton village framework, and within the Cambridge Green Belt. The original farmhouse has been extended previously by approximately 120%. The proposed extension would add a further 31 square metres of floor space, meaning the original dwelling would be extended by 149% of total floor area. The height of the dwelling would also increase, with the main west to east roof ridge being increased from 5.9m to 6.7m. As a result, the proposal is classified as

inappropriate development within the Green Belt. The proposal would result in a material increase in the impact of the dwelling upon its surroundings, resulting in a loss of openness to the Green Belt. Although the Council is sympathetic with the applicants situation, the special circumstances given do not justify this harm.

The application is therefore contrary to Policy P9/2a of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003, which states new development in the Green Belt will be restricted to those appropriate to a rural area, Policy GB2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which defines the proposal as inappropriate and seeks very special circumstances to be demonstrated if this is the case, and Policy GB/1 of the Emerging Local Development Framework Development Control Policies, Submission Draft 2006, which defines the proposal as inappropriate development. The scheme is also contrary to Policy HG13 of the Local Plan and Policy HG/6 of the LDF, which both state extensions to dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted where the extension does not exceed the height of the original dwelling, and the extension does not lead to a 50% increase or more in volume or gross internal floor area of the original dwelling.

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

- Emerging Local Development Framework Development Control Policies, Submission Draft 2006
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File Ref: S/1034/07/F & S/1056/90/F

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