

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation
Control Committee

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

4th August 2004

S/1253/04/F – Babraham
**Erection of House and Garage Following Demolition of Village Hall – Village Hall Site,
High Street for M Winter**

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. The application site is a 0.155 hectare (0.38 acre) L-shaped plot of land occupied by a detached rendered building that is currently vacant although was last used as a village hall. To the north-east of the site is a pair of semi-detached red brick and tile dwellings whilst to the south-west are two detached brown brick and tile properties. The site extends beyond the rear garden areas of the latter properties with the vehicular access being situated adjacent to the south-western boundary of these dwellings. There is a flint and brick wall along the frontage of the site.
2. The full application, submitted on 17th June 2004, seeks to demolish the village hall and to erect a house and garage on the site. The proposed dwelling would be a 5-bedroom hipped roof brick and slate property with a ridge height of 8.4 metres (5.7 metres high to eaves). It would be sited 3.7 metres behind the front elevation of the existing village hall and a total of 8.7 metres back from the frontage of the site. A brick and slate double garage/studio building would be built within the rear garden area beyond the rear/south-eastern boundary of the adjacent dwelling to the south-west. The density of the development equates to 6 dwellings/hectare.

Planning History

3. **S/1585/03/F** – Planning permission granted for erection of dwelling following demolition of the existing village hall on a smaller site (0.0465 hectares), the rear boundary of which was sited just beyond the rear elevation of the existing hall. The approved scheme is for an 8.4 metre high, detached house, of comparable design to the two dwellings to the south-west, with on-street parking and the retention of the existing front boundary wall.
4. **S/0430/93/F** – Planning permission granted for erection of dwelling following demolition of the existing village hall. This consent expired in 1998 and was resurrected by the above permission.
5. **S/0848/93/CAC** and **S/1584/03/CAC** – Conservation Area Consent granted for the demolition of the existing village hall.
6. **S/0446/86/F** – Consent granted for village hall car park on site to rear.

Planning Policy

7. Babraham is identified within **Policy SE5** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") as an Infill-Only Village. In such locations, Policy SE5 states that residential development will be restricted to no more than two dwellings comprising (amongst others) the redevelopment of an existing residential curtilage providing the site does not form an essential part of village character, and development is sympathetic to the historic interests, character, and amenities of the locality.
8. **Policy P1/3** of the County 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.
9. The site lies within the village Conservation Area. **Policy P7/6** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") requires development to protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment, whilst **Policy EN30** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 requires new development in a Conservation Area to either preserve or enhance the character of the area.
10. **Policy CS9** of The Local Plan states that permission will be refused for proposals which would result in the loss of a village service where such loss would cause a significant reduction in the level of service provision in the locality. In considering the significance of the loss, the following matters are considered:
 - The established use of the premises and its existing and potential contribution to the social amenity of the local population;
 - The presence of other village service and facilities which provide an alternative within convenient access by public transport, cycling or walking;
 - An assessment of the future economic viability of the use including the results of any efforts to market the premises.

Consultation

11. **Babraham Parish Council** recommends refusal stating:
 - "Object to the residential aspect of the garage and express a wish to consider the housing density;
 - Prefer to see several smaller dwellings on this site;
 - Wish to ensure and maintain the integrity of the flint wall and protect listed buildings and structures in the immediate vicinity. "
12. **The Conservation Manager** raises no objections to the application stating that the design of the house is an improvement on the existing approved design. The success of the design will require good detailing for the entrance door canopy etc. Also, the drawings do not indicate what sort of door is to be used. Given the style of dwelling proposed, either a 6 panelled or 4 panelled painted timber door should be used. A condition on the Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the existing hall requires the memorial plaque to be salvaged and resited on the replacement building. Samples of materials together with details of front door and canopy need to be conditioned as part of any planning consent.

13. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** raises no objections to the location of the proposed house but does object to the garage which would be located adjacent to a sycamore tree on the boundary. The footprint of the garage should be moved 2 metres to the north to minimise the impact on this tree.
14. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections in principle although he does express concern about noise disturbance to nearby residents during the construction period. As such, a condition restricting the hours of use of power operated machinery during the construction period needs to be attached to any planning consent.

Representations

15. Letters of objections have been received from 5 local residents. The main points raised are:
- The development is of insufficient density. The gaining of vehicular access to the site together with its enlarged size means that consent should only be granted for denser housing. Several small units would be preferable and would make the best use of the enlarged site;
 - The style of the dwelling is not in keeping with the neighbouring houses;
 - The rear element of the site has an existing restrictive covenant and there are a number of claims and rights of way issues that could be exacerbated by the development;
 - Not all of the Madeline Hall Committee members want to see denser development and affordable housing on the site;
 - The garage/studio block would be intrusive in the outlook from The Embers and Coquina (the two detached properties to the south-west of the site). In addition, the parking/turning of vehicles would result in noise nuisance to the occupiers of these properties. The garage should be sited directly to the rear of the new house;
 - The garage/studio block could result in the loss of existing trees;
 - The provision of a greater number of dwellings on the site would result in noise disturbance to Coquina through the use of the access;
 - The existing front boundary wall should be retained;
 - The vehicular access is too narrow for construction vehicles. If permission is granted, access during the construction period should be restricted to small vehicles only;
 - The garage/studio building could be converted to a separate dwelling in the future.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

16. The key issues in relation to this application are:
- Neighbour impact;
 - Impact upon Conservation Area/visual impact in the locality;
 - Density/best use of land;
 - Loss of village service;
 - Impact on trees.
17. Policy CS9 resists the loss of existing village services and facilities where a proposal would result in a significant reduction in the level of service provision locally. This issue has not been properly explored as part of the current application as there is an

extant consent for the demolition of the village hall and its replacement with a dwelling.

18. The site lies within the village framework where policies state that the principle of infill development is acceptable providing the site in its present form does not form an essential part of village character and providing development is sympathetic to the character and amenities of the surrounding area. The Conservation Manager has raised no objections in principle to the demolition of the existing building (for which Conservation Area Consent has been given) and is satisfied that, subject to satisfactory detailing, the proposed dwelling would not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Indeed, he considers the design to be an improvement on the existing approved scheme.
19. Much concern has been raised that the proposed development is of insufficient density. The Parish Council and a number of local residents consider that the proposal should seek to erect a number of smaller units on the site in order to make the best use of the land. I consider there to be a number of problems with this approach. Firstly, Babraham is designated as an Infill Village. In such locations, Policy SE5 of the Local Plan states that residential development will be restricted to no more than two dwellings. In addition, whilst policies relating to development within Rural Growth and Limited Rural Growth Settlements require development to be constructed at a minimum density of 30 dwellings/hectare, there is no such minimum density stipulation within the policy relating to development in infill villages. Only in "Very exceptional cases" would a slightly larger development be permissible if this would lead to the sustainable recycling of a brownfield site bringing benefit to the village.
20. The fact that there is an extant consent for one large detached dwelling on this site is a key consideration in this case. At the pre-application stage, the applicant approached this Authority regarding the feasibility of erecting a pair of semi-detached houses on the site. Officers advised that, in accordance with planning policy, one of these units would need to be an affordable dwelling. The applicant considered such a scheme to be unviable and hence proceeded with the current application for one large dwelling. Should the current scheme be refused, it is highly unlikely that an application for two dwellings would be submitted. The applicant would almost certainly seek to implement the existing consent instead. Given that the Conservation Manager has indicated that the current scheme is preferable to that previously approved and given that this application represents an opportunity to provide off-street parking for the dwelling, I consider that, on balance, the current scheme should be supported.
21. The position of the garage/studio building would compromise an existing tree. Rather than resiting the building 2 metres away from the tree, as requested, the applicant has been advised to locate the garage in the south-eastern corner of the site – ie – directly to the rear of the new dwelling. This would help to overcome concerns expressed by neighbouring properties to the south-east regarding the impact of the garage upon their outlook.
22. Both of the immediately adjoining properties to the site have windows in their side elevations facing towards the village hall. The proposed new dwelling would undoubtedly have an impact upon the outlook from these windows. However, the impact would be no worse than that of the existing building and it would therefore be unreasonable to resist the application on this basis. The proposed dwelling does have first floor bathroom windows in both side elevations and it would be essential to condition the fitting of these openings with obscure glazing. In addition, any consent

should be conditional upon no further first floor windows being added to these elevations in order to prevent overlooking of the neighbouring properties.

23. Finally, it is essential that the existing brick and flint wall at the front of the site be retained. This can be controlled by adding a boundary treatment condition to any planning consent.

Recommendations

24. Subject to the receipt of amended plans to re-site the garage building to the rear of the new dwelling, delegated powers are sought to approve the application subject to the following conditions:
 1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
 2. Sc5a – Details and samples of materials for external walls and roofs of dwelling and garage (Rc5a) and to ensure that the development would not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area);
 3. Sc5 – Details of the design of the front door and canopy over (Reason – To ensure that the development would not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area);
 4. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
 5. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
 6. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
 7. 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);
 8. Save for the windows shown within the approved drawings, no further windows, doors or openings of any kind shall be inserted at first floor level in the north-east and south-west side elevations of the dwelling, hereby permitted, unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf. (Reason – To safeguard the privacy of occupiers of the adjoining dwellings to the north-east and south-west);
 9. Sc23 – First floor windows in the north-east and south-west elevations to be fitted and permanently maintained with obscure glass (Rc23);

Informatives

Reasons for Approval

1. The approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:** P1/3 (Sustainable design in built development) and P7/6 (Historic Built Environment);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** SE5 (Development in Infill-Only Villages) and EN30 (Development in/adjacent to Conservation Areas)
2. The proposal conditionally approved 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 and outlook issues
 - Visual impact on the locality
 - Impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
 - Impact on trees
 - Density of development/best use of land
3. All other material planning considerations have been taken into account. None is of such significance as to outweigh the reason for the decision to approve the planning application.

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 demolition and 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. Before the existing property is demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from Building Control establishing the way in which the property will be dismantled, including any asbestos present, the removal of waste, minimisation of dust, capping of drains and establishing hours of working operation. This should be brought to the attention of the applicant to ensure the protection of the residential environment of the area.

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, Plan File Ref: S/1253/04/F

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