

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

7 November 2007

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

S/1707/07/F - SAWSTON

Demolition of Engine Shed and Erection of House at Fire Engine Shed, High Street for J Tilley

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 29 October 2007

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination at the request of Councillor Mrs S Hatton.

Members will visit this site on Wednesday 7 November 2007.

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. The application site comprises a small plot up to 12m wide with a maximum depth of about 17.5m, and a site area of 0.017ha. It is located close to the centre of the village, with a frontage to the west side of High Street. The old fire engine shed is a single-storey structure clad with timber boarding. The site is at present disused. To the north, the site adjoins The Black Bull Public House, a grade 2 listed building, and its car park to the rear. To the west, the site adjoins the rear gardens of houses at Nos 102 and 104 High Street, which have mature trees. To the south, the site is adjoined by a private driveway that serves development to the west at 106a High Street and Huntingdon Farm. The boundary to this drive is marked by a low fence close to High Street, but by the side elevation of the old engine shed it is marked by a traditional flint wall, which continues to form the enclosure for the garden of 102 High Street. Further to the south, 108 High Street is a listed house. The site lies within Sawston Conservation Area.
2. The full application, dated 1 September 2007, proposes the demolition of the old fire engine shed, and the erection of a two-bedroom house on the same footprint. The house would have a ridge height of 6.5m. The external materials would be facing brick with a contrasting brick plinth and string course, with a slate roof. The existing flint boundary wall is to be incorporated into the southern elevation. The ground floor area would be 50 square metres. The design includes sliding sash and casement windows, arched lintels over windows and doors, and decorative barge boarding. A private garden area of 80 square metres is shown. A single parking space is shown on the frontage, with turning to be achieved by means of a mechanical turntable. No alterations to the existing access are proposed.

Planning History

3. Applications for residential redevelopment of the site were refused in 1989 (**S/2322/89/F**) for a bungalow, in 1999 (**S/1794/98/O**) for a house, and 2002

(**S/0801/02/F**) for a house. An application for the erection of a house was submitted in March this year (**S/0491/07/F**). This was withdrawn by the applicant following concerns about the design of the dwelling that were expressed by the Conservation Manager. The refusal reasons in the earlier schemes have variously included:

- a) adverse effect on the setting of the Black Bull Public House and the character of the conservation area;
- b) restricted private garden area;
- c) overdevelopment of the site;
- d) disturbance to future occupiers from the use of the public house adjacent to the site;
- e) inadequate space for the parking and turning of two cars within the site;
- f) inadequate visibility in each direction for vehicles exiting the site.

4. Each of these proposals has been dismissed subsequently at appeal. The Inspector in 1990 dismissed the appeal on ground b) (**S/2322/89/F**). In 1999, the Inspector dismissed the appeal on all grounds a) to f) and expressed concern about the loss of part of the side boundary wall (**S/1794/98/O**). The 2002 application (**S/0801/02/F**) showed the engine shed to be demolished, and to be replaced with a two-storey dwelling with two bedrooms, a ridge height of 6.7m and a footprint of 40 square metres. The dwelling was shown to be sited on the northern part of the site, adjacent to the Black Bull PH. The layout included two parking spaces and space for vehicular turning on site. The remainder of the site included a private garden area and rear patio together providing an area of approximately 40 square metres. The appeal was dismissed solely on ground a), the Inspector being concerned at proximity of the new dwelling to the listed building and the resultant harm to its setting.
5. In parallel to the proposals for residential development of the site there has been a planning history for its development for commercial purposes. In 1980, planning permission was granted for its use as a carpentry shop for a temporary period of two years (**S/1601/80/F**). Another two-year consent was granted in 1986 for use as an office/ workshop for a glazing contractor (**S/1674/86/F**). An enforcement appeal relating to use for the sale and storage of motor vehicles was dismissed in 1999. An application to demolish the existing building and to erect in the same position a studio/workshop with four parking spaces and a turning area (**S/0802/02/F**) was refused on highway grounds following concerns expressed by the Local Highway Authority about potential parking on the highway as a result of the development. The Inspector, on appeal, also dismissed the proposal for this reason. In doing so, he also commented: *“It is clear to me that this proposal is much more sympathetic to the setting of the listed building and the conservation area than [the scheme for a house, reference S/0801/02/F]. The proposed building would be small in size and scale, it would have a traditional character and appearance, and furthermore it would allow for the retention of the gap to the south side of The Black Bull...I find no conflict between the proposal and the provisions of the development plan which relate to listed buildings and conservation areas.”*
6. In 2003, planning permission was refused for the conversion of the existing building to offices (**S/2204/03/F**). This was refused by the LPA on grounds of inadequate highway visibility and poor provision for the parking and turning of vehicles on the site. On appeal, the Inspector noted that a visibility splay to the south of 2.0 x 33 metres could not be achieved, being obstructed by walls and buildings. He was also concerned that the provision of four car parking spaces on the site in tandem would result in reversing onto the highway. He dismissed the appeal in September 2004. A resubmission was approved in December 2004 (**S/2064/04/F**). In this case no provision for vehicular parking was provided, but only for cycle parking. This

approach was supported by Sawston Parish Council, but the Local Highway Authority continued to express concern about any commercial use of the site.

Planning Policy

7. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy (2007)**
ST/4 (Rural Centres) Development and redevelopment without any limit on individual scheme size will be permitted within the village frameworks of Rural Centres, provided that adequate services, facilities and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development.
8. **South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007)**
9. **Policy DP/2** (Design of New Development) - seeks to ensure that all new development incorporates a high standard of design that responds to the local character of the built environment.
10. **Policy DP/3** (Development Criteria) - states that permission will not be granted for proposals that would have an unacceptable adverse impact on (amongst other issues): residential amenity, from traffic generated, on village character, or from undue environmental disturbance.
11. **Policy CH/4** (Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building) - states that permission will not be granted for development that would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building.
12. **Policy CH/5** (Conservation Areas) - states that development proposals in Conservation Areas will be determined in accordance with PPG15.
13. **Policy TR/2** (Car and Cycle Parking Standards) - for dwellings, Appendix 1 gives a level of an average of 1.5 car parking spaces per dwelling, up to a maximum of two per 3 or more bedrooms in poorly accessible areas. Visitor/ service parking should not fall below 0.25 spaces per dwelling provided with 2 parking spaces).
14. **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003**
P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development) - requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development which minimises the need to travel and reduces car dependency

Consultations

15. **Sawston Parish Council** – Recommendation of refusal on the grounds of:
 - a) overdevelopment of the site;
 - b) poor access to site;
 - c) plans are not explicit as to the status of the flint wall on the southern boundary belonging to the farm next door.
16. **Conservation Manager** - No objection, as the design is based upon advice given to the applicant prior to submission of the proposal. Recommended conditions, requiring agreement of brick sample, natural slate roof, painted timber windows/doors and full details of the turntable including finishes.

17. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – No objection, subject to the design of foundations to take account of adjacent conifer tree roots.
18. **Local Highway Authority** – No objection, as the proposal should have no significant impact on the public highway. Recommendation that pedestrian visibility splays be shown at the entrance and protected by condition attached to the planning permission. Recommendation of an informative for Highway Authority consent for any works to alter a highway crossing.

Representations

19. Representations have been received from Nos 102, 104, 106, 106a and 121 High Street, and 31 Common Lane. The grounds of objection are:
 - a) Is the flint wall to be removed? It is an old and attractive feature of the village. It provides part of the setting of Huntingdon House, a listed building and one of the oldest houses in the village.
 - b) Concern about the impact of the development on the setting of the Black Bull PH and the conservation area.
 - c) The turntable will be sited over a private right of way.
 - d) The development will cause obstruction to visibility to the farm driveway, which is used by heavy machinery
 - e) Additional traffic flow problems on this narrow and dangerous part of High Street when vehicles park on the driveway. There have been three accidents along this section of the High Street in the last eight months;
 - f) The same concerns apply as in the refusal reasons for S/1794/98/O and S/2204/03/F. Most previous applications have been refused because of the location, visibility, parking facilities and the issue of the ownership of the wall.
 - g) The change from a single-storey to a two-storey building would be very obtrusive to the cottages at 102/104 High Street.
 - h) Inappropriate degree of development on a very small site;
 - i) The measurements of the proposed building are larger than the existing shed;
 - j) Amenity impact on 102 High Street – proximity, overlooking, reduction in light, noise disturbance during construction and through occupation of house;
 - k) Any blockage to highway visibility to the north of the driveway onto High Street would be very dangerous.
 - l) The turntable will be unsightly to look at and will be noisy. This will appear industrial, and will be out of keeping with the character of the High Street.
 - m) The ramp up to the front entrance suggests that the house will be higher than shown.

Planning Comments

20. This small site has been the subject of thorough consideration in a number of planning decisions and appeals. This has been helpful in clarifying the planning issues relating to the development of the site for residential.

Overdevelopment

21. The proposed development will occupy the same footprint as the existing shed. It will provide some 50sqm of garden area to serve a 2-bedroomed house. This exceeds the provision for garden area made in S/0801/02/F. The density of development is 58 dwellings per hectare. The incorporation of a mechanical turntable and the provision of only one parking space have enabled more of the site to be provided for private amenity. Members will be able to assess this aspect on site.

Conservation

22. The proposal preserves the gap between the listed public house and the new dwelling. The design has been adjusted to improve its appearance in the street scene and conservation area, and the proposed external materials are appropriate in general terms, subject to samples being submitted. I agree that the preservation of the flint boundary wall is important, and if approved I recommend that a condition to achieve this is included. Similarly, I recommend that final details of the appearance of the turntable be submitted for approval. I consider that the proposal will preserve the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of this part of Sawston Conservation Area.

Residential Amenity

23. I have noted the concerns of the occupiers of No.102 High Street about the potential harm to the amenity of this property from the development. The dwelling would be sited at the rear of this garden, on its eastern boundary. There would be a limited amount of overshadowing of the rear of the garden in the morning from the building, although at present tall conifer trees already have this effect. There would be no facing windows, and I recommend that a condition be attached to any consent granted to prevent such windows being constructed in the future. The height of the ridge, at 6.5m, is not likely to amount to an overbearing impact or serious loss of outlook to this property. I recommend that hours of construction be controlled by condition. The right of way through the site referred to by neighbouring occupiers is a private matter between the parties.

Highway safety

24. Restricted visibility to the south of the access onto High Street has been identified as a concern in previous applications, but has been accepted in respect of residential schemes (most recently in S/0801/02/F) as the extra traffic generated by the development would be limited. The current proposal differs from S/0801/02/F in that it shows only one parking space on site. In view of the central position of the site within the village, and the availability of alternative means of transport, I am satisfied that this level of provision is adequate. The visibility from the adjacent driveway northwards along High Street will not be affected by the development. The Highway Authority has requested that pedestrian visibility splays be identified and safeguarded by means of a condition.

Recommendation

25. Approval of application dated 1 September and accompanying drawings.

Conditions

1. Standard condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A)
2. SC5a - Details to be submitted:
 - a. sample of brick and details of brick bonding (Reason – In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area)
 - b. sample of natural slate as roofing material (Reason – In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area)
 - c. appearance of the mechanical turntable, including finishes. (Reason – In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area)
 - d. boundary treatments for all boundaries. (Reason – RC60)
3. Materials for use in external windows and doors shall be painted timber unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (Reason – In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area)
4. No further windows or openings of any kind shall be inserted at first floor level in the western elevation of the building, hereby approved, unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf. RC23
5. The existing brick and flint wall on the southern boundary shall be retained in its entirety and shall be safeguarded from damage or collapse during the construction period. (Reason – In the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area)
6. The mechanical turntable, hereby approved, shall be provided before the first occupation the dwelling, hereby approved, and shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the purpose of vehicular turning to enable vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear. (Reason - In the interests of highway safety)
7. Prior to the commencement of development, details of pedestrian visibility splays to be provided on both sides of the access shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The visibility splays shall be provided before the first occupation of the dwelling and shall be maintained free of any obstruction over a height of 600mm within an area of 2.0m by 2.0m measured from and along respectively the back of footway. (Reason - In the interests of highway safety)
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.
(Reason - To protect occupiers of adjoining buildings from noise disturbance.)
9. SC5 - Foundation details (Reason - To negate the potential for damage to the new property from root movement and to avoid root severance which could make the conifer unstable and a potential hazard.)

Informatives

1. In respect of Condition 2 the Local Planning Authority recommends the use of gault clay facing brick laid in Flemish bond.
2. Local Highways Authority Informative.

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, (2007)**
ST/4 (Rural Centres)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007)**
DP/2 (Design of New Development)
DP/3 (Development Criteria)
CH/4 (Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)
CH/5 (Conservation Areas)
TR/2 (Car and Cycle Parking Standards)
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**
P1/3 (Sustainable design in built development)
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material considerations, which have been raised during the consultation exercise: **scale of development; impact on the Conservation Area and setting of the adjoining listed building; neighbouring amenity; highway safety.**

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 Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File ref

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