

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

5<sup>th</sup> March 2008

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

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### **S/2399/07/O - GAMLINGAY**

**Dwelling and Garage, Land adj. 24 West Road for Mr P Hutchinson**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 14<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

#### **Notes:**

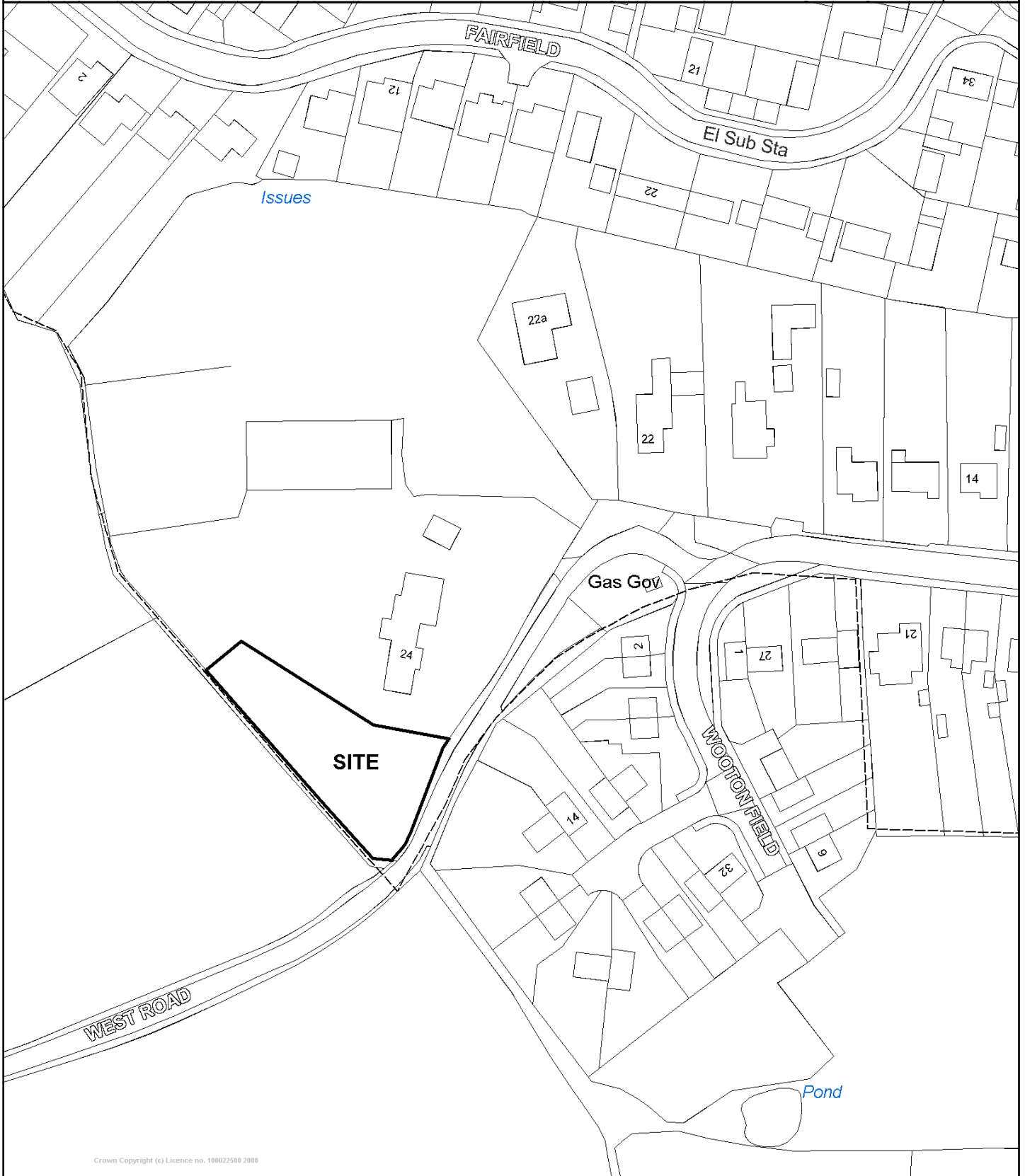
**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination at the request of Cllr Kindersley.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. No 24 West Road, Gamlingay is a substantial detached dwelling located within large grounds.
2. This outline application, submitted on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007, proposes the erection of a single dwelling and garage on a 0.158ha area of the garden land to the south of the existing dwelling. All matters are reserved for consideration at the detailed stage. The submitted drawings include existing levels across the application site and adjacent land.
3. The south west and south east boundaries of the site are defined by established hedges and fencing. The site slope away from the existing dwelling towards the edge of the village (south west). There is a mains sewer that traverses the northern part of the site. West Road is a narrow sunken rural lane at this point with no footpaths. Road-side verges on the site frontage and to the north east are defined as a County Wildlife Site. To the south west of the site is agricultural land. On the opposite side of West Road are the rear gardens of properties in Wootton Field.
4. The proposed density is 6.3 dph.
5. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which indicates a 4/5 bedroom detached house to be sited to the south of the site where there are no large trees, with a detached garage at the front, close to the road. The dwelling would be similar in height to the existing edge of village development. "The building would be T-shaped with a width of 15m and a depth of 6.2m extending to 13m along the rear extension".

#### **Planning History**

6. There is no relevant planning history for the application site, although outline planning consent for residential development was granted in 2006 on the part of the garden area to the north of the existing dwelling .



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Scale 1/1250 Date 22/2/2008

Centre = 523514 E 251988 N

March 2008 Planning Committee

## Planning Policy

*Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:*

7. **Policy P1/3** encourages a high standard of design and sustainability for new development, which should respond to the local character of the built environment, conserve important environmental assets of the site and pay attention to the detail of form, massing, textures, colours and landscaping.

*South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007:*

8. **Policy ST/5** identifies Gamlingay as a Minor Rural Centre where residential development and redevelopment up to a maximum indicative scheme size of 30 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework.
9. **Policy DP/1** states that development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, as appropriate to its location, scale and form. Amongst other criteria development should make efficient and effective use of land by giving priority to the use of brownfield sites and use of higher densities.
10. **Policy DP/2** states that all new development must be of a high quality of design and, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development
11. **Policy DP/3** states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on, amongst other criteria, residential amenity, from traffic generated, and on village or countryside/landscape character.
12. **Policy DP/5** states that development will not be permitted where it would form part of a larger site where there would be a requirement for infrastructure provision if developed as a whole; where it would result in a piecemeal, unsatisfactory form of development and; where it would prejudice the development of another site adjacent or nearby.
13. **Policy DP/7** states that development and redevelopment of unallocated land within village frameworks will be permitted provided that, amongst other criteria, the retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character and development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours.
14. **Policy HG/1** states that residential developments will make best use of the site by achieving average net densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment. Higher average net densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare should be achieved in more sustainable locations close to good range of existing or potential services and facilities and where there is, or there is potential for, good local public transport services.
15. **Policy HG/2** sets out the Council's policy in respect of housing mix and requires developments to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of housing types, sizes and affordability to meet local needs.

16. **Policy HG/3** requires the provision of affordable housing in development of two or more dwellings.
17. **Policy SF10** states that all developments will be required to contribute to the provision of outdoor playing space and informal open space to meet the additional needs generated by the development in accordance with the standards contained in Policy SF/11.
18. **Policy NE/7** states that planning permission will not be given for proposals that may have an unacceptable adverse impact, either directly or indirectly, on a Site of Biodiversity or Geological Importance.

### **Consultation**

19. **Gamlingay Parish Council** recommends that the application be refused. "The Council objects to the proposed development of one dwelling on this site as it is contrary to policies relating to site densities and requirements for affordable housing. Councillors also required a site visit by the Highways officer to investigate vision splays around the corner of this road, as traffic can speed (60mph) along this stretch of lane, which could become a serious safety issue."
20. The **Local Highway Authority** originally requested that the applicant provide additional information in respect of levels due to a difference in height between the proposed development and the adopted public highway to ensure that visibility is not obscured. Following the receipt of these details it has expressed concerns that the proposed visibility plays will not be sufficient to meet the existing highway conditions along West Road and has requested that a speed survey is undertaken. It has however stated that it has serious safety concerns and that at the present time it would recommend refusal. It would prefer that the existing entrance be used, given that the splay to the east is already acceptable and that to the southwest could easily be achieved with remedial works to the existing hedge.
21. The Local Highway Authority confirms that it would resist any further development, beyond an additional single dwelling unit.
22. The **Environment Agency** standing advice applies in respect of flood risk and surface water drainage. It points out that the applicant will be required to demonstrate that a connection to a public foul sewer is not available. It also advises that the site is identified as being within an area adjacent to an old landfill site and therefore landfill gas may be present. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the safe development and secure occupancy of the development.
23. The **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** requests conditions restricting the hours of operation of power driven machinery during the construction period and an investigation/remediation of any contamination of the site. Informatives should be attached to any consent concerning the use of driven pile foundations and burning of waste/bonfires during the construction period.
24. The comments for the Council's Ecologist will be reported orally at the meeting.

### **Representations**

25. Councillor Kindersley has requested that the application be reported to Planning Committee as he is concerned at the lack of affordable housing and poor density on the site. Sites such as this within the village envelope are running low yet there is an

ever increasing housing needs list which it is the Council's job to try and address. The adjacent site was consented without an affordable housing element and that is no longer acceptable. In this instance the edge of village policy should be sacrificed.

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

26. The key issues to be considered with this application are whether the proposed development complies with the requirements of Policy in terms of housing density, affordable dwellings, vehicular access and biodiversity.
27. Policy HG/1 requires new development to achieve a minimum density of 30 dph unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment. One dwelling on this site represents a density of 6.3 dph however it is sometimes difficult to achieve the standard density figure on single building plots where issues such as the existing character of an area and the ability to provide a satisfactory access have to be taken into account.
28. West Road is very rural in character at this point being single vehicle width, without footpaths and designated a County Wildlife Site. There are changes in levels and a bend in the road which restrict the amount of visibility that can be achieved. The Local Highway Authority is of the view that a vehicular access and visibility sufficient to serve a single dwelling can be achieved within the site, subject to the applicant providing traffic speed data to justify the reduced splays of 2.4m x 30m identified on a submitted site plan. However it has made it clear that it would not support an application for more than a single dwelling. This would require an increase in both the width of the access and an increased visibility splay which cannot be achieved.
29. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application shows a single 4/5 bedroom detached house sited towards the south side of the plot with a garage at the front of the site. The position of any new dwelling is dictated by the need to provide adequate distance from a mains sewer that runs through the site. I have commented on the scale and design of the dwelling further below and whilst it is my view that the character of the site and edge of village location make the plot best suited to a single dwelling, it might in principle be possible to provide a pair of smaller dwellings on a similar footprint to that currently shown. One of those dwellings would then need to be an affordable dwelling.
30. Whilst the impact of any development on the character of the area and edge of village is a subjective matter the constraints of the site in respect of the vehicular access is in my view an exceptional local circumstance that dictates that there can only be a single dwelling on this site.
31. Policy HG/3 requires the provision of affordable housing in developments of two or more dwellings. As this application relates to a single dwelling, and the constraints of the site in terms of its ability to accommodate further development have been highlighted above, this Policy does not automatically apply. However it is also necessary to consider Policy DP/5 in respect of whether this application should be interpreted as cumulative development when considered along with the extant planning consent for residential development of the area of garden land to the north of the existing house. The Policy states that if development forms part of a larger site there would be a requirement for infrastructure provision, in this case affordable housing, if developed as a whole.

32. The previous permission was granted under the Local Plan 2004 and at that time the requirement to provide affordable housing in villages where the population exceeded 3000 (which included Gamlingay) related only to schemes of more than 10 dwellings. As no numbers were specified in the application, a condition was imposed on the consent that required an appropriate affordable housing contribution if, at the reserved matters stage, a scheme of more than 10 dwellings was proposed. The decision notice also drew the applicant's attention to meeting density standards at the reserved matters stage.
33. The question to be considered here is, if planning permission is granted on the current site for a single dwelling, would it be reasonable to require an affordable dwelling to be provided within the currently permitted site on the grounds that the two proposals represented cumulative development. In determining an appeal elsewhere in the district where this argument was raised the Inspector considered that the following factors should be taken into account: whether the sites are within one ownership; whether they comprise a single site for planning purposes; and whether the proposals constitute a single development.
34. In respect of the first of these criteria the sites are within the same ownership. However they will be physically separate developments served by different accesses some way apart and the two sites could be developed independently. In this case I do not consider that they can be considered to comprise a single unit for planning purposes or constitute a single development and it would therefore not be reasonable to request an affordable housing contribution.
35. As stated above this site is at the edge of the village and in order to limit the impact of development on the surrounding countryside it is necessary to ensure that the scale and location of any dwelling is appropriate. In my view the position of any dwelling needs to provide adequate space on the south boundary of the site to allow for additional screening. There were existing trees along this boundary that have been removed. Although the site is lower than that which No. 24 is built on, in my view the height of any new dwelling should be significantly lower than the existing dwelling. The Design and Access Statement fails to give a maximum and minimum height for the dwelling stating only that it will be of similar height to existing two storey properties in the area. I am also of the view that a detached garage at the front of the site will represent an alien feature in the street scene. I have asked the applicant to address these points and further details will be available for the meeting.
36. A further consequence of achieving the 2.4m x 30m visibility splays at the new vehicular access is the necessity to remove approximately 27m length of existing hedgerow, which may have a detrimental impact on the County Wildlife Site. I shall report further on this matter at the meeting.
37. The requirements of the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) and the Environment Agency can be addressed by conditions and informatives.

### **Recommendation**

38. That, subject to an acceptable access being achieved in relation to traffic speeds and biodiversity, and the receipt of satisfactory amendments to the details in the Design and Access Statement, outline consent be granted with all matters reserved.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework – Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S/2399/07/O and S/0034/06/O

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