

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

5<sup>th</sup> November 2008

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

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**S/1532/08/F – LITTLE WILBRAHAM**  
**Erection of Dwelling with Replacement Access to Existing Dwelling at**  
**9 Bell House, Rectory Farm Road**  
**for Mr & Mrs Lee**

**Recommendation: Refusal**

**Date for Determination: 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

**Notes:**

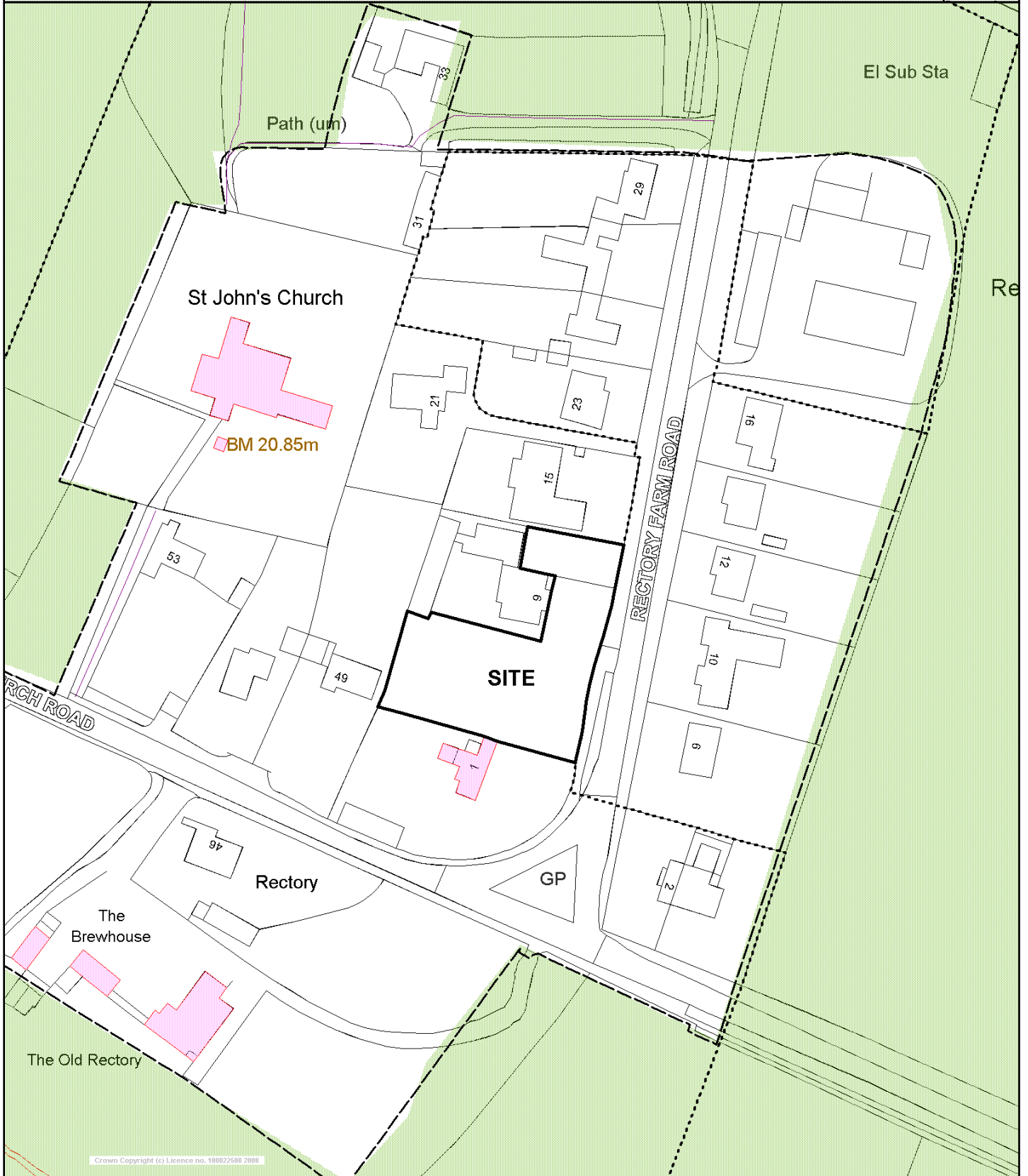
**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Officer recommendation is contrary to the comments of Little Wilbraham Parish Council and because the site adjoins the home of Councillor Turner.**

**Members will visit this site on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008**

**Conservation Area**

**Site and Proposal**

1. The application site (0.0837 hectare) is located within the Little Wilbraham Conservation Area and within the eastern outskirts of the village Framework. Bell House is a detached two-storey dwelling, which has been extended at single storey level to its rear with a converted outbuilding upon the rear western boundary. The site benefits from a garden behind the main dwelling and to the south, which comprises the application site. There is also an extensive garden area to the front of the property, which also serves as a driveway to the dwelling. Bell House appears to have once been a terrace of small cottages, which has since been converted into one dwelling with a Victorian façade added to its frontage. It is thought that the original terrace predates the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The dwelling is now rendered and painted a salmon pink with a traditional slate roof.
2. This part of Rectory Farm Road (west) contains several large properties in reasonably large plots. One of these is Reed Cottage, which is a Grade II Listed Building to the south of Bell House located on the corner of Rectory Farm Road and Church Road. Reed Cottage is a detached one and half storey reed thatched cottage thought to have been built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The building is constructed in a yellow grey brick and contains a modern two-storey addition to its rear.
3. The west side of the Rectory Farm Road contains a dense and well-established hedgerow frontage, which effectively screens the Bell House and Reed Cottage from views when travelling south down the Rectory Road. The opposite side of the road (east) is very different with a more open appearance to the street scene with many of the dwellings have open front gardens laid to lawn. The pattern of development within



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November Planning Committee

the vicinity is very much linear with all development following the line of Rectory Farm Road to the junction with Church Road.

4. The application, submitted on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008, as amended by drawing no. 08/625L/20A proposes the subdivision of the south garden of Bell House for the erection of a detached one and a half storey dwelling. The building would utilise the existing vehicular access for the site with a newly proposed access created to serve Bell House further north upon the eastern boundary. The proposed dwelling would have a traditional chalet style frontage incorporating three lead clad dormers with a more contemporary single storey rear element with flat sedum roof. The proposal would contain separate fuel and bin and bike stores to the front of the dwelling. The house would be designed with Lime render walls and a plain clay tile. The rear single storey element would be faced with timber boarding on the south side under the 'green' roof. The resultant density, inclusive of Bell House, would be 8.7 dwellings per hectare (dph).

### **Planning History**

5. Outline Planning Application **S/0352/77/O** was approved for the erection of a dwelling and garage at land within the garden south of Bell House.
6. Planning Application **S/1038/79/F** was approved for a single storey rear extension to the dwelling house.
7. Planning Applications **S/0764/85/O** and **S/0763/85/O** for the erection of a dwelling on land south and north respectively of the Bell House were refused on the adverse impact upon Bell House and the character of the area. Planning Application **S/0763/85/O** for a dwelling on the north side was later allowed upon appeal. The Inspector considered the development represented an acceptable infill, which would not detract from the form and character of this part of the village. He noted that a Conservation Area was proposed. Development was conditioned to single storey.

### **Planning Policy**

8. **Government Planning Policy Guidance Note 15** "Planning and the Historic Environment" 1994.

This confirms that planning decisions in respect of development proposed in a Conservation Area must give a high priority to the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

*South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007 and Development Control Policy, adopted July 2007:*

9. **Policy ST/7 "Infill Villages"** only permits development and redevelopment within village frameworks to no more than two dwellings within a gap in a built up frontage to an existing road, amongst others.
10. **Policy DP/1 "Sustainable Development"** only permits development where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development. The policy lists the main considerations in assessing whether development meets this requirement.

11. **Policy DP/2 “Design of New Development”** requires all new development to be of a high quality design and indicates the specific elements to be achieved where appropriate. It also sets out the requirements for Design and Access Statements.
12. **Policy DP/3 “Development Criteria”** sets out what all new development should provide, as appropriate to its nature, scale and economic viability and clearly sets out circumstances where development will not be granted on grounds of an unacceptable adverse impact e.g. residential amenity and traffic generation.
13. **Policy DP/4 “Infrastructure and New Developments”** states planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. Contributions may be necessary in relation to public open space.
14. **Policy DP/7 “Development Frameworks”** permits development within village frameworks provided that retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character; it would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours; there is the necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development; and it would not result in the loss of local employment, or a local service or facility.
15. **CH/4 “Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building”** states that planning permission would not be granted for development, which would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building.
16. **Policy CH/5 “Conservation Areas”** states planning applications for development proposals in or affecting Conservation Areas will be determined in accordance with legislative and national policy. The content of PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) seeks development to preserve or enhance its character and appearance.
17. **Policy HG/1 “Housing Density”** 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 a good range of existing or potential services and facilities and where there is, or there is potential for, good local public transport.
18. **Policy NE/6 “Biodiversity”** aims to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity. Opportunities should be taken to achieve positive gain through the form and design of development. Where appropriate, measures may include creating, enhancing and managing wildlife habitats and natural landscape. The built environment should be viewed as an opportunity to fully integrate biodiversity within new development through innovation.
19. **Policy SF/10 “Outdoor Play Space, informal Open Space and New Developments”** states all residential developments will be required to contribute towards Outdoor Playing Space (including children’s play space and formal outdoor sports facilities) and Informal Open Space to meet the additional need generated by the development in accordance with the standards in **Policy SF/11**.
20. **Policy SF/11 “Open Space Standards”** The minimum standard for outdoor play space and informal open space is 2.8 hectares per 1,000 people, comprising:

- a) Outdoor Sport – 1.6 hectares per 1,000 people;
- b) Children's Playspace – 0.8 hectares per 1,000 people;
- c) Informal Open Space – 0.4 hectares per 1,000 people;

21. **Policy "TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards"** identifies maximum parking standards to reduce over-reliance of the car and to promote more sustainable forms of transport. Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with minimum standards.

### **Consultation**

22. **Little Wilbraham Parish Council** recommends that the application be approved noting that several Councillors expressed regret at the loss of a fine garden.
23. The **Conservation and Design Officer** recommends that the application be refused as being contrary to Policies CH/4 and CH/5 of the Development Control Policies DPD 2007. This is on the grounds that the proposal would harm the rural setting of the Grade II Listed Building and this part of the Little Wilbraham Conservation Area by reducing the viability and reasonable provision of garden space to the Bell House, which is deemed a significant building within the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the design of the proposed dwelling would harm the character of this setting, by reason of the appearance of the front canopy and of the flat roof single storey range.
24. The **Trees and Landscape Officer** had no objection to the removal of the Horse Chestnut, Apple, Judus and Birch Trees or to the creation of a new access.
25. The **Local Highway Authority** had concerns over the location of the proposed access to the new dwelling due to the close proximity of the Church Road / Rectory Farm Road junction. Visibility to the south from the new access would only be in the region of 32m, which is short of that considered acceptable within a 30mph speed limit.
26. To overcome this issue the proposed dwelling should utilise the existing vehicular access, which serves Bell House. Whilst this may not be ideal, this access is used by traffic associated with a residential unit so could not object to it continuing to be used to serve traffic associated with one residential unit. The newly proposed access to serve Bell House is deemed acceptable. The scheme has been amended accordingly.

### **Representations**

27. None received

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

#### ***Housing Context***

28. Little Wilbraham is defined as an infill village and therefore development sites are restricted to development of up to 2 dwellings only. The application site is considered as a gap within a built up frontage, which fronts the roadside. The pattern of development within Rectory Farm Road is linear with examples of detached dwellings within large plots. At the minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare the site could accommodate up to 2 dwellings. However, given the sensitive nature of the area with the site being adjacent to a Listed Building and within the Conservation Area a single dwelling is deemed to be the limit of development potential as a principle only. The

application site is within the development framework of Little Wilbraham and the principle of the proposal would therefore conform to Policies ST/7 and HG/1 of the Local Development Framework 2007).

### ***Historic Environment***

29. The application site is adjacent to a Grade II Listed Building and is within the Little Wilbraham Conservation Area. As such the proposal must be determined against Policies CH/4 and CH/5 of the DPD 2007 as well as Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, (PPG15, 1994). The Policy guidance seeks development to either preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas with the use of traditional materials where appropriate. In addition, planning permission will not be granted for development, which would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a listed building.
30. The application site in its undeveloped form contributes to the residential capacity and character of Bell House. Planning Application S/0763/85/O was allowed upon appeal for the erection of a detached dwelling within the garden land of the north of Bell House. Within this decision the Inspector indicated that the garden land to the south of Bell House was sufficient in size to serve Bell House if the land to the north was subdivided as a separate housing plot. It is my understanding that this statement was made in reference to assessing the capacity of residential amenity to serve Bell House and not an assessment on the character of the area. Nevertheless, due to the substantial size of Bell House, this garden land is essential to its residential amenity and the character of the Conservation Area. It should therefore be retained as open space.
31. The development is also deemed to be detrimental to the setting of the adjacent Listed Building at Reed Cottage (No.1 Rectory Farm Road). The immediate setting of Reed Cottage is semi rural with an open appearance to the street scene. The erection of a dwelling adjacent to this setting would therefore break down this rural open character and provide a harmful urban addition to the setting of this Listed Building. It is however noted that the revised access arrangements would limit the open views of the application site from the street scene. Furthermore, at present when travelling south down Rectory Farm Road, Reed Cottage is not clearly visible until the approach of the junction with Church Road. I am of the opinion that the proposed dwelling would not deplete views of this Listed Building due to the extensive landscaping that exists upon the eastern boundary along with the fact that the building envelope of the dwelling would be set in line with the built form of the area.
32. The proposal's design has been criticised by the Conservation and Design Officer on the grounds that it is not sympathetic of the sensitive setting to which the dwelling would sit. The front porch canopy and single storey sedum roof rear range are deemed to be in conflict with the traditional forms of the main façade of the proposed dwelling as well as its neighbouring dwellings. It is argued that these elements would be visibly prominent from views of the Listed Building. Chimneys are a strong feature within the group of buildings in the vicinity and a single chimney to the proposed dwelling is deemed insufficient. In conclusion the contemporary aspect to the rear of the proposed dwelling is at odds with the more traditional form of the proposals frontage, which, as a consequence, would fail to preserve the character of the Conservation Area as well as being unduly harmful upon the setting and character of the adjacent Listed Building.

### ***Access & Parking***

33. The revised plan 08/625L/20A has addressed the concerns of the Highway Authority in that the proposed dwelling would now be served by the existing vehicular access, which currently serves Bell House, whilst a new access is to be created approximately 15m to the north to serve Bell House. This amendment now allows improved vehicle-to-vehicle visibility from the application site to the south to the junction of Rectory Farm Road and Church Road. The existing access already serves one residential unit and its re-use to serve one dwelling would be acceptable. The proposal would provide sufficient space to the front of both the proposed dwelling and the existing for the off road parking of at least two vehicles per dwelling. These areas also included suitable manoeuvring area for vehicles to enter and exit the site within forward gear.

### ***Residential & Visual Amenity***

34. The proposed dwelling would be located so that its north flank elevation would abut the newly proposed common boundary with Bell House with its side elevation forming the vast amount of southern boundary treatment to the rear garden of Bell House. This rear wing is approximately 18m in length with 3.5m being at two-storey level and the remaining 14.5m consisting of an approximate 3m high flat sedum roof element with facing brick work to the garden of Bell House. Despite Bell House being located approximately 5m away from the mass of this boundary treatment the height and length of this brick wall is considered excessive and unduly overbearing along a south garden boundary. At present Bell House benefits from open garden space denoted by soft landscaped boundaries, which contribute towards the open character of this part of the Conservation Area.
35. Notwithstanding the design appraisal within paragraph 32, the traditional form of the frontage of the proposed dwelling is considered to assimilate well within the street from a visual perspective. The building is subservient to Bell House in terms of its height and the building envelope conforms to the linear building line on the western side of Rectory Farm Road.
36. The applicant is willing to make a financial contribution towards informal public open space in accordance with Policies DP/4, SF10 and SF11 of the DPD 2007.

### ***Other Matters***

37. This proposal was subject to informal advice and support from a former senior officer of the Conservation Team, although the letter of support suggests that he understood the appeal decision of 1986 to grant permission of land south of Bell House, rather than to the north.
38. Planning Application S/0352/77/O was approved for the erection of a dwelling and garage upon the southern garden of Bell House, but this permission was never implemented. Consent was granted in 1977. Since then a material change in circumstances has occurred, namely in relation to Planning Policy. PPG15 was published in 1994 and the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework adopted in 2007. Furthermore, Reed Cottage was Listed in 1984, and the Little Wilbraham Conservation Area was designated in 1986. Therefore it is considered that a sufficient change in circumstances have taken place to justify the refusal of this current proposal.

## Recommendation

### 39. Refuse

1. The retention of the open garden land south of Bell House is essential to the character of this part of the Little Wilbraham Conservation Area and the addition of a dwelling within this location would result in the adverse impact upon the setting of the adjacent Listed Building "Reed Cottage", by virtue of the depletion of the open rural nature of the setting of the Listed Building. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies CH/4 and CH/5 of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD 2007, which seek that development preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas and that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a listed building. For those reasons the proposal would also be contrary to Policy DP/7 of the above-mentioned DPD since retention of the site in its present state forms an essential part of the local character and development would not be sensitive to the character of the location.
2. The design of the modern contemporary single storey range projecting to the rear of the proposed dwelling would contrast with the period architecture of the surrounding neighbouring properties. Despite the use of traditional materials this range would not be sympathetic to its surroundings and would fail to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area whilst adversely impacting upon the adjacent Listed Building.
3. The proposed single storey rear element of the proposal with a height of 3m and a projection of some 14m along the common boundary with The Bell House "No.9 Rectory Farm Road" would be unduly overbearing and un-neighbourly in terms of its height and length along the southern garden boundary. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy DP/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD 2007, which states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact upon residential amenity.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 "Planning and the Historic Environment" (1994)
- Planning Applications S/0763/85/O, S/0352/77/O; S/0764/85/O, S/1038/79/F and S/1532/08/F

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