

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

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**Ref: S/1531/08/F – COMBERTON**  
**New Detached Garage Building, Extended Garden Wall and New Gates at Westfield Farm, Royston Lane for Mr Fentiman**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 28<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

### **Notes:**

**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee as it is considered a departure from the Development Plan and because the Officer recommendation is contrary to that of the Parish Council.**

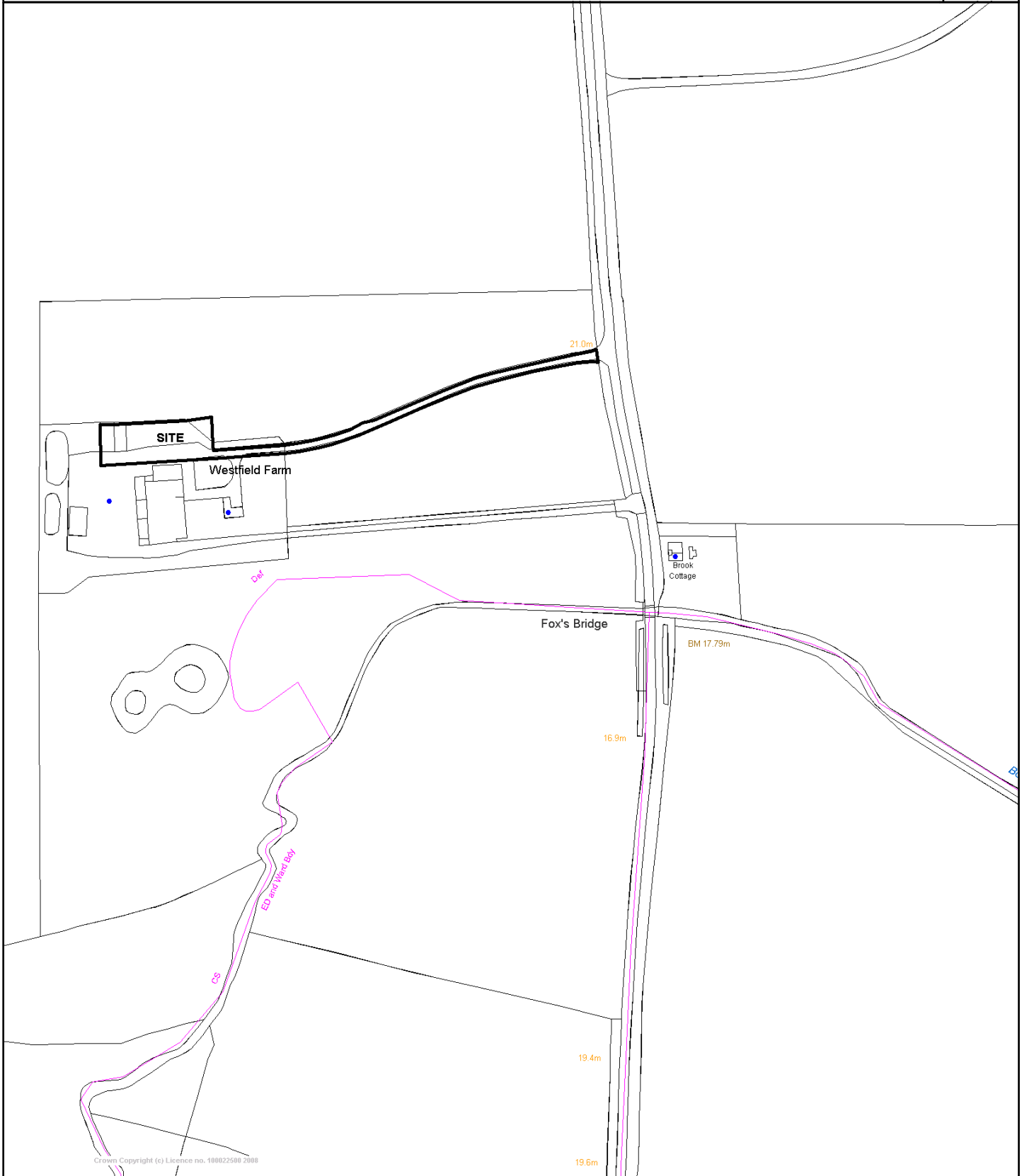
### **Departure Application**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application site is a residential dwelling comprised of converted agricultural buildings and an element of new build. The site lies within the Green Belt and is outside of the Development Framework on the South side of Comberton. There are two accesses to the site from the main road to the east with long drives leading to the buildings, which are situated approximately 200 metres from the road. The land levels on site are relatively flat. The main dwelling is a large two storey L-shaped building and there is a large detached, steel frame agricultural store building to the North West of the main house. The area around the buildings is largely laid to grass, although the area immediately to the front and rear of the main dwelling is compacted earth.
2. The application, received 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008, proposes the erection of a single storey detached garage building to the North East of the main house, the extension of the garden wall to the East of the main house to link with the proposed garage, and the installation of new gates adjacent to the garage. In addition, the existing large agricultural shed to the West of the proposed garage would be demolished.

#### **Relevant Planning History**

3. **S/1180/08/F** – Application for the erection of a garage, wall and gates was made on incorrect forms. Application has since been withdrawn.
4. **S/1716/04/F** – Planning permission was granted for the conversion and extension of the barn to a residential dwelling following the demolition of the existing dwelling, including swimming pool and tennis court.



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5. **S/0044/01/PNA** – Approval given for erection of the detached shed to the North West of the current dwelling. Permission given for the extension of the building in 2002 (**S/2009/02/F**) does not appear to have been implemented.

### **Planning Policy**

*South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Control Policies, adopted July 2007:*

6. **Policy DP/1 Sustainable Development** – 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. In particular, it should minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency.
7. **Policy DP/2 Design of New Development** – All new development must be of high quality design and, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, should preserve or enhance the character of the local area.
8. **Policy DP/3 Development Criteria** – Lists the requisites of new development to be provided as appropriate to the nature, scale and economic viability. Permission would not be granted for schemes which would have unacceptable adverse impact on residential amenity, from traffic generated or on village character.
9. **Policy GB/1 Development in the Green Belt** – There is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Cambridge Green Belt as defined on the Proposals Map. The main purpose of a Green Belt is to keep land open by placing a permanent and severe restriction on inappropriate development; therefore most types of development can only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with PPG2. Such exceptional circumstances will be regarded as Departures from the Development Plan and will only be permitted where other considerations outweigh the harm to the Green Belt. It is not sufficient justification to override Green Belt policies because a development would be inconspicuous or would not harm the site or locality.

### **Consultation**

10. **Comberton Parish Council** – has recommended refusal on the grounds that the extent and nature of the development would diminish the openness of the Green Belt and represents new residential development altering the character of the Green Belt.

### **Representations**

11. No representations have been received in respect of this application.

### **Planning Comments**

12. The main planning considerations in this case are the impact on the setting of the Green Belt and impact on the visual amenity of the area.

### ***Impact on the Green Belt***

13. As the proposed garage, walls and gates are not for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation and are not considered to be a limited extension, alteration or replacement of the existing dwelling, the development represents inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by Planning Policy

Guidance 2 – Green Belts (PPG2). Paragraph 3.2 of PPG2 states that "*inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*"

14. The applicant has submitted a statement of justification, which attempts to address the issue of harm by virtue of inappropriate development. They argue that the harm caused by the inappropriateness of the development is clearly outweighed by the benefit to the character and integrity of the Green Belt, which would be derived from the removal of the existing large and unsightly barn from the site and replacement with a significantly smaller and more sympathetic structure. The building to be demolished has a footprint of 170 sq m and a ridge height of 5.25m. The proposed garage has a footprint of 88 sq m and a ridge height of 5.0m.
15. It is considered that the proposed garage, walls and gates would have a more appropriate relationship to the main building than the existing shed, and that the net reduction of footprint and height would benefit the character and appearance of the Green Belt. In addition, as the garage would not extend as far to the North as the existing shed, and by virtue of its significantly smaller footprint it is considered that the openness of the Green Belt would be increased. It is considered that the proposed development therefore meets the demands of PPG2 and local Green Belt policy, and is therefore considered to be acceptable. Very special circumstances have been demonstrated to override Green Belt harm by reason of inappropriateness. A planning condition can require the demolition and removal of the shed, prior to the commencement of the proposed development. In these circumstances it would not be necessary to refer the application to the Secretary of State under The Town and Country Planning (Green Belt) Direction 2005.

#### ***Impact of the visual amenity of the area***

16. The proposed garage, walls and gates have been designed to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the main house. In addition, they are a significant distance from the public domain, and it is not considered that they would cause any harm to the visual amenity of the area. The removal of the large, unsympathetic shed towards the rear of the site is considered to benefit the appearance of the site as a whole in its wider visual context.

#### ***Impact on ecology***

17. The ecological impacts of development on the site have been addressed through previous applications and no further significant impacts would be associated with the demolition or construction proposed in this application.

#### **Recommendation**

##### **Conditions approve subject to:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.  
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development which have not been acted upon.)

2. No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building and structures hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason - To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
3. No development shall commence until the existing shed, shown as 'existing shed demolished' on drawing WS-FP-03, has been fully demolished and the materials removed from the site.  
(Reason – To ensure that the development has no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the visual appearance of the area in accordance with PPG2 and Policies GB/1, DP/2 and DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Control Policies, adopted July 2007
- Planning file references – S/1531/08/F, S/1180/08/F, S/1716/04/F, S/0044/01/PNA and S/2009/02/F

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