

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

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**S/1678/05/F – WESTON COLVILLE**  
**Erection of House and Garage and Carport for Existing Dwelling**  
**at Land Adj. 33 Mill Hill for Dr & Mrs N Coleman**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date for Determination: 28<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

**Notes:**

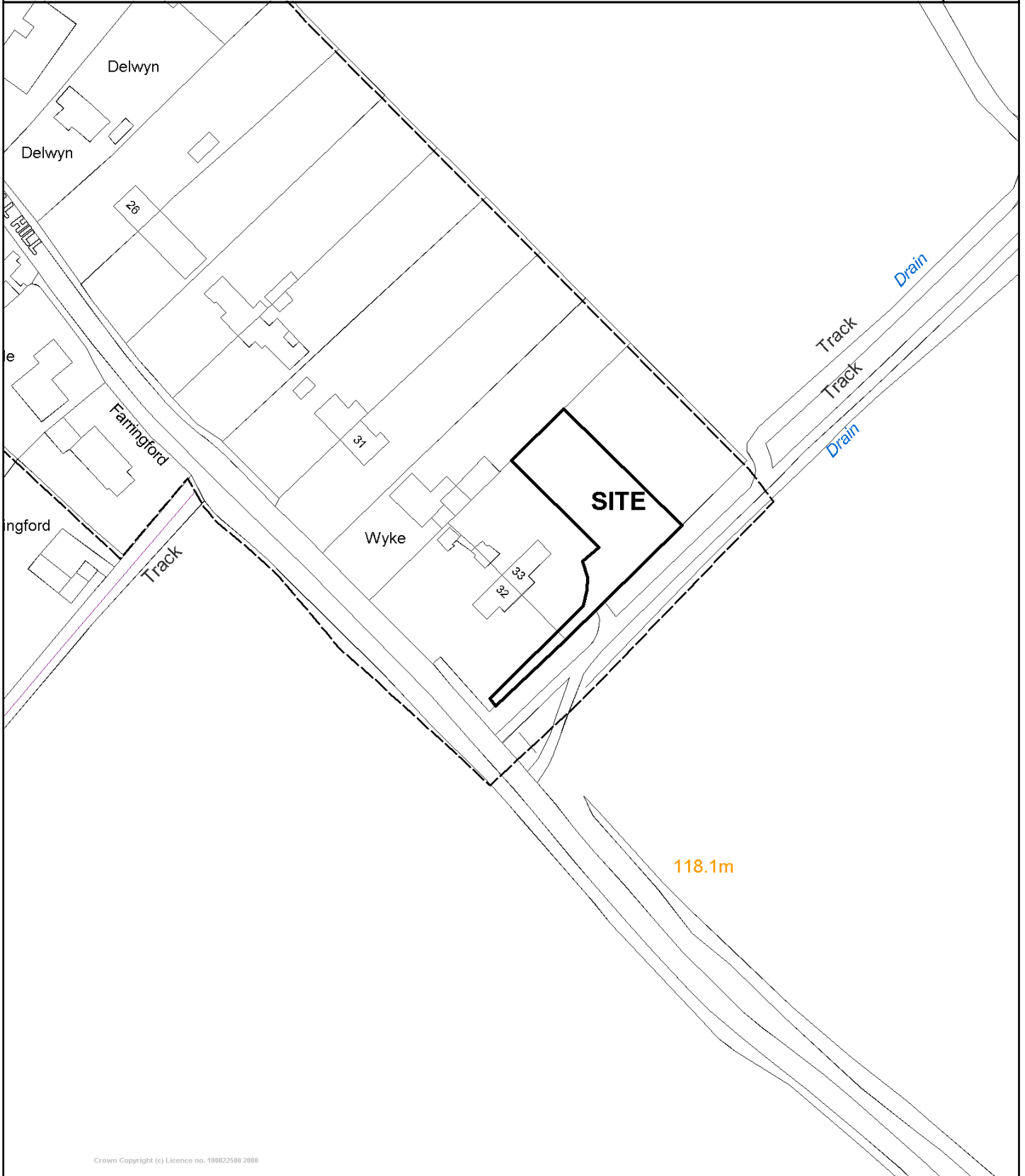
**This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the recommendation is contrary to the response of the Parish Council.**

**Site and Proposal**

1. The application site is a 0.08 hectare plot of land that forms part of the garden to No.33 Mill Hill, a substantial detached two storey red brick dwelling that is located just inside the village framework and is bounded to the north-east and south-east by agricultural land. The proposed plot comprises the south-western half of the garden nearest to the dwelling. The remainder of the garden to the north-east of the site has consent for a dwelling, which has been constructed.
2. The full application, submitted on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2005, seeks to erect a house and garage on the site. The dwelling would be a 2<sup>1/2</sup> storey (approximately 8.7 metre high) 5-bedroom property that would be oriented in a south-east/north-west direction. A detached double garage would be sited in front of the property and a single carport would also be constructed at the front of the existing dwelling. The density of the development equates to 12.5 dwellings per hectare.
3. The property would be a market dwelling, but the proposal involves the payment of a £77,000 commuted sum towards affordable housing, that would be secured by way of a Section 106 legal agreement. Initially, the application proposed the payment of a £35,000 sum. Following objections received from the Housing Development Manager, the proposed contribution was increased to approximately £61,500 (based on a formula used at another Authority and Housing Corporation Standards). The final sum of £77,000 was arrived at following an independent assessment/valuation carried out by Pocock and Shaw, in accordance with the Council's procedure guide on commuted sums.

**Background and Update**

4. Members may recall that this application was refused at Planning Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008, contrary to Officer recommendation. Members agreed the reason for refusal as being the omission of a commitment to provide any affordable housing in Weston Colville and the absence of any exceptional circumstances justifying an alternative approach to the provision of an affordable plot. Prior to issuing the Decision Notice, Officers were requested to re-examine with the valuers the viability



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Scale 1/1250 Date 16/12/2008

Centre = 562098 E 252893 N

January Planning Committee

of a market and affordable dwelling on the application site and, with Housing Officers, whether there would be any difficulty in delivering or managing one affordable dwelling on the site. A copy of the previous Committee report is attached as an appendix.

5. Initially, Pocock and Shaw were asked to advise on the following, with the commuted sum amounting to the difference between the two valuations:
  - (a) The value of the land (ie – No.33 Mill Hill's remaining garden) without an affordable housing contribution (ie – with permission for two detached houses as per the approved application reference S/1289/03/RM and the current proposal); and
  - (b) The value of the land with an on-site affordable housing contribution (ie – with permission for one detached market house as per S/1289/03/RM and one affordable dwelling on the current site)
6. Pocock and Shaw concluded that making the proposed plot available for an affordable dwelling would prove unviable, and advised that the commuted sum required in this instance amounted to £77,000.
7. Following Members resolution at the January 2008 Committee meeting, Pocock and Shaw were asked to advise whether developing the site itself with two dwellings (one market and one affordable), resulting in a total of three dwellings (two market and one affordable) being constructed within No.33 Mill Hill's garden, would produce a viable development. Pocock and Shaw advise that, as a site for two dwellings, the plot is relatively small. Development of the site would have a detrimental effect on the existing house and the new dwelling at the bottom of the garden. Fitting two houses onto the site, either as very narrow detached properties or as a pair of semi-detached houses, would have an even greater impact than the currently proposed dwelling. The value of the site for two small dwellings is, in today's market, probably no more than the value for a single large dwelling in March of last year, but the detrimental effect is greater and the net gain, on a totally unrestricted basis, is likely to be around £85,000. If one of the two plots were to be provided for an affordable house, the net gain would be reduced to around £10-15,000 and is therefore unlikely to be considered to be viable.
8. The Housing Section have also been asked to explore with Housing Associations whether there would be any difficulty in delivering or managing one affordable dwelling on the site. Responses have been received from Granta and Circle Anglia. Granta has indicated that it would be willing to purchase the proposed dwelling for a cost of £85,000. The applicant's agent has, however, stated that this would be unviable as the building costs alone would be significantly in excess of this figure. In addition, Circle Anglia has advised that, in the current financial climate, it would not be able to consider the acquisition of this dwelling, either for shared ownership or rent. In light of these responses, the Housing Section has commented that it would be sensible to accept a commuted sum in this instance.

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

9. Members resolved to refuse this application at Planning Committee a year ago on the basis that it would fail to provide any affordable housing in Weston Colville. The resolution at Committee also required Officers to further explore the viability of providing an affordable dwelling, and, with Housing Officers/Associations, the likelihood of an affordable unit coming forward on the site. Members considered that, if the provision of two houses (1 market and 1 affordable) on the application site

would produce a viable development, this would be the Council's preferred solution, and the current proposal would be unacceptable because it failed to provide an affordable unit on the site.

10. This further exploration has indicated that providing an affordable unit on the site as part of a larger three house scheme would prove to be unviable. In addition, two Housing Associations have been approached - Granta expressed an interest in the site but its offer was too low to provide a viable form of development, whilst Circle Anglia was unwilling to consider the site in the current economic climate.
11. In light of this indication that the provision of an affordable dwelling on the site, whether as part of a two or three house scheme, would not, in all likelihood, be delivered, Officers remain of the view that the application should be approved subject to the prior payment of the £77,000 contribution towards affordable housing.

### **Recommendation**

12. Subject to the prior signing of a Section 106 Agreement to secure the provision of a financial contribution of £77,000 towards affordable housing, approval:
  1. Sc1 – Time limited permission (Rc1);
  2. Sc13 – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc13);
  3. Sc5 – Landscaping (Rc5);
  4. Sc6 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc6);
  5. Sc12 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc12);
  6. 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 (Rc38)

### **Informatives**

#### **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 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.

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

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Local Development Framework 2007
- Planning application refs: S/1678/05/F, S/0358/04/F, S/1289/03/RM and S/2109/02/O

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