

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

6<sup>th</sup> May 2009

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

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### **S/0213/09/F – NEWTON**

**Change of Use from Post Office/Shop (A1) to Residential (C3) including Alterations and Extension at Newton Post Office, 11 Harston Road for Mr E Grey**

**Recommendation: Approval**

**Date for Determination: 13<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

#### **Notes:**

**This application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination as the Head of Development Control considers that this application should be presented to Committee for decision having considered the comments made by the Parish Council.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application site measures approximately 155m<sup>2</sup>. On it is a 1.5 storey detached building formerly used as a shop/ post office with first floor roof space. To the front of the building is a concrete car parking area. To the south east of the site is No 9, a 1.5 storey cottage with a driveway adjacent to the boundary fencing with the application site. No.9 has a rear facing dormer window and a single storey rear extension with patio doors facing the garden. To the northwest is No 11 (under the same ownership as the application site), a 2 storey detached house with openings/windows and sitting out area at the side facing the application site, and a shed set to the rear of the shop/ post office.
2. The full application, submitted on 16th February 2009 seeks permission to change the use from post office/shop (A1) to a two bedroom residential dwelling (C3) with extension and alterations. The alterations include adding 2 side dormer windows in the side elevations, changes to windows and openings with a first floor bedroom balustrade in the rear elevation and a bay window in the front elevation. The application site includes a piece of garden land from No 11 to form a small garden area measuring 6m (wide) by 4m (depth) for the proposed new dwelling with 1.8m high fencing to the boundaries.
3. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement and a Marketing Report.

#### **Planning History**

4. **S/0591/00/F** – Planning consent granted for Erection of House and Shop following Demolition of Existing

#### **Planning Policy**

5. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2007: ST/7** – Infill Villages



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Scale 1/1250 Date 17/4/2009

Centre = 543733 E 249502 N

May Planning Committee

6. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007**

- **DP/1** - Sustainable Development;
- **DP/2** - Design of New Development;
- **DP/3** – Development Criteria
- **DP/4** – Infrastructure and New Developments
- **DP/7** – Development Frameworks
- **HG/1** – Housing Density
- **ET/6** – Loss of Rural Employment to Non-Employment Uses
- **SF/1** – Protection of Village Services and Facilities
- **SF/10** – Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open space, and New Developments
- **SF/11** – Open Space Standards
- **TR/1** – Planning for More Sustainable Travel
- **TR/2** – Car and Cycle Parking Standards
- **NE/15** – Noise Pollution

**Consultations**

7. **Newton Parish Council** makes no overall recommendation. It states that as the applicant is a Parish Councillor, the remaining 4 Councillors were split 2-2. The comments of one of the Councillors opposed to the application stated 'If this application was for severance of an existing plot in Newton and therefore 'infill' development it would surely be refused. The plot is too small for a residential development, especially given its close proximity to adjacent housing. A residential development would be 24/7 a week occupation as opposed to the normal shop opening hours as the original approval was granted for the site. The proposed design of the 'house' is not in keeping architecturally with the village vernacular both in design elements, but also with its concrete forecourt and very limited rear private space. The building should remain as part of the original plot and at this stage other like uses be given more consideration.'

Those in favour thought it is best to be used rather than remain empty.

8. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** raises no objections in principle although does express concerns about potential noise disturbance to residents during the construction period. As such, it is recommended that condition and informatives be attached to any permission.

**Representations**

9. None from neighbouring residents

**Representations by the Applicant's Agent**

10. The agent confirms that pre-application advice had been sought and there was definitive information that if the property was advertised at a lower price for a further six months from 30 April 2008 and if no interest resulted, a planning application for change of use from shop/post office to a dwelling would be likely to receive officers' support.

## **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

11. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
  - a. Reduction in the level of service provision in the village;
  - b. The availability of alternatives with convenient access;
  - c. Economic viability;
  - d. Design details and layout;
  - e. Car parking; and
  - f. Residential amenity interests

### ***Reduction in the level of service provision in the village***

12. The property was the only shop/post office in the village of Newton until it closed in November 2006. The village has a public house, a public hall and a cricket ground. Although the shop/ post office is not the only village services and facilities in the village, it is considered that the nature of the services and facilities provided from a shop/ post office is different from the public house, public hall and cricket ground. The loss of the shop/ post office by changing its use to residential dwelling would cause a reduction in the level of an important service provision in this rural community.

### ***Availability of alternatives***

13. Given that there is no other shop within the village to provide same/ similar service, I consider that the established use would contribute to the provision of village services for the local population.
14. I have carefully considered the criteria set out in Policy SF/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2007 in determining the significance of the loss of village services.
15. The neighbouring villages around Newton are Harston, Little and Great Shelford, Whittlesford, Foxton and Thriplow; all of them have shops/ post offices. It is noted that the shops/ post offices at these nearby villages could not provide alternatives with convenient access by good local public transport services or by walking. The nearest village is Harston. It is approximately 1.4 miles from Newton. The presence of shop/ post office in Harston can provide an alternative with convenient access by cycling within reasonable distance. I consider that the presence of village service in the locality would meet paragraph 2b of Policy SF/1.

### ***Economic viability***

16. The submitted information provides marketing details. It is indicated that the premises has been marketed for 7 months between April and October 2006 at a price of £25000. The property was then marketed at a reduced price of £15000 between October and November 2006. On both occasions, these were for the ground floor only; the first floor office being retained for the vendor's use. The shop/ post office was closed in November 2006 but it was re-marketed from June 2008 to sell the closed business at the price of £15000. Having considered that there is a gap of 19 months (between December 2006 and May/June 2008) that the property had not been marketed, and it was marketed mainly at a higher price during 2006, I do not consider that the 8 months marketing period in 2006 would be sufficient in itself in relation to Policy SF/1 to establish that the loss of this service to the village is not significant.

17. I consider that the reduced price of £15000 would be a realistic price compared to £25000 given the current economic situation. The latest advertised period started from June 2008 and the marketing exercise had been stopped around the end of March 2009, a period of some 10 months.
18. It is noted that the latest marketing period does not meet a minimum of 12 months as required in paragraph of 2c of Policy SF/1. Nevertheless I have taken into account that the established use of the premises ceased in 2006, there is no objections from the Parish Council or local residents to the principle of the loss of the shop/ post office, and there is an alternative service within cycling distance at Harston and that the recent marketing period is close to 12 months. On balance therefore, the principle of a change of use from shop/post office to a dwelling is supported.

### ***Design details, layout and car parking***

19. The site measures 6m wide and 23m long. The south east elevation of the building would be set 1m from the boundary fencing shared with the neighbouring property, No 9 Harston Road. The north west elevation forms part of the common boundary with and set 2.7m from the side elevation of the existing dwellinghouse at No 11. I do not consider that the building is too close to adjacent dwellings. The proposed dwelling would include a small garden area measuring 6m (wide) by 4m (depth) with 1.8m high fencing to the boundaries. I do not consider the limited garden area provided in the proposal would warrant a refusal. Nor do I consider that the site is too small for a residential dwelling.
20. The dwellinghouses at Harston Road have various design and character; I do not consider that the alteration to the windows and openings of the existing building would cause adverse impact on street scene and the surrounding character.
21. The provision of car parking spaces to the front of the building would be sufficient to meet the car parking provision standard set out in Policy TP/2. Given that there is an existing concrete parking forecourt on site, I do not consider that the proposal would cause a harmful impact on highway safety and visual amenity.

### ***Residential amenity interests***

22. The addition of new windows and balustrade would not cause serious harm to residential amenity interests through undue loss of privacy. The rear facing bedroom opening would have a very oblique view to the sitting-out area and a secondary lounge window in the side elevation at No 11. The new dormer windows in the side elevations would serve a bathroom and landing area. One of the dormer windows would face the first floor landing window at No 9, and the other would be in an oblique angle to the first floor bedroom window at No 11, and having considered that the dormer windows would be high-level windows and could be fitted with obscured glass by condition, I do not consider that the addition of side dormer windows would cause serious harm or overlooking to neighbouring properties.
23. I do not consider that the change of use from shop/post to residential with the introduction of residential activity associated with a proposed dwelling in this location would result in significant noise or other disturbance to residents of neighbouring properties.

### ***Other material planning considerations***

24. The proposal would not cause serious harm in terms of the loss of rural employment, given the level of employment associated with the established use and the relatively small scale of the business.
25. The size of the site is approximately 0.0155 ha. The proposal represents a density of 65 dwellings per hectare. It would meet the housing density requirement (Policy HG/1). The proposal for 1 dwelling in this infill village would also meet Policy ST/7 (Infill Villages).
26. The applicants' agent is aware of the need to provide a contribution towards off site informal open space in accordance with Policies SF/10 and SF/11 of the South Cambridgeshire Development Control Policies DPD 2007. A two-bedroom dwelling would require an approximate sum of £2244.90 and the applicants are willing to make such a contribution.
27. In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed scheme is acceptable and the application is recommended for approval.

### **Recommendation**

28. Approve as amended by drawing numbers BP.01.09/1208/001A and MG99183.2A date stamped 4 March 2009.
29. Conditions
  1. Standard Condition1 - Full planning permission, time limit (3 years) (Reason - 1)
  2. SC63 – Grampian Condition – the provision of open space infrastructure, Policies SF/10 (Reason – open space, Policies SF/10 and DP/4)
  3. The proposed dormer windows in the side elevations of the building, hereby permitted, shall be fitted and permanently glazed with obscure glass. (Reason – To prevent overlooking of the adjoining properties in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
  4. SC30 Permitted development – windows (in the side elevations of the building at and above first floor level). (Reason –To prevent overlooking of the adjoining properties in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
  5. During the period of alteration and extension works, no power operated machinery shall be operated on the site before 0800 hours and after 1800 hours on weekdays and 1300 hours on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays and Bank Holidays, unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. (Reason – To minimise noise disturbance for adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
  6. The car parking area as shown on drawing number BP.01.09/1208/001A shall be provided before the dwelling hereby permitted is occupied and thereafter retained as such. (Reason – In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

### **Informatives**

During alteration and extension works 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:

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) 2007  
Planning application references S/0213/09/F and S/0591/00/F

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