

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

10th June 2009

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

S/0509/09/F- STEEPLE MORDEN/LITLINGTON

Erection of Restaurant Building with Ancillary Accommodation Following the Demolition of Existing Public House at the Horse and Groom, Baldock Road (A505) for Findlay Duthie Partnership

Recommendation: Approve

Date for Determination: 24th June 2009

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Local Member has referred it to Committee.

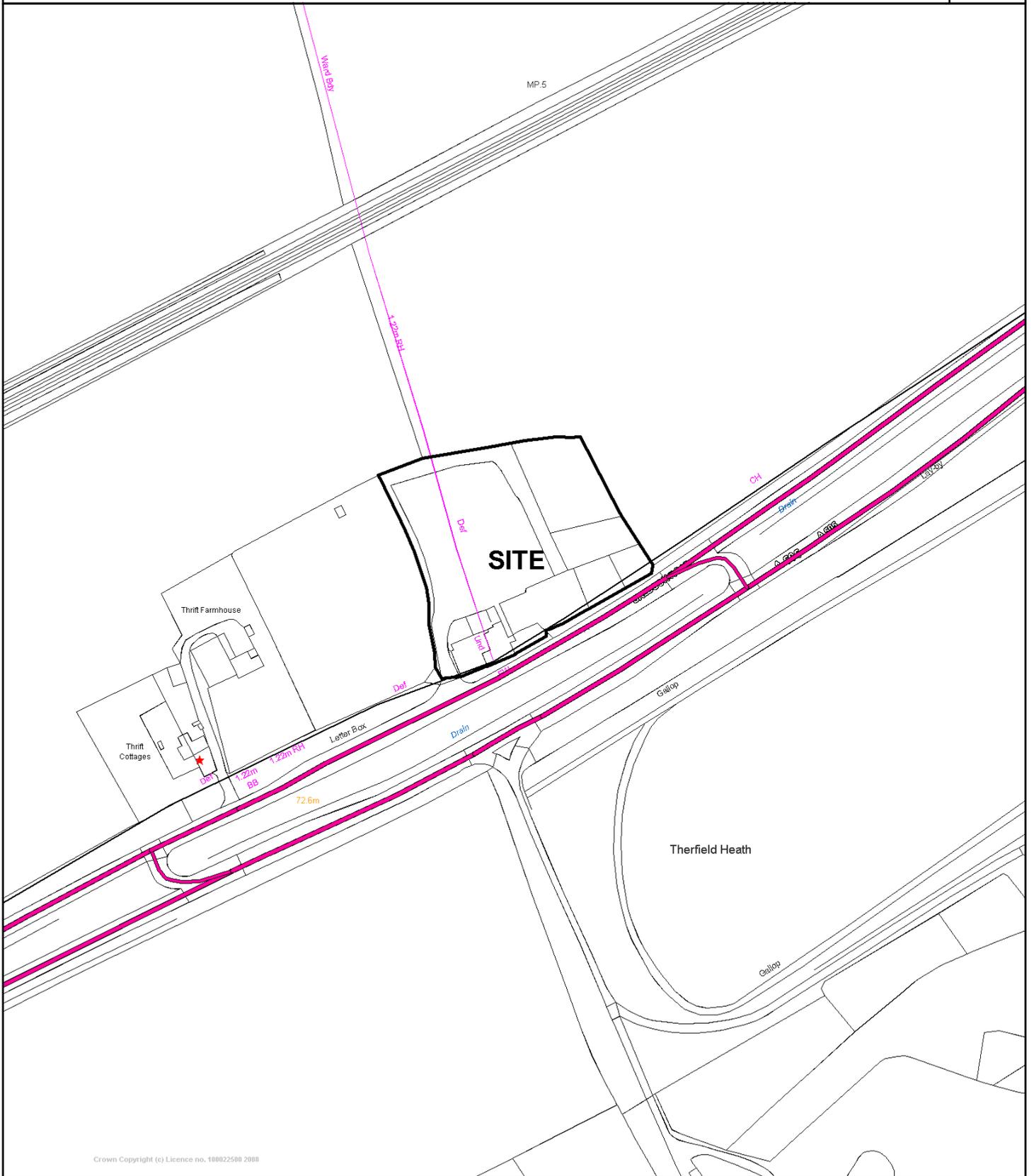
Members will visit this site on June 10th 2009

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.899 hectare site is located on the A505 road between Royston and Baldock, in the parishes of Litlington and Steeple Morden. It is a well-used route that provides a link between Cambridge and London, which is located approximately 35 miles to the south. It is located approximately 3 miles from Royston and 12 miles from Cambridge to the northeast. The site is situated outside of the designated village frameworks, and is currently laid predominately to concrete hardstanding, with an unused public house that has fallen in to disrepair. There is a single point of access to the west of the existing public house building.
2. The full planning application, received 30th April, proposes the demolition of the existing public house building and the erection of a replacement building with a 100% increased floor space. The height to the eaves is 8 metres and the building is to be located approximately 20 metres from the back of the highway.
3. The scheme follows informal discussions with the agent prior to the submission of the current application. Discussions were predominately based around agreeing an acceptable increase in size considering the two previously refused schemes and the policy wording that refers specifically to 'modest extensions'. A copy of the letter sent to the agent is attached as Appendix 1. This particular design was an improvement on an alternative scheme submitted, though it was agreed that it needed alterations. Design, outlook and materials were discussed at the Design Surgery and these comments were passed to the agent for consideration.

Planning History

4. **S/2115/06/F** proposed the erection of a 30-bedroom hotel following demolition of the existing public house premises. This application was refused and later withdrawn by the applicants at the Appeal stage.



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JUNE 2009 PLANNING COMMITTEE

5. **S/1922/06/F** proposed the erection of a 26-bedroom hotel demolition of the existing public house premises. This application was refused.

Planning Policy

6. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (Adopted July 2007):**

DP/1 (Sustainable Development)
DP/2 (Design of New Development)
DP/3 (Development Criteria)
DP/7 (Development Frameworks)
TR/1 (Planning for more Sustainable Travel)
ET/8 (Replacement Buildings In the Countryside)

7. **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions:** Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.
8. **Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations:** Advises that planning obligations must be relevant to planning, necessary, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and reasonable in all other respect.

Consultation

9. **Steeple Morden Parish Council** – Recommends that the scheme be refused for the following reasons:
 - (a) Proposed building is not of any architectural merit and out of scale and character with the area of best landscape
 - (b) Obtrusive when viewed from Therfield Heath
 - (c) Entrance and exit does little to enhance safety levels
 - (d) Dangerous road
 - (e) Incorrectly advertised – should be advertised as restaurant/hotel
 - (f) Concerned about the viability of neighbouring sites such as the Jester and Little Chef
 - (g) Concerned about the neighbouring field and SSSI
10. **Mr Oliver Heald MP** – No comments received at the time of writing this report (Members will be updated verbally of any comments at the meeting).
11. **Royston Town Council** – No comments at the time of writing the report (Members will be updated verbally of any comments at the meeting).
12. **Cambridgeshire Archaeology** – No comments at the time of writing this report (Members will be updated verbally of any comments at the meeting).
13. **North Hertfordshire District Council** – No comments at the time of writing this report. (Members will be updated verbally of any comments at the meeting).
14. **Environment Agency** – has raised concerns regarding foul water drainage and referred the applicant to DETR Circular 03/99 and has included a condition should the scheme be approved.

15. **Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services)** – has no objections to the scheme with reference to noise or environmental pollution.
16. **Local Highway Authority** – raises no objection (the road is within Herts County Council Area)
17. **Hertfordshire County Council** – comments that “the vehicle-to-vehicle inter-visibility from the present access to the A505 is to an acceptable standard and the proposed modification may be appropriate in principle.

However preliminary design details of the new access arrangements are required to establish that the design in principle is to highway standards. An engineering drawing should be prepared drawn to a suitable scale (1:500 or 1:200) to demonstrate the extent of re-profiling of the carriageway, visibility splays, approach angle and taper of entry, access width, carriageway cross falls and a scheme for the on-site and regulated discharge of surface water run-off drainage from the proposal.

Three copies of the preliminary design would then be submitted for approval to the highway authority where a Stage 1 Safety Audit would be commissioned to carry out the road safety implications of the scheme and to save time a technical design check would also be carried out simultaneously.”

18. **Cambridge Fire and Rescue Service** – have requested that if granted approval adequate provision should be made for fire hydrants by way of a S106 Agreement or planning condition.

Representations

19. Two representations have been received from the neighbouring cottages.
20. The occupiers of 1 Thrift Cottages are in support of the scheme and of the view that it would improve the site visually, would serve passing local residents and passing trade, and prevent the site from becoming a spot for fly tipping.
21. An email received from the occupiers of No 2 Thrift Cottages also supports the proposed scheme for similar reasons to those above.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

22. The key issues to consider during the determination of this application are:
 - (a) Impact on highway safety
 - (b) Impact on the character of the area

Highway Safety

23. The neighbouring Highway Authority have accepted the scheme in ‘principle’, although they require further technical information before making a recommendation as to whether the enhancement made to the access is acceptable for the proposed level of use. I am of the view that this matter is still unresolved. However, it has been suggested these details could be secured by condition and agreed prior to development commencing, and therefore would not prejudice a favourable determination of the application.

Impact on the Character of the surrounding area

24. The siting of the building in the centre of the site is considered an improvement to future development of the site, as the existing building is located very close to the road and visibility could be improved significantly with its removal. I am of the view the relocation of the building is acceptable and has minimal impact on the character of the area. This also provides an opportunity for new tree screening along the front boundary of the site, which is currently unkempt and in major disrepair, very close to the highway.
25. The proposed building would measure 8 metres in height to the ridge and would be acceptable in terms of height in this location. The unit does not have any immediate neighbours and therefore there does not threaten neighbour amenity.
26. The design of the building is not led by local character and nor does it use examples of local buildings in the vicinity. It is apparent that the architect has aimed to achieve a building of interest that is very different to those in the local area, focussing on creating large openings that have the best views across the neighbouring countryside. Internally it aims to create an interesting flow of useable space that can be enjoyed by large or small parties of people.
27. Personal views on the design of the building are subjective and though the Council's Urban Design Team has suggested alterations, it was agreed that the architect would proceed with the design as originally submitted. I am of the view that the design of the scheme is not unacceptable and the character of the building on the surrounding area is not adversely impacted by the erection of this building. New tree screening on boundaries would improve the site as a whole.

Recommendation

28. Approve, subject to the comments of outstanding consultations with conditions regarding implementation, highway safety, foul and surface water drainage, fire hydrants, landscaping and materials; plus any further conditions considered necessary by the awaited consultees.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions
- Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations
- Planning Files Ref: S/0509/09/F, S/2115/06/F & S/1922/06/F

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