

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation  
Control Committee

3<sup>rd</sup> November 2004

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

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### **S/1951/04/LB - Fulbourn Barn at Golden Gables, Sanders Lane, for R Poulter**

**Recommendation: Resolve to approve and send this recommendation to SoSE**

Members will visit the site on Monday 1 November 2004

Conservation Area

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The application relates to a Grade II Listed thatched barn within the curtilage of a bungalow dating from the 1950's. It is located within the Fulbourn Conservation Area. The barn originally formed an outbuilding to 8 Balsham Road (grade II Listed) but when the properties to Sanders Lane were developed the barn became an outbuilding to Golden Gables. The barn dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is aisled timber framed structure. It was a five bay barn with a half hipped thatched roof and weather boarding to the external walls. The building is located within 2 metres of the bungalow. It has authorised use as an ancillary domestic building – principally being used for storage.
2. In February 2004 following the snowfall two of the bays to the western end of the barn collapsed. The building has imploded with the roof falling into the building. The remaining three bays are standing but are considered to be in a dangerous state warranting the need for temporary works. Building Control is monitoring the site and has sought the removal of the collapsed section on safety grounds. An urgent works notice was to be served to seek the provision of scaffolding to make the barn safe in the short term but this has not been served as the works have been undertaken on behalf of the owner.
3. The application seeks the total demolition of the remaining three bays of the barn. The structure would have to be carefully dismantled. The land would be returned to garden amenity area.

#### **Planning History**

4. The bungalow appears to date from the 1960's and was granted permission for an extension in 1983 (S/0693/83/F). There have been no applications relating specifically to the barn.

#### **Planning Policy**

5. The Guidance in **Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 Planning and the Historic Environment** sets out three considerations to address in applications for demolition:
  1. The condition of the building and the cost of repairing/maintaining it.
  2. The efforts made to retain the building in use including sale of building.

3. Merits of alternatives for the site.
6. The site is within the village framework of Fulbourn as defined in the Local Plan 2004.
7. **Policy EN18 The demolition of Listed Buildings (Local Plan 2004.)**
8. This sets out that there is a presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings. Consent for demolition will not be granted other than in exceptional circumstances.
9. When assessing applications the following criteria are to be considered:
  1. The intrinsic value of the building
  2. The condition of the building
  3. The efforts made to keep the building or find a new use, if necessary, by putting the building for sale on the open market.
10. **Policy P7/6** of the Structure Plan 2003 aims to protect the Historic Built Environment.

### **Considerations**

11. As part of the submission the applicant has submitted a full condition survey for the surviving three bays of the barn. The collapsed two bays are considered to be beyond repair and the debris has been cleared away.
12. The conclusion is that the remaining barn is in a very poor condition with considerable areas of timbers in an advanced state of decay and rot. The barn is liable to imminent collapse and temporary support measures are proposed. It is concluded that the barn has come to the end of its useful life.
13. The costs of repairs are estimated to be in the region of £250,000, which would include the re-thatching, which would be c£60,000.

### **Consultation**

14. As the proposal is for total demolition the six main Statutory Historic Building consultees have been consulted including English Heritage.
15. Under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the application has to be referred to the Secretary of State for consideration, which would take place after the Committee has made a resolution.

### **Representations**

16. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** have requested that there are hours of working placed on the demolition, that no burning takes place on site and that a demolition notice is sought prior to demolition taking place. These matters are proposed to be dealt with by way of an informative on any consent issued.
17. **Councillor Scarr** the Local Member has requested the item was referred to Committee and was subject of a site visit. He has expressed concern at the loss of this building.
18. **English Heritage:** Having considered the condition of the remaining building and estimated costs of repair no objection is raised to the proposed demolition.

19. Any other comments received will be reported verbally.

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

20. The demolition is considered under the tests of PPG 15 and Policy EN18:

1. **Interest of building.**

The building is Listed in its own right. It originally formed part of the farm complex of 8 Balsham Road once known as Meldreth Farmhouse and its importance is part of the surviving historic fabric of this property. The barn has thus been separated from its original context and now forms part of the curtilage of the bungalow of Golden Gables. The barn is not easily viewed from public land and its contribution to the Conservation Area/street scene is limited.

2. **The Condition of the Building**

The building is in a very poor condition which has resulted in the total collapse of the two western bays and the remaining structure is considered to be in dangerous condition. The structural report submitted concludes that the majority of timber would need to be replaced if the building is to be retained. It will need to be rethatched and a new gable end wall formed. The safety measures now in place are necessary whether the building is retained or demolished.

3. **Efforts to retain the building.**

The proximity to the existing bungalow on the site acts as a constraint on any alternative use of the structure as does the means of access to the site. The building currently serves as an ancillary domestic storage building. With the loss of the two bays its continued use as storage and possibly garage facilities for the bungalow are not viable in terms of the costs of repair. The building is a Grade II Listed Building so that the only source of funding is likely to be from the Local Authority. With the repair costs of c £250,000 the level of grant funding which could be offered would not enable the owner to fund the cost of the repair works – even if the roof were to be redone in tin rather than thatch.

4. The merits of alternative uses have been discussed with the Area Planning Officer.

5. The site is surrounded by residential units and has a narrow access. The possibility of a commercial use of the barn is considered to have too great an impact on the residential amenities of the surrounding units in particular the bungalow of Golden Gables. The conversion of the structure to a residential use was also considered to be unlikely to receive officer support due to the close relationship with the surrounding residential units giving rise to concerns of overlooking. It is questionable if a satisfactory residential scheme could be achieved given the proximity to Golden Gables.

6. From a Listed Building point of view there is also the issue of the amount of physical alterations and works necessary for any new use. The resulting structure is likely to be almost all new build with little of the surviving fabric capable of reuse.

7. The structure has not been offered on the open market as in its current condition with all alternative uses raising planning and listed building concerns there seems little point to undertake such an exercise. The advice from Bidwells – the agents acting on behalf of the owners is that the building has no market value – the structure lacks any land around it or outstanding views.
8. The owners of the barn do not wish to sell the land but retain it as part of their garden area possibly seeking permission for the erection of a replacement shed/garage.
9. The demolition of a Listed Building is always the last option when all other options and the condition of the fabric/ costs of the works have been considered. Regrettably in this instance the structure is considered to be beyond viable repair/reuse. The building has slowly deteriorated over some considerable time to a point where it is beyond economic repair. It is not considered that this has been done deliberately to enable any development on the site. The building was until the point of collapse in use by the owners but the low key domestic storage use has precluded any major investment in the structure.
10. The constraints of the location of the building combined with the overall condition of the building are considered to justify in this case the demolition of the structure.
11. A drawn and photographic recording of the remaining structure prior to the dismantling and salvaging of any timbers which could be reused would be required if demolition is agreed.

### **Recommendation**

To refer the item to the Secretary of State with a recommendation to Grant Listed Building Consent for the total demolition of the building.

### **Suggested Conditions**

1. The works to which this consent relates shall be started not later than the expiration of six months beginning with the date of this decision notice.  
Reason: The dangerous condition of the structure is such that the works should be undertaken as soon as possible, once the provisions of the other conditions/informatives have been complied with.
2. The listed building shall be fully recorded by an archaeologist or architectural historian before and during the works to dismantle the structure by means of drawings, photographs and a written report to meet the criteria of Level 2 of the English Heritage (Formerly RCHME) specification for recording buildings. Three copies of the final, completed report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within six months of the completion of the works.  
Reason: To ensure that the listed building is properly recorded both before and during the demolition works.
3. English Heritage, East of England Region, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 2BU shall be notified before the works commence and given at least one month to enter the building and record it or within that period indicate that it has either completed the record or does not wish to record it.

Reason: To ensure English Heritage is allowed the required access to the building to record the structure if they wish to undertaken this.

4. Where possible the main timber frame members which are in a condition to warrant salvaging shall be carefully dismantled labelled and set aside during the dismantling process. The location for the reuse of these timbers shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the salvaging of any of the historic frame in a suitable condition and to control where these timbers are reused for the records.

### **Informatives**

Before the structure is demolished a Demolition Notice will be required from the Environmental Health Department of the District Council establishing the way in which the property will be dismantled, including the removal or treatment of the resulting waste and the hours of the working operation.

### **Reasons for Approval**

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
  - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:** P7/6 (Historic Built Environment);
  - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: EN18**
2. In this case the demolition is considered to be justified as the tests of PPG 15 and Policy EN18 have been applied and the poor condition of the building and the constraints on reusing the structure are considered to justify the demolition in this case.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: S/1951/04/LB, County Structure Plan 2003, South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 and Planning Policy Guidance 15.

**Contact Officer:** Charmain Hawkins Historic Building Officer  
Telephone: (01954 713178)