

## 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/1798/04/F - Highfields Caldecote House and Garage on Land adjoining 2 & 8 East Drive, Caldecote**

#### **Recommendation: Refusal**

Members will visit this site on 1 November 2004

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The 1.7 hectare (4.2 acre) site has a 25m wide frontage along East Drive and surrounds the site area for planning application S/1797/04/F, with a 4m wide access track to the side of No. 8 East Drive. The site is roughly rectangular in shape, with a depth of 425m. The site lies on the east side of East Drive (which is an unmade, single width track and a public bridleway) between the bungalow at No. 8 and a dwelling at No. 2. It is currently rough grassland. Fields extend to the east. The new development by Banner Homes along Blythe Way is located on the western side of East Drive but accessed from Highfields Road. The front 85m section of the site is adjacent to the eastern edge of the village framework of Highfields Caldecote as defined in the Local Plan, with the remaining length of 340m within the countryside.
2. This full application, received on the 25 August 2004, proposes the erection of a four-bedroom house and garage with vehicular access off East Drive. The house is of chalet design with a 7m high ridge and 2.5m high eaves, with a front gable and front, rear and side dormers. The dwelling is setback approximately 15m from East Drive. The front garage measures 6.6m in width and 8.9m in length (not including the roof overhang), with a ridge height of 6.3m. The density equates to 0.6 d/hectare.

#### **Planning History**

3. On 10 June 2003 outline planning permission was given for the erection of one dwelling on a site measuring 48m in width and 85m in length, covering the front 85m section of the proposed plot (**Ref: S/0402/02/O**). It is noted that this application was amended, prior to approval, to reduce the site area to land within the village framework only and to reduce the number of proposed dwellings from two to one.
4. It is noted that a full planning application has been conjointly lodged for a house and garage on the adjacent plot (**Ref: S/1797/04/F**). (see previous agenda item.)

#### **Planning Policy**

5. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") states that development will be restricted in the countryside unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.

6. **Policy P1/3** of the County Structure Plan requires a high standard of design for all new development that responds to the local character of the built environment.
7. **Policy P5/5** of the County Structure Plan states that small-scale housing developments will be permitted in villages only where appropriate, taking into account the need for affordable rural housing, the character of the village and its setting, and the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport provision in the immediate area.
8. **Policy SE4** of the Local Plan identifies Highfields Caldecote as a Group Village. This policy states that residential development up to a maximum scheme of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework provided that the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; and the development would be sensitive to the character of the village and the amenities of neighbours.
9. **Policy SE8** of the Local Plan states that residential development outside of the village frameworks will not be permitted.
10. **Policy SE9** of the Local Plan specifies “development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the Countryside.”
11. **Policy HG7** of the Local Plan provides for up to 50% of the total number of dwellings for which permission may be given in settlements with a population of 3,000 or fewer to be affordable provided there is a clearly identified local need and subject to factors such as proximity to local services; access to public transport; the particular costs associated with the development; and whether or not the provision of affordable housing would prejudice other planning objectives warranting greater priority in the particular case.

### **Consultation**

12. **Caldecote Parish Council** – Recommendation of approval
13. **Councillor Marklew** – Has verbally supported the planning application and requested a site visit by Councillors.
14. **Local Highway Authority** – Comments to be verbally reported.
15. It is noted that the Local Highway Authority originally objected to the outline application for two dwellings on part of the site area for applications S/1797/04/F and S/1798/04/F in 2003, on the grounds that East Drive at its junction with Highfields Road is unsuitable in its present form to cater for additional traffic that is likely to be generated by further residential development. After an amendment was received, reducing the number of proposed dwellings to one, it commented that it would be difficult to sustain an objection on highway grounds if only one dwelling was proposed.
16. **Environment Agency** – No objection, subject to a surface water drainage condition being imposed.
17. **County Access and Bridleway Officer** – No objection but note that the site is accessed via a public bridleway which should remain unobstructed at all times.

18. **The Countryside Services Team at the County Council** raises no objections. However, it points out that several bridleways surround the sites for applications S/1797/04/F and S/1798/04/F and outlines that the bridleways must not be used for access to the site unless the applicant is sure that they have lawful authority to do so and that it is an offence under Section 34 of the Road Traffic Act to drive on a public bridleway. They add that the bridleways must remain open and unobstructed across their full widths at all times, and that building materials must not be stored on them, or contractor vehicles parked on them and that it is an offence under Section 137 of the Highways Act to obstruct a public right of way.
19. **British Horse Society** – No comment
20. **Ramblers** – Concerned that the proposal may lead to the obstruction of the bridleway to the front of the site, that the surface of the bridleway may be disturbed by increased traffic to the site and that signage on the bridleway may be obscured or damaged.

### **Representations**

21. None received.

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

22. The main issue to be considered is whether the principle of development in this position is acceptable, and if so, whether the detailed design and siting submitted are suitable.

### **Principle of Development**

23. Although this application has been submitted as a single plot development, the location and common ownership of the adjacent land on which another single plot development has been submitted (Ref: S/1797/04/F), means that these applications effectively represent a two plot development that should be jointly considered in terms of impacts on highway safety and Council's affordable housing policy.
24. Although, the principle of erecting a dwelling between No. 2 and 8 East Drive has been previously accepted, by the prior approval of outline planning application S/0402/02/O), I am of the view that the erection of two dwellings in this position would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety along East Drive. The Local Highways Authority has previously commented that East Drive is a narrow track with an extremely poor junction with Highfields in terms of access geometry. This junction is unsuitable in its present form to cater for additional traffic that is likely to be generated by further residential development. The track does not have the benefit of separate pedestrian facilities or street lighting.
25. Both applications S/1997/04/F and S/1998/04/F for two dwellings beside each other in common ownership have no affordable housing component, with no attempt made to justify the lack of affordable housing provided, contrary to policy HG7 of the Local Plan.
26. Furthermore, the application involves a 340m intrusion into the surrounding countryside, to form part of the residential garden of plot 2. The length of the plot is out of character with surrounding development, would involve a loss both Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land and would have an adverse impact on the local landscape. The simple, open character of the field outside the village framework,

enclosed by hedges, is considered to be important as it emphasises the containment of residential development on the eastern edge of Highfields Caldecote. The conversion of the field to domestic garden will result in a loss of this important characteristic, creating the potential for the introduction of inappropriate domestic garden features and planting. The result would be the apparent sprawl of residential development into the wider landscape which would be a significant and unfortunate impact.

### **Design of Proposed Dwelling**

27. The proposed 18.5m wide dwelling when viewed in conjunction with the front detached garage virtually fills the width of the plot and is out of character with the general pattern of development along East Drive of detached dwellings on spacious plots. The site is considered to be more closely related to the pattern of development along East Road in terms of size of plot, access and semi-rural aspect than new residential development along Blythe Way, to the west of the site. The height of the proposed dwelling and garage (7.0m and 6.3m respectively) is also out of character with the lower height of adjacent properties along East Drive. It is noted that the ridge height of the garage on this plot is above the ridge height of both No. 2 and 8 East Drive.
28. The proposed garage by virtue of its height, scale and position to the front of the dwelling is also considered to form an unduly dominant feature in the streetscene, out of the character with the surrounding pattern of setback from East Drive.
29. I am of the view that the scale of the proposed dwelling and garage is inappropriate for its location at the eastern edge of the village framework of Caldecote, and in conjunction with the proposed long rear garden would create a more developed and urbanised character for this section of East Drive, contrary to the intention of providing a transition between settlements and surrounding countryside, so as to protect the visual amenities of land within the countryside.

### **Recommendation**

30. Refuse

### **Reasons for Refusal**

1. East Drive and its junction with Highfields is unsuitable in its present form to cater for the additional traffic that is likely to be generated by further residential development.
2. The proposal forms one half of a two-plot development on adjacent sites on land under the same ownership. No provision is made in the proposal for the provision of affordable housing, contrary to policy HG7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
3. The proposed dwelling and garage by virtue of its width, height and massing is out of character with the surrounding pattern of development of dwellings along East Drive of detached dwellings of lower height on spacious plots. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and Policy SE4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which requires new development to respond to local character of the built environment.
4. The proposed rear garden extends 340m outside of the village framework of Highways Caldecote and involves the change of use of agricultural land to domestic garden. This change of use would adversely affect the visual amenities of the

surrounding countryside and the simple, rural landscape of this area, which is important for containing residential development on the eastern edge of Highfields Caldecote. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy SE9 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2004.

5. The design of the proposed dwelling and garage by virtue of its height and bulk is not appropriate for its location on the village edge of Highfields Caldecote and does not contribute to the aim of creating a transition between the village settlement and the surrounding countryside. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy SE9 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which requires development on village edges to be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of the development on the surrounding countryside,
6. The proposed garage by virtue of its height, massing and position to the front of the dwelling, creates an unduly dominating frontage feature that is out of character with the pattern of setback from East Drive. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and Policy SE4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which requires new development to respond to local character of the built environment.

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

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004  
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003  
Planning File Refs: S/1798/04/F, S/1797/04/F and S/0402/02/F

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