

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

1<sup>st</sup> December 2004

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

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### **S/2153/04/F - Litlington**

### **Change of Use of Land to Garden Land and Retention of Garden Room (Retrospective Application), 2 Manor Farm Barns and Land Adjoining, Cockhall Lane, for Ms C Romeyer and Mr R Kennedy**

#### **Recommendation: Approval**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. Number 2 Manor Farm Barns is one of a trio of residential dwellings that have been created through the conversion of former barns. The site lies on the edge of the Litlington village framework and abuts the Conservation Area. To the north west of number 2 there is an area of meadowland that is under the ownership of the applicants but does not form a part of their residential curtilage. Unlike the dwelling's curtilage this meadowland falls outside of the village framework and within the Conservation Area. Aside from the other Manor Farm Barns the closest residential properties are those of Cockhall Close to the southeast and a pair of listed cottages to the northeast.
2. This full planning application received 21<sup>st</sup> October 2004, is for a garden room that has been built without the required formal consent of the Local Planning Authority. It is therefore retrospective. The garden room is a single story 'L' shaped structure, with weatherboarding and a natural slate roof. As the garden room has been built on part of the aforementioned meadowland this application also proposes the change of use of the area of land on which the structure sits. The building has a footprint of 33 sq.m.
3. The garden room would have required formal consent as it falls outside of the property's residential curtilage, it also falls within the Conservation Area and has a cubic volume greater than 10 cubic metres. Even if the garden room had been sited within the property's residential curtilage it would still have required formal consent as the permitted development rights for the erection of such structures was removed as a condition of the barns' planning consent.

#### **Planning History**

4. **S/0225/95/F** – Planning consent granted for the conversion of the barns into three dwellings, at which time permitted development rights were removed under Part 1 and Part 2 of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

**S/0219/95/LB** – Listed Building consent granted for part demolition, alterations, extensions and conversion of barns to three dwellings, together with demolition of storage buildings.

#### **Planning Policy**

5. **Policy P1/2 'Environmental Restrictions on Development'** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 states that development in the countryside should be essential in a particular rural location.
6. **Policy SE9 'Village Edges'** of the Local Plan 2004 states development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact on the countryside.
7. **Policy HG12 'Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings within Frameworks'** of the Local Plan establishes that proposals for the alteration or extension of dwellings should have regard to the issues of scale, design, materials and the degree of impact on surrounding properties and the street scene.
8. **Policy EN30 'Development in Conservation Areas'** of the Local Plan states that proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### **Consultation**

9. **Litlington Parish Council** recommends refusal of the application due to the fact that the development lies outside the village boundary.

**The Conservation Manager** has no objection to the application stating:

10. The structure forms a sense of freestanding outbuildings to the perimeter of the main barns, including the garage block to numbers 1 and 2. It is constructed of materials complementary to the barns. The form and scale is subservient to the main barns.
11. This part of the Conservation Area includes the open fields between this site and the church. The barns sit at the top of a promontory, the land falling down towards the church. The meadow area includes mounding which helps buffer the site together with a group of trees to the south east of the structure. It is noted that the greenhouse has been removed. It is not considered that the siting and form of this structure harms the appearance of the Conservation Area, and would not be contrary to Policy EN30.
12. It is regrettable that this is retrospective as the site abuts a known site of a Roman villa, and it is probable an archaeological condition would have been required, however such an opportunity has been lost.

### **Representations**

13. A letter of support has been received from the residents of The Southerly Barn, Cockhall Lane. They state that the applicants have transformed an unkempt, unsightly and weed-ridden piece of land and enhanced the appearance and visual enjoyment of the area. They also state that the garden room replaces a tumbledown building, which significantly improves the visual appearance and blends very well with the barns.
14. A letter has been received from the resident of Walnut House, Cockhall Lane. The writer states that he has no objection to the application but thinks that it would be a sensible compromise for planning consent to be granted for a change of use of the area containing the garden house, and to retain agricultural classification for the remainder of the land.

## Planning Comments – Key Issues

15. Prior to the submission of this application a large greenhouse had also been erected on the meadowland together with the garden room. The greenhouse has since been dismantled and does not form a part of this application. The area of the meadowland that would become garden land as a result of this application is the land directly beneath the garden room. Planning officers have raised questions about the accuracy of the red line on the block plan as it does not appear to follow the existing hedge. A clarification of this matter will be requested of the agent and further information will be made available to members. Although the meadowland has been tidied up it does not form a part of the residential curtilage, and will not as a result of this application become garden land.
16. The garden room does not impact upon the amenities of any of the surrounding properties, and the distance of the development from the listed cottages means that it has no impact upon their setting. The choice of materials used helps it to blend in with the main barns and their existing outbuildings. This use of matching, natural, materials is in compliance with Policy EN30 of the Local Plan. Similarly the Conservation Manager has stated that the garden room does not harm the setting or appearance of the Conservation Area. The Parish Council has made no reference to the development being detrimental to the character or setting of the Conservation Area.
17. The reason given for the Parish Council's recommendation of refusal is due to the fact that the development is located outside of the Litlington village framework. Although the garden room is technically located in the countryside its proximity to the main barns does not make it appear incongruous. It also has a strong ancillary relationship with a residential site within the village framework. The low height of the structure and the materials used help to reduce the visual impact of the structure on the open countryside, especially when seen against the backdrop of the main barns and their outbuildings.

## Recommendation

18. Approval

### Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE9 (Village Edges), Policy HG12 (Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings within Frameworks), Policy EN30 (Development in Conservation Areas)

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

County Structure Plan 2003  
South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004  
Planning application file S/2153/04F

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