

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation
Control Committee
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

1st December 2004

S/1966/04/RM - Steeple Morden Erection of 5 Dwellings, Land at The Mill, Ashwell Road, for Hasler (HTC) Ltd

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Site and Proposal

1. This application, as amended by drawings received 12th November 2004, seeks reserved matters consent for the siting, design, means of access and landscaping in respect of the erection of five dwellings on land extending to 0.32ha to the north of The Mill, Ashwell Road, Steeple Morden.
2. The site was previously used in part as a waste transfer station. That use has now ceased although a large brick industrial style building remains on the site. To the south the site abuts the residential garden of The Mill, Ashwell Road, and to the east the long rear gardens of properties in Station Road. To the west is agricultural land, with long distance views of the site being afforded from a public footpath. To the north of the site is land owned by the applicant with outline consent for residential development (see History below). Access to the site is via an existing roadway along the eastern boundary of the site, which also serves the existing dwelling. The site contains a Grade II Listed Stock Windmill at the rear of the existing house.
3. As amended the application proposes five detached dwellings. Plot 1, which is located in a similar position on the site to the existing brick industrial building, is a 4-bedroom house with a main ridge height of 7.7m with an attached double garage with bedroom above on its eastern end which has a ridge height of 6.3m. As amended the front elevation is barn like in character with a plain façade and five rooflights lighting the first floor accommodation.
4. Plot 2 is a 4-bedroom house with a main ridge and garage roof height similar to that of Plot 1. Plots 3 and 4, on the west side of the site are detached barn like structures, both with 4 bedrooms, with a main ridge height of 7.6m. Each dwelling is provided with a linked single garage and car port to the front. As amended Plot 5 comprises a detached 3-bedroom cottage with a ridge height of 7.5m. Two parking spaces are provided at the front of the plot.

Planning History

5. In December 2001 outline planning consent was granted for the erection of 5 dwellings on the site. A condition attached to the consent required that, prior to the submission of reserved matters, a scheme, which should include a timetable for implementation of any works agreed, for the proposed treatment of the external fabric of the Grade II Listed Stock Windmill; for the internal boundaries of the application site in relation to the stock windmill; the landscape treatment of the site in relation to the setting of the stock windmill and; the means of access to the stock windmill, shall

be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. (Ref: S/1774/01/O).

6. In 2002 outline consent was granted for residential development on a further area of land to the rear of the current application site, but accessed through it. Under that consent the applicants put forward a Section 106 Agreement in respect of The Mill. (Ref: S/0843/01/0).

Planning Policy

7. **Policy P7/6** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") states that Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
8. **Policy SE4** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") identifies Steeple Morden as a group village where residential development and redevelopment up to a maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework subject to specified criteria.
9. **Policy HG10** of the Local Plan states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs.
10. **Policy SE9** of the Local Plan states that development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development in the countryside.
11. **Policy EN28** of the Local Plan 2004 seeks to preserve the setting of Listed Buildings. It states that the District Council will resist and refuse applications which would dominate the Listed Building or its curtilage buildings in scale, form, massing or appearance; would damage the setting, well-being or attractiveness of a Listed Building; would harm the visual relationship between the building and its formal or natural landscape surroundings or; would damage archaeological remains of importance unless some exceptional, overriding need can be demonstrated, in which case conditions may be applied to protect particular features or aspects of the building and its setting.
12. **Policy Steeple Morden 1** includes the application site as part of a larger area of land that is allocated for residential development. However, it states planning permission will only be granted for a scheme which (a) results in the relocation of the existing waste transfer station, (b) is accompanied by measures to ensure that full internal and external structural repair of the grade II listed stock mill is undertaken and c) provides sufficient open space around the mill to permit a reasonable appreciation of its original setting, including removal of the present brick wall partly surrounding the building. Reinforcement of the boundary hedge along the western boundary of the site will also be required.
13. **Planning Policy Guidance Note 15** at para 2.16 and Annex C considers development affecting the setting of Listed Buildings. This refers to the setting of a Listed Building having its character robbed by a particular grouping of buildings.

Consultation

14. **Steeple Morden Parish Council** recommends refusal. Its detailed comments are attached as Appendix 1. Comments on the amended drawings will be reported verbally.
15. The **Conservation Manager** comments in respect of the original submission that he has considered the proposal in terms of its impact on the setting of the Mill; the impact on the setting of the village given the site abuts open countryside and is visible from the footpath network in the locality; and how this will lead to the refurbishment of the Mill.
16. He states that broadly the development follows the layout of the outline consent with the main difference being the separation of the units so that they are all now detached which it is understood is to enable the scheme to proceed as self-build.
17. Units 3 and 4 are designed to have the form of an agricultural building complex and although detached are in close proximity. The ridge height of these units is 7.5 metres which is considered acceptable. The design and form of Units 2, 3 and 4 is considered acceptable and the distance of these units from the Mill is such that they are not considered to harm the setting of the Listed Building.
18. The location of Units 1 and 5 means that these units have a direct relationship with the Mill, creating a new physical context or setting for the Listed Building. Plot 1 is viewed up the driveway to the site and there is currently an industrial brick structure on the site. The design as originally submitted is felt to detract from the approach and setting of the Mill by reason of the suburban residential form proposed for this building which fundamentally changes the character of the site. A simple barn format with the principle fenestration to the rear is encouraged, with only small openings on the front elevation and no decorative elements as found on the front projecting gable.
19. Plot 5 has the closest relationship to the Mill. The creation of a fake cottage has no precedent in this location and is not supported, as it will fundamentally alter the visual status of the Listed Building suggesting an historical and functional role which did not exist. The design of this unit should take the form of an ancillary outbuilding - one of a group of 'mill' buildings rather than a dwelling with an individual identity as a mill house. The rear garden room element should be deleted to reduce the footprint of the unit and the design simplified.
20. The details do not denote the boundary treatments for the overall site, which are an important consideration and need to be submitted for consideration at this stage.
21. Refusal of the application is recommended as originally submitted.
22. The revised drawings follow discussions with the Conservation Manager and his further comments will be reported to the meeting.
23. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** requests a condition restricting the hours of operation of power driven machinery during the construction period. Should driven pile foundations be proposed a statement of the method of construction should be submitted and agreed. There should be no bonfires or burning of waste on site without prior consent.
24. The **Local Highway Authority** comments that this development of five new residential units plus the existing house should be served by an adoptable road (and if the future extension of a further five units is to be realised it is strongly recommended that an adoptable road be provided). The need to retain an access

road of any greater width than 5m is questioned. Is there an overriding need (such as a business use within the existing house)? If the road is to remain, the access should be a simple crossing of the footway, i.e. no radius kerbing or break in the footway.

25. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** confirms that additional water supplies for firefighting are not required.
26. The comments of the **Environment Agency** and **Trees and Landscapes Officer** will be reported verbally.

Representations

27. Letters have been received from residents of Nos. 10, 12, 20 and 22 Ashwell Road objecting to the application on the following grounds:
28. Traffic – This is a major concern and presently traffic using Ashwell Road consists of a large number of vehicles, especially in the morning, with vehicles turning into Ashwell Road from Station Road to leave the village, many cutting the corner and accelerating immediately afterwards. The extra houses are a recipe for disaster. Is the roadway to remain private or will it be adopted, and will there be street lighting? The additional traffic will result in noise, dirt and air pollution to neighbouring properties.
29. Privacy – There is concern that the house on Plot 1 will look directly at the rear of No10 Ashwell Road, with unrestricted views into the rear gardens. The occupiers of 22 Station Road is concerned that a larger dormer window above the garage of Plot 2 will look into their rear garden and ask that it be switched to the front of the house thereby leaving two small velux type windows in the rear. The occupiers of 12 Ashwell Road object to the position of the windows in the front elevation of the roof of the garage on Plot 1 stating that bedroom 2 already has a large dormer window in the rear elevation. The window for the en-suite bathroom could be positioned on the rear roof area or on the side elevation, therefore making the front windows unnecessary. The current position of this dwelling causes overlooking and loss of privacy to back bedrooms, conservatory and full length of garden.
30. Sewerage – Will the existing sewers be able to deal with the additional demand from these houses and the proposed further development?
31. Build Times – It is understood that the applicant will manage the project and there is concern about the level of noise and lack of consideration that may take place for local residents at weekends.
32. Design of the Buildings – There is concern regarding the height and colour of the roofs of the five plots and how they might affect views of the windmill.
33. Site Boundaries – There is no reference to proposed treatment of site boundaries.
34. Windmill – The enhancement of the windmill is to be welcomed in preference to the waste transfer station.
35. Comments on the amended drawings are awaited.

Applicant's Representations

36. A copy of a report submitted in support of the application is attached as Appendix 2.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

37. Given that outline consent exists for the erection of 5 dwellings on this site the key issue to be considered with this application are whether the siting and design of the proposed dwellings are acceptable having regard to the setting of the Grade II Listed Building, the location of the site at the edge of the village framework, and the amenity of adjacent residents. It is also important to ensure that the application secures the measures to ensure renovation and preservation of the mill, as envisaged by the outline consent and Local Plan allocation.
38. The comments of the Conservation Manager on the revised scheme will be reported at the meeting. No objections have been raised to the design of the proposed houses on Plots 2,3 and 4. The revised details for Plots 1 and 5, which have the greatest effect on the setting of the Mill, have been discussed with the Conservation Manager prior to submission.
39. Long distance views of the site are obtained from the Ashwell Road when approaching the village from the west and from the public footpath network in the area. I am of the view that the barn like approach adopted for Plots 3 and 4 and the design of Plot 5, and the height of these units, is acceptable. The layout allows for additional planting on the western boundary of the site which will help soften the impact of the development on the adjacent countryside.
40. With regard to the impact of the development on adjacent dwellings it is Plots 1 and 2 that are most relevant. The dwelling on Plot 1 is in a position that reflects the existing industrial building. It is designed with rooflights at first floor level on the front elevation which faces Ashwell Road. With regard to the impact on adjacent properties in Ashwell Road the two closest rooflights serve an en-suite area to a bedroom above the garage, and a secondary window to the bedroom itself and can be non-opening and obscure glazed to prevent overlooking. Although there is a dormer window at first floor in the rear facing elevation of the garage in my view any overlooking will be at an oblique angle over the rear of the long gardens to properties in Station Road and will not result in a significant loss of privacy. Although there are first floor windows in the rear elevation of Plot 2 facing Station Road these are set a minimum of 15m from the boundary and again it is my view that there will be no significant loss of privacy from overlooking.
41. On site parking provision is adequate and turning space exists in front of the Mill. The outline consent contains a condition requiring the submission of schemes for foul and surface water drainage prior to the commencement of development. As outline consent exists for the erection of five dwellings on the site the issues raised in respect of traffic are not relevant at this reserved matters stage. I understand that the applicant is not seeking adoption of the roadway and therefore a condition in respect of details of street lighting would be appropriate. The Chief Environmental Health Officer has requested a condition controlling hours of operation of machinery during the construction period.
42. The planning consent and allocation of this site for residential development was based on the relocation of a non-conforming use on the site and the restoration of the Mill. The existing use of the site has ceased but it is important to ensure that this scheme secures the necessary work to the Mill to the satisfaction of the Conservation Manager. The applicant has stated that bringing forward development on the front part of the site will allow the actual repair of the Mill as set out in the Section 106 Agreement signed as part of the consent for the rear portion of the site, without

waiting for that development to take place. The scheme secured by the Section 106 Agreement goes beyond that required by the condition attached to the outline consent for the front part of the site. I will be discussing this matter further with the Conservation Manager prior to the meeting to ensure that the necessary provisions are in place to secure these works as part of this consent, if granted.

Recommendation

43. Subject to the receipt of no materially new objections to the amended drawings and securing the provisions of works to the Mill that delegated powers are given to grant reserved matters consent subject to safeguarding conditions and informatics suggested by the Chief Environmental health Officer.

Informatics

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 Structure Plan 2004: SE4; HG10; SE9; EN28 and Steeple Morden 1**
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Residential amenity including noise disturbance and overlooking issues
 - Highway safety
 - Visual impact on the locality
 - Impact upon setting of adjacent stock mill

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Planning Application Files S/1966/04/RM; S/0843/01/O and S/1774/01/O

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