

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 1st December 2004
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/2030/04/F - Fulbourn
Extension to Nursing Home Together with Additional Car Parking
at Home Close Nursing Home, Cow Lane
for Abbott Healthcare Plc**

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. The site is within the Fulbourn Conservation Area and comprises a large nursing home dating from the 1960s. The building is sited within wooded gardens of 1.1ha (approx.) between Cow Lane and Pierce Lane. The main vehicular access is from Cow Lane, with a further driveway off Pierce Lane leading across the site to a former nursing home, now a private house, adjacent to the east. There are houses and bungalows to the east and west. The site is covered by a tree preservation order.
2. This full planning application, received on the 1st October 2004 proposes to extend to the rear of the existing building to provide an additional 30 rooms over and above the existing 43 rooms. The existing ground floor rear extension will be re-configured to provide an extra bedroom and improved accommodation, with a total of nine bedrooms in this area. A first floor extension above this area will provide an additional 9 bedrooms, with associated living areas. The main bulk of the extension will be in the form of a two storey rear extension to provide a further 20 bedrooms and associated living areas, which will be the same height, 8.5m, as the existing building. This will result in a total of 73 bedrooms on the site. A small parking area for eight cars is proposed on what is currently a raised lawn area to the east of the building.

Planning History

3. Planning application **S/0880/04/F** for larger extensions that would have provided 112 bedrooms on the site and a car park in the walled garden to provide 33 spaces, was refused earlier this year. The grounds for refusal are summarised:
 - The proposals represented over-development of the site to the detriment of the Conservation Area, the bulk of the building proposed would not enhance or preserve the special character of the Conservation Area,
 - The additional car parking and vehicular access through the existing wall would be detrimental to the Conservation Area,
 - The proposals required the removal of some trees on site and underground works could result in the loss of others, further eroding the Conservation Area,
 - The privacy and amenity of neighbouring dwellings would be harmed due to the relationship of the north-eastern wing to Mulberry House, the latter suffering poor

outlook through the sheer size and bulk of the extended wing and being overlooked by the same. Residents on Cow Lane would suffer noise and disturbance to their properties and gardens from the use of the proposed car park.

4. Other planning applications on the site relevant to this application include:
 - **S/1860/01/F** for alterations and extensions to provide 7 bedrooms which was approved;
 - **S/0594/97/O** for a children's home on the site, which was withdrawn;
 - **S/0606/97/F** and **S/0762/97/CAC** to provide an access, and **S/0619/97/CAC** for part demolition of roadside boundary wall for access were refused on Conservation grounds as these would result in the loss of the wall to the walled garden;
 - **S/1411/94/F** was approved for extensions, day centre and additional parking,
 - **S/1835/88/F** for 27 retirement bungalows, day centre, matrons flat, garage and car parking was approved;
 - and in 1967 permission was originally granted of the erection of a home for the elderly on the site under planning reference **C/0179/67/D**.

Planning Policy

5. **Policy HG9 'Residential Care Homes'** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("Local Plan"), permits extension of existing residential care facilities where:
 - The quality of design is in keeping with surrounding properties and landscape in terms of scale, form, layout and materials;
 - Boundary treatment provides privacy and a high standard of visual amenity;
 - The privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties is protected;
 - There is safe and convenient access for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians;
 - Parking facilities are in accordance with District Council standards; and
 - There is access to an adequate level of services to meet the need of the development.
6. **Policy EN30 'Development in Conservation Areas'** of the Local Plan requires development within these areas to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area, especially in terms of scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials.
7. **Policy P1/2 'Environmental Restrictions on Development'** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("Structure Plan") restricts development where it could damage areas that should be retained for their biodiversity, historic, archaeological, architectural and recreational value.
8. **Policy P1/3 'Sustainable Design in Built Development'** of the Structure Plan states that a high standard of design and sustainability should be adopted for all new forms of development.
9. **Policy P7/6 'Historic Built Environment'** of the Structure Plan requires Local Authorities to protect and enhance the historic environment, including designated conservation areas.

Consultations

10. **Fulbourn Parish Council** recommends refusal, its comments are attached at Appendix 1.
11. **Conservation Manager** – no objection to the siting and massing, but would wish to see some revisions to the elevational treatment. Seek delegated approval/refusal to enable further negotiations to take place over the details of the elevations and materials. Full comments are attached at Appendix 2.
12. **Trees and Landscape Officer** – objects strongly to the loss of two large sycamore trees; the proposed bedroom wing should be reduced in length to provide a minimum 6.0m clearance. An adjacent beech tree is just about OK, but an intervening path could cause root damage.
13. **Ecology Officer** – comments to be reported verbally.
14. **Local Highways Authority** – recommends that before the development is brought into use the proposed additional car parking shall be laid out, hard surfaced, sealed and drained.
15. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – recommends conditions requiring details of the location and type of power driven plant or equipment and limits on hours of construction work with power driven machinery. Informatives that there should be no bonfires or burning of waste on site and details of any pile driven foundations to be submitted are suggested.

Representations

16. Nine letters of objection from residents of 39, 52, 53 and 54 Cow Lane, 62, 56, 50 and 68 Pierce Lane and 38A Fendon Road, Cambridge have been received. They raise issues summarised below:
 - The proposals do not enhance or preserve the Conservation Area; in particular
 - Building style/design;
 - Loss of lawns and grassed areas;
 - Loss of mature trees, including trees protected by TPO;
 - Impact on roots of trees could lead to further loss of trees;
 - Some tree species are incorrectly identified on plans;
 - Some trees (to boundary with Pierce Lane) not marked on plans;
 - Site is over-developed and 'enough is enough';
 - Trees lost should be replaced with mature specimens, not saplings;
 - Visual impact of additional car parking; and
 - Previous appeal decision in which the Inspector noted the Conservation Area as the main issue.
 - Increase in traffic; in particular
 - Increased road hazard/danger;
 - Impact on pedestrian routes;
 - Access is on a blind bend on Cow Lane;
 - Increased traffic at night; and
 - Noise.

- Car parking requirements are likely to increase in the future and parking should be provided by re-configuring the existing area instead.
- Additional pressure on the sewage system, the system has flooded gardens once this year due to a blockage.
- The development is less than 10m from the boundary with 68 Pierce Lane, which will result in visual dominance, especially if trees are removed.
- A solid 8ft high timber fence should be provided to the boundary with 68 Pierce Lane in order to provide additional screening.
- Light pollution from security lights is likely to increase as a result of this development.
- Impact on wildlife habitat.
- If development is to be approved, it should be limited to single storey so it is less obtrusive to neighbours and reduces the intensity of use on the site.
- If there is bed blocking at Addenbrookes, it would be better to use empty/closed wards at Fulbourn and Ida Darwin Hospitals instead of extending this site.
- Repair of the wall is important but should be carried out properly and then maintained.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. The key issues to consider in respect of this application are the impact upon the Conservation Area trees, traffic, car parking and residential amenities. Other matters raised include wildlife, sewage system, and repair of the wall.

Conservation Area/Trees

18. The Council's Conservation Manager has not raised significant objections to the proposals, which are greatly scaled down in terms of size and bulk. Amendments are being sought in line with the Officer's comments (see Appendix 2). Much concern has been raised with regard to the impact on numerous trees on site. The Trees and Landscape Officer's objections can be addressed under delegated powers through a reduction in the size of the building or if necessary refusal of the application. Objections to the earlier application, which included an access through a wooded area of the site that has been removed in this application, were concerned largely with the removal of trees in the south due to the larger footprint of those proposals, along the driveway due to the proposed access and in the north east due to the, then proposed car park for 33 cars all appear to have been overcome.

Traffic

19. The Local Highway Authority has raised no objections to the proposals.

Car parking

20. The Local Highways Authority has recommended a condition to ensure appropriate levels of car parking are maintained on site. This will not result in an over-provision, however the siting of the car park is not considered to be ideal, being adjacent to living rooms and at a raised ground level. The recommendation to re-site additional car parking in front of the building through a re-configuration of the existing parking areas has been noted by the agent and revised plans are to be submitted. This will also result in less intrusion into the landscaped gardens of the site, reducing the overall impact on the area.

Residential amenities

21. The two-storey extension is well screened from neighbouring residential dwellings, including no. 68 Pierce Lane, by trees both within the site and the neighbouring garden. The two storey extensions will be a minimum of 30m away from neighbouring dwellings. Reasonable additional screening to boundaries can be addressed through condition. The reduced scale of these proposals will result in minimal impact upon neighbouring properties, in my opinion.

Other matters

22. Issues of wildlife impact, sewage system, and repair of the wall raised during consultations can be addressed through conditions.

Recommendation

23. Delegated approval is sought subject to receipt of revised plans to safeguard the two sycamore trees, a satisfactory revised car parking layout and minor amendments to the elevational details in line with recommendations by the Conservation and Design Officer. Conditions are recommended as follows:
 1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
 2. Sc5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5ai, ii and ‘as the site is within the Conservation Area’);
 3. Sc5b – Surface water drainage (Rc5b);
 4. Sc5c – Foul water drainage (Rc5c);
 5. Sc5f – Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas (Reason –The site is within the Conservation Area’);
 6. Sc5g – Foundations (Rc5g);
 7. Sc5h – Underground works (Rc5h);
 8. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
 9. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
 10. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
 11. Sc26 – During the period of construction no power operated machinery (or other specified machinery) shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 am on weekdays and 08.00 am on Saturdays nor after 6.00 pm on weekdays and 1.00 pm on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays), unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions.
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents);
 12. SC27 – Control of Emissions (Rc27a & b);
Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled;
 13. No development shall commence on site until detailed plans of the proposed vehicular access and compound required in order to build the extensions and car park have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such plans shall show the form of construction and depth of roadway, together with all adjacent trees and measures for their protection.
(Reason – To protect trees which are to retained in order to enhance the development and the visual amenities of the Conservation Area);
 14. Before the development is brought into use the proposed additional car parking spaces shall be laid out, hard surfaced, sealed, and drained within the site as shown on the approved plan numbered XXX to a specification approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason – In the interests of highway safety);

15. Details of repairs to the wall on the east of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of such works and shall be carried out within an agreed timescale.

(Reason: In order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area);

Any additional conditions required by the Trees and Landscaping Officer and Ecology Officer.

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: P1/2** (Environmental restrictions on development), **P1/3** (Sustainable design in built development) and **P7/6** (Historic Built Environment);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: HG9** (Residential Care Homes) and **EN30** (Development in or adjacent to Conservation Areas)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations, which have been raised during the consultation exercise: Conservation Area, traffic, car parking and residential amenities, wildlife, and sewage system.

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 Ref: S/2030/04/F and S/0880/04/F

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