

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

2nd June 2010

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services)/
Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

**S/0107/10/F & S/0108/10/LB – STEEPLE MORDEN
Extension at The Hay Loft, 67 Hay Street
For Ms A Dodd and Mr A Fison**

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 25th May 2010

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination at the request of an elected Member of the District Council.

Members will visit the site on 2nd June 2010

Site and Proposal

1. The dwelling at 67 Hay Street is a Grade II Listed Building dating from the early 19th century and is constructed of timber frame and clay bat. The dwelling is located within the linear pattern of dwellings along Hay Street and is positioned parallel and close to the road. The site falls within the village framework and Conservation Area of Steeple Morden.
2. The planning application, registered on 30th March 2010, seeks approval to erect a two storey extension, which would be sited to the southern elevation of the existing dwelling and would extend from the existing side gable by 3.6m at first floor level and 1.5m at ground floor level. The extension would provide a lift to allow access to the enlarged first floor bedroom to meet the needs of the disabled occupant. The materials of the extension are proposed to be similar to the existing white render and roof slate of the existing building. Currently the applicant is confined to the ground floor and sleeps in the dining room at the opposite end of the house.

Planning History

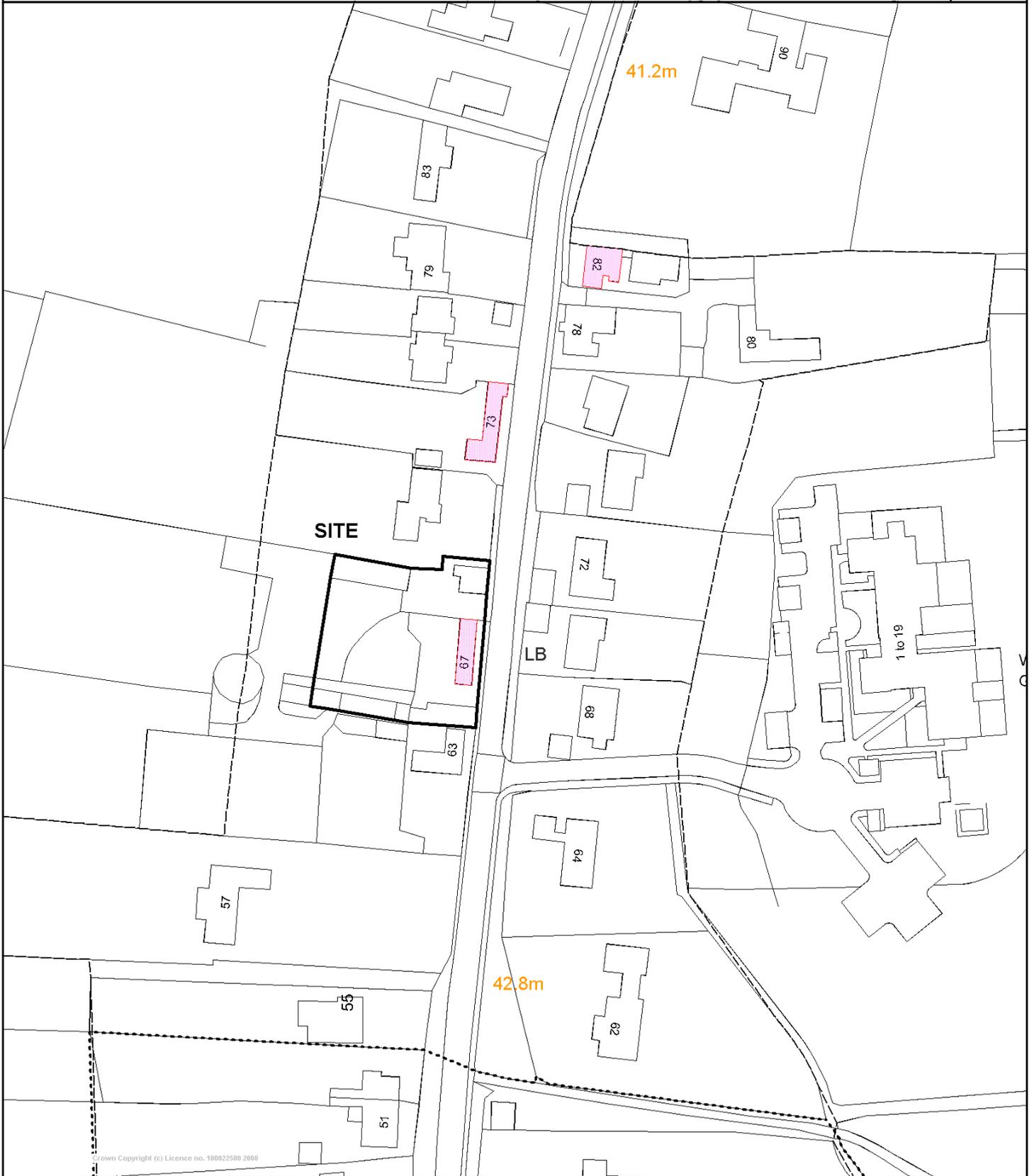
3. The dwelling is believed to have been modernised in the Mid 1980s and a two storey extension of 7 metres added, although the planning consent for these works is not held on current records. The cottage was further extended by a single storey dining room and bathroom on the south and west elevations (**S/2049/98/LB**, **S/2050/98/F**, **S/0410/00/F** and **S/0409/00/LB**).

Planning Policy

4. **National Policy**

Planning Policy Statement 5 *Planning for the Historic Environment*

S-0107-10-F - Steeple Morden



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Scale 1/1250 Date 14/5/2010

Centre = 528647 E 242983 N

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5. **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (Adopted July 2007):**

DP/1 (Sustainable Development), **DP/2** (Design of New Development), **DP/3** (Development Criteria), **DP/7** (Development Frameworks), **CH/3** (Listed Buildings) and **CH/5** (Conservation Areas).

Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents:

Development Affecting Conservation Areas SPD - Adopted January 2009
Listed Buildings SPD - Adopted July 2009

Consultation

6. **Steeple Morden Parish Council** Recommend approval with all materials in keeping with the existing building.
7. **Listed Building Officer** Recommends refusal. Whilst sympathetic to the needs of the owner, officers consider the proposal would harm the special character and appearance of this 19th Century timber framed and clay bat cottage by increasing the bulk and massing of the existing extension and physically dominating the front, rear and side elevations of the property and, as such, would significantly detract from the appearance of the building and the historic plan form. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy CH/3 and Policies HE7 (7.1, 7.2 and 7.4) and HE9 (9.1, 9.2 and 9.4) of Planning Policy Statement 5 and PPS 5 Planning Policy Practice Guidance (including 86, 111, 178 and 182).

Representations

8. District Councillor Mrs Murfitt – I wish the application to be decided by members for the following planning reasons:
- (a) No historic fabric is involved in the proposed construction of the lift shaft. It involves cutting through a 2000 extension. The upstairs gable is 1970s.
 - (b) It will make hardly any difference to the street scene and will probably be barely noticeable. The house is screened along its entire frontage by a high hedge that reaches just about to the upstairs window sills.
 - (c) Neighbours at number 65 are 9.5 metres away. Their side window is a stairwell or landing. There are no windows proposed on the lift shaft. Therefore there is no effect on these neighbours.
 - (d) The neighbours to the right and left and opposite have no objections and in fact support the application not just for sympathetic reasons but because they feel it would make very little difference to the house.
 - (e) To call this a 2-storey extension is misleading. It's a lift shaft to enable access to the large bedroom and bathroom upstairs.
 - (f) A lean-to, which adds nothing to enhance the Listed Building, will be removed.
 - (g) To suggest the present sitting-room could accommodate an extension further out into the back garden is unreasonable bearing in mind the large expenditure incurred by the applicant to achieve wheelchair access to the house in order for Mrs Dodd to be allowed home from Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The work involved to achieve this would be wasted. Further all drains are at the roadside front of the building.
 - (h) At the moment, the historic part of the building has been turned into a hospital ward, which has detracted considerably from the internal historic fabric. To be

blunt, a full sized hospital bed in one room and necessary exercise equipment in the other mean nobody can appreciate the historic fabric. This lift shaft would enable Mrs Dodd to use the large upstairs bedroom and bathroom and thus restore the 2 downstairs rooms to their former state.

- (i) I discussed with the applicants whether they would be prepared to agree a condition that the lift shaft should be removed if there were no further use for it (e.g. if they moved) and they would agree to this. I have since been informed by the department that this could not be allowed.
- (j) The applicants are not seeking to extend their living space and increase the value of their house. In fact they want to be able to use the living space they already have for its original purpose. It is now a hospital ward not a dining room and not space visitors can use. They wish they did not need to ask for the lift shaft. With the lift shaft, the domestic space in the house could be returned to its proper living and social space and the quality of life of both Mrs Dodd and Mr Fison could be greatly improved.
- (k) Conservation and planning policies are important but we are also supposed to be a caring council.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

- 9. The key issues to be judged in the determination of the application are the impact of the development on the Grade II Listed Building and the personal circumstances of the applicant.

Impact on the Listed Building

- 10. The proposal is assessed with close regard to historic environment policy, which seeks to preserve the significance of listed buildings and ensure that historic buildings remain the main features following any changes. Planning Policy Statement 5 carries significant weight in the determination of planning applications, which affect the historic environment. Particularly relevant to this application is Policy HE9.1 which states the following: ‘There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting.’ Policy HE9.2 goes on further to say, ‘Where the application will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance local planning authorities should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that: i) the substantial harm to or loss of significance is necessary in order to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss; or ii)(a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site...’
- 11. Even where a proposal has a perceived harm to a heritage asset which is considered to be less than substantial harm Planning Policy Statement 5 states that, ‘in all cases local planning authorities should: (i) weigh the public benefit of the proposal (for example, that it helps to secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset in the interests of its long-term conservation) against the harm; and (ii) recognise that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset the greater the justification will be needed for any loss.’ The justification put forward in the application is clearly understood but heritage policy does not allow the Council to give special weight to the needs of individual owners; instead the impact of the changes must be balanced against the best general use (in this case residential) and the significance that the building holds for future generations.

12. The floor area of the original cottage is estimated to have been extended by 108% at present and the cumulative impact of the proposed extension would be an increase of 120% resulting in a large modern proportion to the historic cottage. The two storey scale and form of the proposed extension is contrary to guidance set out in paragraphs 4.12 and 4.13 of Supplementary Planning Document Listed Buildings, which outlines that works to a Listed Building should be subservient to the original building and two storey extensions will generally not be supported. The proposal, together with existing extensions, reduces any distinction between what is historic and what is modern and the increase in the bulk and massing of the existing extension would physically dominate the front, rear and side elevations of the property detracting from the character and identity of the Listed Building.
13. Officers are sympathetic to the needs of the owner and have sought to find a solution which is less harmful to the Listed Building. The Conservation Team have been involved in lengthy pre-application discussions and have suggested an alternative that extends the existing single storey rear extension, that is currently used as a study and day room, to the south to incorporate a bathroom. This would enable the existing bathroom to be converted for the lift, thereby reducing the size of the proposed extension by 1.5m at first floor level and avoiding further extensions to the footprint of the building. The owner did not want to accept this alternative for reasons of cost, disruption and some reduction in space at first floor level.

Residential Amenity

14. The development would be sited close to the immediate neighbour to the south at 63 Hay Street but would not have a significant impact on the amenity of this neighbouring property.

Conclusion

15. In this case, the development is considered to cause significant harm to the character and identity of the Grade II Listed Building and in such circumstances the local planning authority is guided by national planning policy to give presumption in favour of conserving the building and its special architectural or historic interest.

Recommendation

16. That the application is refused, for the following reasons:

The proposal would harm the special character and appearance of this 19th century Grade II Listed timber framed and clay bat cottage by increasing the bulk and massing of the existing extension and physically dominating the front, rear and side elevations of the property and as such would significantly detract from the appearance of the building and the historic plan form. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy CH/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 (DPD) and Policies HE7 and HE9 of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (including HE7.1, 7.2, 7.4 and HE9.1, 9.2 9.4) and PPS 5 Historic Environment Planning Policy Practice Guide (including 86, 111, 178 and 182).

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

- Circular 11/95 – Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions
- National Planning Policy Statements
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Control Policies, adopted July 2007.
- Development Affecting Conservation Areas SPD - Adopted January 2009
- Listed Buildings SPD - Adopted July 2009
- Planning File Refs: S/2049/98/LB, S/2050/98/F, S/0410/00/F and S/0409/00/LB.

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