

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4 August 2010

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

S/0856/10/F and S/0857/10/LB – CALDECOTE

Alterations, Reconstruction and Conversion of Former Barn and Cart Shed to Offices and Demolition of 3 Outbuildings at Manor Farm, Main Street, for Strutt and Parker

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for determination: 11 August 2010

Notes:

These Applications have been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the Local Member has requested they be presented before Planning Committee, due to concerns on material planning considerations.

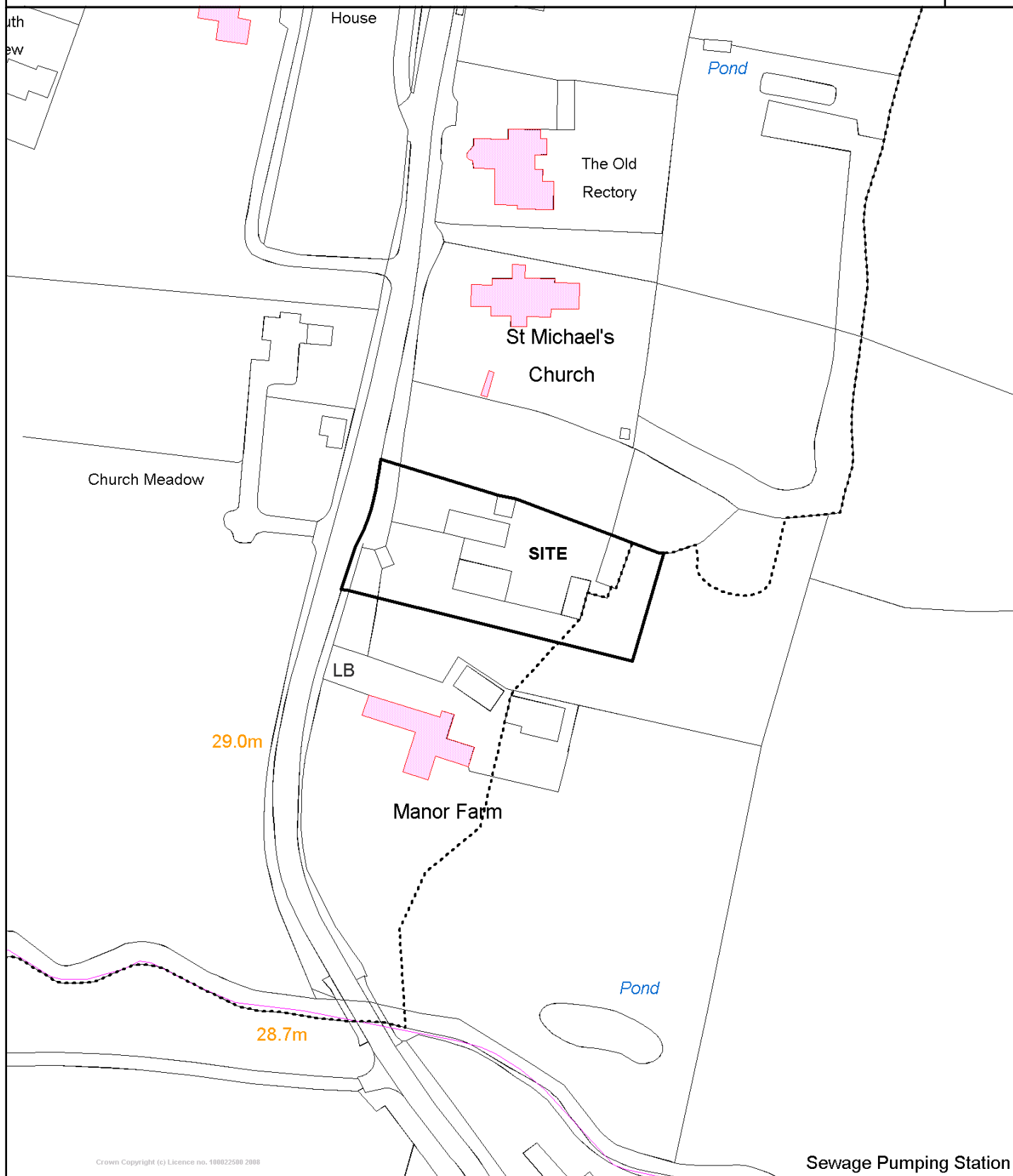
Site and Proposal

1. The 0.2 hectare (ha) site is located in the most southern part of Caldecote, outside of the village framework, within the Conservation Area and sited between two listed buildings. The Parish of Kingston is a short distance from the application site (approximately 100m south).
2. The existing buildings comprise dilapidated wooden structures that were originally used for agricultural purposes and are set within the large grounds of Manor Farm; a grade II listed building located approximately 30 metres south of the application site. To the north is St Michaels Church, a grade II* listed building, this is partly screened from the site by trees and hedging. To the east is open countryside and to the west is Main Street and access to the site.
3. The full application, received 26 May 2010, proposes the alteration and conversion of existing buildings to offices. The listed building application is required for the demolition of 3 existing curtilage listed outbuildings. The application was submitted with the following documents:
 - (a) Planning statement
 - (b) Design and Access Statement
 - (c) Heritage Statement
 - (d) Bat and Owl Survey
 - (e) Structural Statement

Planning History

4. **S/0937/06/LB** - Extension and Conversion of Barn and Cart shed to Dwelling and erection of garage/outbuilding – Refused.
5. **S/0938/06/F** - Extension and Conversion of Barn and Cart shed to Dwelling and erection of garage/outbuilding - Withdrawn.

S-0856-01-F



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Sewage Pumping Station



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Scale 1/1250 Date 20/7/2010

Centre = 534710 E 256188 N

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6. **S/0111/07/LB** - Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension to Cart shed to form 5-bed dwelling and attached double garage, workshop and store. Demolition of 3 outbuildings – Refused.
7. **S/0112/07/F** - Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension to Cart shed to form 5-bed dwelling and attached double garage, workshop and store. Demolition of 3 outbuildings – Refused. Dismissed at Appeal.
8. **S/0096/09/LB** - Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension of former Barn and Cart Shed. Demolition of 3 outbuildings - Refused.
9. **S/0094/09/F** – Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension of former Barn and Cart Shed. Demolition of 3 outbuildings – Withdrawn.
10. **S/1830/09/F** - Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension of former Barn and Cart Shed. Demolition of 3 outbuildings – Refused.
11. **S/1920/09/LB** - Alterations, Reconstruction, Conversion and Extension of former Barn and Cart Shed. Demolition of 3 outbuildings – Refused.

Planning Policy

12. **PPS1** (Delivering Sustainable Development).
13. **PPS 7** (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas).
14. **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions:** Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007 (LDFDCP)

15. **DP/1** – Sustainable Development, **DP/2** – Design of Development, **DP/3** – Development Criteria, **DP/7** – Development Frameworks, **ET/7** – Conversion of Rural Buildings for Employment, **ET/8** – Replacement Buildings in the Countryside, **CH/4** – Development within the Curtilage of a Setting of a Listed Building, **CH/5** – Conservation Area, **TR/1** – Planning for more Sustainable Travel, **TR/2** – Car and Cycle Parking Standards.

Consultations

16. **Conservation Officer** - In summary the team are of the opinion that the best use of the buildings is that for which they were originally designed. The proposals follow the refusal of alterations, reconstruction and conversion of the barn and cart shed to offices and demolition of 3 outbuildings. This application is for the same scheme but omitting the extension to the cart shed. Although this proposal no longer includes an extension to the cart shed there are still concerns about the impact on the character and appearance of these curtilage listed buildings and on the setting of the grade II listed farmhouse and grade II* listed Parish Church and the Conservation Area. There is still a small extension proposed to the chaff barn.

17. In this case no compelling evidence has been presented to show that some form of agricultural or storage use could not be maintained. It is clear that an alternative non-agricultural use would be difficult to accommodate due to the close proximity of the listed farmhouse and church. However conversion to an employment use is not considered to be an acceptable alternative for the above reasons. Consequently a less intrusive use should be sought which does not require so much alteration and extension to the buildings and which avoids destroying their special character. For the above reasons the proposed extension and alterations to the barn and cart shed would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the wider Conservation Area. The barn is prominent within the street scene and the Conservation Area and the proposal, which is considered to be visually intrusive, would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to CH/5 of the LDFDCP 2007. In addition the setting of the listed farmhouse would be compromised and the visual relationship between the farmhouse and its former agricultural buildings would be further eroded. The setting of the adjacent grade II* parish church would also be compromised by an office development in this location. The proposals would therefore be contrary to Policy CH/4 of the LDFDCP 2007.

18. **Local Highway Authority** – objects to the proposal.

'The Highway Authority would recommend refusal of the above application in its present format:

The proposed development, if permitted, would involve the use of a vehicular access onto Main Street where visibility is severely restricted by a bank to the south of the access and would therefore be detrimental to highway safety. '

If the application is granted permission by the Local Planning Authority, it will be the Local Planning Authority's decision with regards to which conditions will be incorporated.

It is requested that the applicant provide a contour survey of Main Street (a hollow way) in relationship to the access way. As visibility splays need to be unobstructed, the Highway Authority is concerned that the cutting that has been created to join the road obscures the visibility. The gradient of the bank to the road appears from on site observations be too great to permit the access merely to follow the banks profile.

19. **English Heritage** – Have not responded at the time of writing this report.

20. **Biodiversity Officer** - I have no objection to this development taking place subject to the development commencing in accordance with the information and recommendations contained within the Bat and Owl Survey, such that two internal cavity bat boxes will be provided on the west and east elevations of the building, that bird boxes will be erected around the site, that the grass will be kept short around the development area to deter the possible presence of great crested newts in the development area.

The restoration of the pond through selective desilting would provide a simple biodiversity gain for the site. The SCDC Ecology Officer would be willing to provide further guidance on the matter.

21. **Building Control Manager** – No objections

22. **Environment Agency** – Application falls within Cell F10 (floodzone 1/<1ha) of Flood Zone Matrix, version 1.0. No other Agency related issues, and Council will be required to respond in respect of flood risk and surface water drainage.
23. **Environmental Health Officer** – Has requested conditions to control hours of demolition/construction and details regarding pile foundations. Informatives include no bonfires and burning of waste on site, and the need for a Demolition Notice establishing ways in which buildings will be dismantled.
24. **Councillor Hawkins** - Due to the nature of the site and its history, it would be helpful for the application to be viewed and considered by a wider audience. I hereby request that both applications be referred to the democratically elected members of the Planning Committee for consideration, for the following reasons:
- (a) The site is located in a Conservation Area and the buildings in question are listed, therefore, having a historic relevance to the village.
 - (b) The planning history of the site shows that the proposals have gone through several iterations, and an appeal, and that the new application has taken into account previous comments made by the planning department and inspectorate, in order to come up with a proposal that attempts to bring the dilapidated buildings back into economic use, whilst preserving their historic fabric.
 - (c) The design of proposed development, which is a change of use of existing buildings, without extensions/conversions, seems more in keeping with the rural character of the site, and in that respect, aims to preserve the overall character of the Conservation Area.
 - (d) The proposal is for small office space provision, aimed at small businesses which current national policy aims to encourage as part of the plans for economic recovery. Indications are that such small units are much needed in the area.
 - (e) The Local policy is to encourage small businesses to grow, and the redevelopment of this site is widely welcome and supported by the local community of Caldecote, and its Parish Council.
 - (f) Furthermore, there is a local concern that the buildings, if not brought back into use, will fall into a more severe state of disrepair, to the detriment of the area. There is also the local hope that the national policy of encouraging working from home/local area, can be further strengthened by considering these buildings to be brought back to use. Also that by doing so, the ultimate users of the site may contribute to the reduction in the carbon footprint generated by residents of the area.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

25. The key issues regarding the scheme refer to the:
- (a) Principle of development
 - (b) Sustainability
 - (c) Highway Safety
 - (d) The impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the two Listed Buildings and their settings
 - (e) The impact on neighbour amenity

Principle of Development

26. There is policy support for the conversion of agricultural buildings to employment use under policy ET/7 of the LDFDCDP 2007. Planning permission will only be granted, however, if certain criteria are met.
- a) The buildings are structurally sound*
27. It is accepted that the structure of the buildings could be successfully re-used. However, the proposal seeks to retain only some elements of the existing structures (predominately the frames of the building with some work), as a large element of the scheme is new build. In addition, the works of the cart shed amount to major reconstruction and the works to the Chaff Barn are significant also. The comments from the Building Control Officer inform that though the frames can be predominately retained the materials for the external appearance are all likely to be new and not those of the existing buildings, including completely re-roofing both structures. The buildings cannot be re-used for the proposed use without significant structural improvements.
- b) The buildings are not makeshift in their nature and are of permanent, substantial construction*
28. Building Control agree that the buildings are of permanent construction and that the works proposed can be carried out in accordance with the structural statement submitted. The report states that although much of the original structure remains at low level the sole plate and the plinth would still need to be replaced. Additionally, there is no information on how the new roof would be supported but this would potentially require strengthening of the existing walls in order to take the increased load of a tiled finish. With this in mind it raises the question as to how substantial the existing structures are and whether it fully meets this criterion.
- c) The buildings are capable of re-use without materially changing their existing character or impact on the surrounding countryside*
29. The structures of the existing buildings can be re-used though the external materials for the buildings and the design would have to be as such so as not to have an adverse impact on their historic fabric, the neighbouring listed building and the character of the Conservation Area. It is crucial that design takes account of the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding area. It is not sufficient to simply retain the frame of the building and substantially reconstruct around it. This proposal intends to change the character of the buildings to an unacceptable level by inserting new openings, adding extensions and internal alterations and strengthening works that will have a significant adverse impact on the simple character and appearance of the buildings and would result in the loss of historic fabric. The impact the change of use would have on the wider countryside would have a much lower impact than that of the earlier schemes though the immediate setting would still be harmed and therefore contrary to the policy criterion.
- d) The form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.*
30. The Conservation Manager has concluded that the form, bulk and general design of the buildings would have an adverse impact on the character of these curtilage listed buildings, the setting of the grade 2 listed farmhouse, the neighbouring grade 2 listed

Parish Church and the setting of the Conservation Area. The once proposed wall has been changed to a newly proposed indigenous hedge to screen the parking area. It is not detailed though this can be secured through an appropriately worded landscaping condition. It is seen as a visual improvement to earlier efforts.

31. The roof of the chaff barn at the east elevation is altered from the existing structure adding a pitched roof where there currently isn't one. Additionally the lean-to is being infilled and new openings inserted in the new elevation. These changes are considered to have a detrimental impact on the building's existing character.

Sustainability

32. As the site is located to the very south of the village and outside of the village framework this limits easy access to public transport. The closest bus stop is located in the neighbouring village of Kingston, approximately an 18-minute walk from the application site. Visiting the site would be predominately by private vehicle and therefore the development does not promote minimising the use of the car in line with current sustainability policies. There are also no local facilities close by; the local shop is approximately 1.5 miles north of the application site and currently closed. The site is quite remote for an office use; and considered to be unsustainable.

Highway Safety

33. The Local Highway Authority raise objection to the above application as submitted as the access presents problems with highway safety due to obscure visibility. This has been an issue in previous planning applications and is still not adequately addressed. Further assessment regarding the level of traffic proposed and comparison with the potential agricultural use on this site is required with the Local Highway Authority. Members will be updated accordingly.

Conservation Area/Listed Building

34. Chaff Barn
The Chaff Barn comprises a two bay mid-late 19th century timber framed barn with a timber framed open lean-to on the north elevation. Both elements are roofed with corrugated sheeting. The proposal seeks to convert the barn and replace the existing lean-to with an extension of a similar form that extends along the whole of the north elevation. There is no automatic right to replacement and the fact that there is an existing lean-to structure of no interest or quality is not sufficient justification for a more permanent structure. The addition of this extension would be to the detriment of the historic plan form and harm the special character and appearance of the barn. In terms of planning policy there is a presumption against extension of rural buildings for employment use and the proposal would be contrary to Policy ET/7.
35. In addition the alterations include additional openings, internal alterations and some strengthening works all of which would have a significant impact on the simple character and appearance of this former agricultural building and would result in the loss of historic fabric.
36. Cart Shed
This building comprises a four bay timber framed structure that was originally open fronted on the east elevation; the roof is monopitched and covered in corrugated metal sheeting. The proposal is to convert the existing building and reinstate the pitched roof. While there would be no additional openings in the cart shed and therefore no loss of historic fabric, the alterations required for the new use including

the addition of insulation, services and a new floor internally and new weatherboarding externally would have a significant impact on the simple character and appearance of this curtilage listed building.

37. For the above reasons the proposed alterations to the barn and cart shed would neither preserve nor enhance the character of the wider Conservation Area. The barn is prominent within the streetscene and the Conservation Area and the proposal, which is considered to be visually intrusive, would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CH/5.
38. In addition the setting of the listed farmhouse would be compromised and the visual relationship between the farmhouse and its former agricultural buildings would be further eroded. The setting of the adjacent grade II* parish church would also be compromised by an office development in this location. The proposals would therefore be contrary to Policy CH/4.

Neighbour amenity

39. The closest neighbouring property is that of Manor Farm, located some 30 metres to the south of the application site. There are no major concerns with regard to the proposed scheme having an adverse impact on the occupiers of this property.

Conclusion

40. The proposed scheme has been scaled down considerably from the first applications received in 2006. The proposal for the use of the buildings to offices demonstrates a re-use that is supported, in principle by the LDF policies, subject to other criteria. This scheme meets only parts of these criteria. In addition the site is set between two listed buildings in the conservation area where it is the view of officers the development would materially detract from the setting of the listed buildings and would neither preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. The scheme also fails to successfully address sustainability.
41. It is one of the Council's aims to support local businesses and promote economic recovery. The proposed changes to the buildings would also increase their longevity. However, on balance it is considered that the material considerations with regard to the impact on the historic environment and highway safety and sustainability outweigh those with regard to economic development in this instance.

For the above reasons the application is recommended for **REFUSAL**.

1. The site lies in an unsustainable location away from village services and facilities and is not in an accessible location with a choice of means of travel, including non-motorised modes. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DP/1 (b) and TR/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies that aims to minimise the need to travel and reduce car dependency.
2. No compelling evidence has been presented to show that some form of agricultural or storage use could not be maintained. It is clear that an alternative non-agricultural use would be difficult to accommodate due to the close proximity of the listed farmhouse and church. However conversion to an employment use is not considered to be an acceptable alternative use. Consequently a less intrusive use should be sought which does not require so much alteration and extension to the buildings and which avoids destroying

their special character. The barn is prominent within the street scene and the proposal, which is considered to be visually intrusive, would be detrimental to local character. The alterations to the barns and the introduction of a formal business use and associated parking areas will materially detract from the simple, rural and agricultural character of the site to the detriment of the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Manor Farmhouse, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and the visual quality of the street scene and surrounding countryside. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies DP/2 (a) that aims to preserve or enhance the character of the local area, CH/4 that aims to avoid development that would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building and CH/5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies adopted July 2007 that aims to determine applications in wider open areas in accordance with legislative provisions and national policy currently in PPS5.

3. The scheme is contrary to the requirements of Policy ET/7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies adopted July 2007 as it fails to convert buildings without materially changing their existing character or impact upon the surrounding countryside.
4. The proposed development is contrary to the requirements of Policy DP/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007 as it would involve the use of a vehicular access onto Main Street where visibility is severely restricted by a bank to the south of the access and would therefore be detrimental to highway safety.

The Listed Building Application **S/0857/10/LB** is recommended for refusal for the following reason:

1. The proposed alterations and extension to these curtilage-listed buildings will damage historic fabric and harm the special character and appearance of these simple rural buildings. Internally the installation of services, insulation, strengthening works and solid floors would detract from the character of the interior. Externally the addition of new openings, new weatherboarding, a large glazed area and the erection of the new-build elements would have a significant impact on the character of the exterior. The proposals are therefore 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 HE7.2 and HE9.1) and PPS 5 Historic Environment Planning Policy Practice Guide (including 86, 111, 182 and 185).
2. The alterations to the barns, the erection of the new-build elements, the provision of parking and areas of hard landscaping will materially detract from the simple rural agricultural character of this site to the detriment of the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Manor Farmhouse and the setting of the Grade II* listed parish church. As such the proposal is contrary to Policies CH/4 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 (DPD) and policy HE10 of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and PPS 5 Historic Environment Planning Policy Practice Guide (including 113 –115 and 117).

3. The curtilage listed buildings make a positive visual contribution within the conservation area. Due to the inappropriateness of the alterations and extensions the proposals will neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposals are therefore contrary to Policy CH/5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 (DPD).

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

- Core Strategy 2007
- Development Control Policies 2007
- Site Specific Policies
- Planning files Ref: S/0937/06/LB, S/0938/06/F, S/0111/07/LB, S/0112/07/F, S/0096/09/LB S/0094/09/F, S/1830/09/F and S/1920/09/LB

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