

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 2nd February 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/2364/04/F - Steeple Morden
2 Houses at Land rear of 1 Cheyney Street for
Wedge Homes Ltd**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval
Date for Determination: 17th January 2005**

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. This approximately 450m² site forms part of the rear garden of No.1 Cheyney Street, a corner property. It lies opposite the school across on Hay Street. Adjacent properties, No. 3 Cheyney Street and No. 12 Hay Street, which is set back from the road, are both Grade II Listed. There are various outbuildings in a poor state of repair and the site is currently overgrown.
2. The full planning application, received on 22nd November 2004, proposes the erection of a pair of semi-detached 2/3 bedroom cottage style dwellings fronting Hay Street set back approximately 3-5m from the road. The northernmost dwelling is approximately 6.5m in height, 1½ storey with front facing dormer windows that cut through the eaves line. The other dwelling is taller, at 7.2m and with a 2 storey frontage to Hay Street. Both dwellings have an asymmetric pitch, no windows at first floor level in the side elevations and rooflights in the rear roofslope which falls to an eaves height of 2.2-3.3m. The density would equate to 44 dwellings per hectare.
3. The existing access is to be used and a parking and turning area for 4 cars for the two dwellings and 2 cars for the existing dwelling, No. 1 Cheyney Street, is to be provided.
4. The northernmost dwelling would be situated approximately 1-1.5m adjacent to a telephone box and telegraph pole.
5. Each dwelling would be situated at the back edge of the grass verge with pedestrian access off Hay Street.

Planning History

6. In January 1993 full planning permission was granted for a dwelling on the application site and land to the rear of No. 3 Cheyney Street.
7. In October 2003 full planning permission was granted for two dwellings on the site.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (the Structure Plan) **Policy P1/3** - Sustainable Design in Built Development.

8. This policy stresses the need for a high standard of design and a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment, amongst a whole host of other sustainability considerations.

Structure Plan **Policy P7/6** - Historic Built Environment

9. Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (the Local Plan) **Policy SE4** - List of Group Villages

10. Steeple Morden is listed as a Group Village

Residential development and redevelopment up to a maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village frameworks of Group Villages provided that:

- (a) The retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village;
- (b) The development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours;
- (c) The village has the necessary infrastructure capacity; and
- (d) Residential development would not conflict with another policy of the Plan, particularly **Policy EM8**

Development may exceptionally consist of up to 15 dwellings, if this would make the best use of a brownfield site.

All development should provide an appropriate mix of dwelling size, type and affordability.

Local Plan Policy HG10 - Housing Mix and Design

11. Residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs.

The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency. The District Council will support the preparation of Village Design Statements to secure these aims.

Local Plan Policy EN30 - Development in Conservation Areas

12. The District Council will require that applications for planning permission for development in Conservation Areas or affecting their setting, be accompanied by sufficient details to allow the impact of the proposals to be assessed. This must include drawings or other pictorial material which illustrates the proposed buildings in

their context, and in most cases outline applications will not be acceptable. Proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. The District Council will refuse permission for schemes which do not specify traditional local materials and details and which do not fit comfortably into their context.

Local Plan Policy EN28 - Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building

13. Where it appears that proposals would affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building, the District Council will require the submission of sufficient illustrative and technical material to allow its impact to be clearly established. The District Council will resist and refuse applications which:
- (1) Would dominate the Listed Building or its curtilage buildings in scale, form, massing or appearance;
 - (2) Would damage the setting, well-being or attractiveness of a Listed Building;
 - (3) Would harm the visual relationship between the building and its formal or natural landscape surroundings;
 - (4) 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.

Consultation

14. **Steeple Morden Parish Council** recommends refusal:
“As with the original version of the Application, the Parish Council finds the design of the proposed dwellings fully in keeping with their location at the heart of the Conservation Area and also approves of the decision to opt for two smaller dwellings, rather than a single larger one. However, the following practical difficulties continue to be present with the plans as presented.

There remains some concern that the boundary with No. 3 Cheyney Street is not as indicated on the plan. This may have implications both for the parking area and for the layout of the gardens for the proposed new dwellings.

It would seem that the parking area is still intended to provide space for vehicles from No. 1 Cheyney Street, as well as from the proposed new dwellings. Given the paucity of local public transport and the unsuitability of the location for on-road parking, the allocation of space for 1.5 cars per dwelling would be the very minimum required, while 2 would be a much better solution as it would also allow for occasional visitors. Even at the lower allocation, we feel that the indicated layout of the parking area would prove unworkable if it is to allow vehicles to turn, in order to exit the area in forward gear - at least, not without removing at least one of the mature trees on-site, and we see no mention of that in the current plan.

The sightlines around this busy corner of Hay Street are also a concern, both for vehicles exiting the parking area and those joining Hay Street from Cheyney Street - not helped by the thick hedge bordering the garden of No. 1 Cheyney Street. Recent new building in the immediate vicinity and the ever-increasing weight of fast-moving

traffic have done nothing to improve the situation since we considered the original application in April 2003. We would suggest that the Highways Authority make a site visit to confirm that the indicated splay of the parking area exit and location of the proposed new dwellings will not constitute additional safety hazards. We would also request that members of the current Committee make a site visit to satisfy themselves on the same matters.

We also feel that the plans do not take sufficient account of the current location of the listed telephone box and associated telegraph pole immediately adjacent to the left-hand dwelling.

Without prejudice to the above objections, we would ask that should the Committee be minded to approve the Application, the following conditions should be imposed:

- That the listed telephone box and telegraph pole should be resited at an agreed location, at the expense of the Applicant (Reason: to preserve the existing streetscape within the Conservation Area).
- That any mature trees removed to increase the parking area be replaced by similar specimens elsewhere in the Conservation Area at the Applicant's expense (Reason: to preserve the green content of the Conservation Area).
- That consideration be given to replacing the hedge bordering the garden of 1 Cheyney Street with a 3' high open picket fence (Reason: to improve vehicle and pedestrian sightlines at this junction).

15. **County Archaeology Office**

The site was the subject of an archaeological evaluation in March 2004 (*Late Medieval Features at 1 Cheyney Street, Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation - Cambridgeshire County Council - Archaeological Field Unit Report No. 719*), in connection with a previous application for the site (S/0561/03/F), which demonstrated that few archaeological features were present and any impact upon the archaeological record is likely to [be] minimal. Accordingly, no further works will be required”.

16. **Chief Environmental Health Officer**

No objection subject to safeguarding conditions to control noise and disturbance during the period of construction.

17. **Conservation Manager**

“The site has permission for the construction of two cottage style dwellings (**Ref: S/0561/03/F**) and this application follows the broad principals of that design.

The original scheme has been shown to have headroom problems in respect of the cat-slide roofs to the rear. The current revised design attempts to address this problem, while at the same time includes some modest additional floor area at ground floor to each cottage.

The changes will result in the ridgeline to the northern cottage being raised by approximately 200mm, while the ridgeline on the southern cottage will rise by approximately 300mm. The plan depth of both cottages is increased by approximately 150mm with the additional ground floor outshoots to the north of the northern cottage and to the east of the southern cottage.

When compared to the approved development for this site, the change in impact on Conservation Area in general and the street scene and adjacent Listed Building in particular, will be minimal. The revision to the front elevation of the north cottage (with the introduction of a single window alongside the entrance door) is an improvement over the symmetry of the approved scheme.

Recommendation:

18. No objection.

I note the kitchen window on the North cottage will now face towards the north boundary and the flank wall of an adjacent garage. I would suggest that this space could be improved through the addition of a single casement window onto the west elevation of the lean-to element (similar in size to the new window lighting the hall)".

Representations

19. One letter of objection has been received from the occupiers of **3 Cheyney Street:**
20. Not opposed to dwellings in principle
21. The boundary between Nos. 1 and 3 is incorrect and the site includes land that is owned by No. 3.
22. No mention is made with regard to fencing.
23. On-road parking is not an option at this very busy location opposite the school and a few metres from the village's central road junction. Overspill parking on the verge outside the site would obstruct the view on the T-junction and would be a danger to both pedestrians and road users. Additional parking and turning space is required on site.
24. One letter has been received from **Steeple Morden Primary School:**
25. Construction deliveries should be restricted to before 8.45am and after 9.15am until 2.45pm and then after 3.30pm.
26. "Although the majority of our parent population park away from the school we do have one and sometimes two school buses that require access to the front of the school. The proposed development is opposite the school and only a short distance away from a junction".
27. The Council should be satisfied that sufficient parking spaces are provided within the development so that resident parking will not cause any additional congestion outside the school.

Planning Comments - Key Issues

28. The key issues in this application are the impact of the two dwellings on the amenity of surrounding residents, the impact on the street scene, the impact on the character and appearance of the Steeple Morden Conservation Area, the impact on the setting of nearby Listed Buildings, the potential impact from additional traffic and parking, turning and access issues.

Previous application

29. This proposal is very similar to the extant planning permission ref. S/0561/03/F which unfortunately did not allow sufficient ceiling heights to be practically workable. Members may recall resolving to grant the permission at the September 2003 committee meeting. The differences, which are minimal, between the current application and that approved earlier are largely explained in the Conservation Managers comments. In addition internal layouts have been revised and the parking layout has altered resulting in a less workable arrangement. I have contacted the applicant's agent who will amend the application to provide 6 car parking spaces in the same arrangement as previously approved. Members will be updated at the meeting.

Neighbour amenity

30. At first floor level the properties are only one room deep. This allows for all of the primary bedroom windows to be in the front elevation with only secondary bedroom and bathroom rooflights in the rear elevation which will be obscure glazed. As such the only views out of the properties at first floor level are from their front elevations. This will protect the garden of No. 3 Cheyney Street from being overlooked as well as the rear of No. 1 Cheyney Street and the front of No. 12 Hay Street. The proposed dwellings are also sufficiently distant from surrounding properties not to result in any material loss of light or overbearing impact. As such the small additional volume over the previous approved scheme (described in the Conservation Managers comments) will have little impact on amenity.

Impact on the street scene, character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings.

31. The scheme provides two small 2/3 bed cottages that are well designed following lengthy consultation with officers. The site is in a prominent position in the village but these carefully designed modest properties will fit well into their surroundings. I note the support of the Parish Council on design issues and the comments of the Conservation Manager.

Parking and turning

32. The proposal as submitted shows six car parking spaces, two for each dwelling plus two for No. 1 Cheyney Street. However, only five of these spaces are practical. As stated above the applicant has agreed to amend the parking arrangement to that already approved which provides six spaces - two for each dwelling. Turning space is limited, however this was accepted for the previous scheme following the removal of the tree to the right of the existing access point and turning will be possible if a little restricted.

Trees

33. The Trees and Landscape Officer has not commented on this application. His comments, regarding the previous approval, indicated that there were no trees of particular merit. The loss of the tree to the right of the access was accepted to accommodate a sixth parking space. Once the amended parking layout plan has been received there will be no change to the existing tree planting from that already approved. New tree planting can be secured through a landscape scheme.

Boundary

34. The precise position of the boundary between Nos. 1 and 3 appears (from the comments of the occupiers of No.3) to remain unresolved. In my view the application should be considered as submitted. If there is a change to the position of the boundary this will impact on the space available for the rear gardens of the dwellings and more importantly the space available for parking and turning. If the development cannot go ahead in accordance with the approved plans the matter will have to be

considered at that time. I do not consider that this application should be refused for a matter which has remained unresolved for approximately the last 2 years.

Affordable housing

35. It was accepted in the previous application that affordable housing would not be required. Negotiations began prior to the publication of the Local Plan Proposed Modifications and have taken place over a long period of time. The site lies in a prominent position in the Steeple Morden Conservation Area and the design of the proposal is felt to positively contribute to its character and appearance. Coupled with this I am mindful of advice that has been given regarding the officers' preferences and the willingness of the agent to address these during negotiations on the previous scheme. I also believe that a requirement for one affordable dwelling here would lead the developer to re-examine the possibility of erecting a single dwelling. This could probably be achieved satisfactorily but would not in my opinion be best use of land and would not be as positive to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as this proposal. Although one of these dwellings will not be 'affordable' they will nevertheless each be of a value that is significantly lower than that of one larger dwelling and will provide two smaller dwellings for the village.

Highway safety

36. The Parish Council is concerned that existing sight lines around the busy corner of Hay Street limit views from vehicles approaching Hay Street from Cheyney Street and will create problems for vehicles exiting the parking area. There is approximately 3-4m of grass verge in front of the hedge behind the footpath. Vehicles exiting the parking area on the site will have the advantage of this area before approaching the footpath and pedestrians will clearly see any vehicles emerging. As for the situation regarding sightlines around the bend, this proposal will not alter that situation. The dwellings are set sufficiently far back so that there will be no material loss of visibility when approaching from Cheyney Street to Hay Street. In any case the situation has not changed from the previous approval.

Telephone Box and Telegraph pole

37. The proposed dwellings will be close to both the telephone box and the telegraph pole (approximately 1m) but will not impact on the use of the telephone box and I do not consider there will be any harm to the visual quality of the surroundings due to this close relationship.

Recommendation

38. Delegated Approval subject to a plan showing car parking for six cars in accordance with that approved under reference S/0561/03/F and subject to the following conditions:
1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 years from the date of this permission.
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development which have not been acted upon.)
 2. No development shall commence until details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - a) the materials to be used for the external walls and roofs.

- b) materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas.

(Reason -

- a)i) To ensure that visually the development accords with neighbouring buildings in accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
- a)ii) To ensure that the development is not incongruous in accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
- b) To ensure that the development enhances the character of the area in accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)

3. No development shall commence until precise details of the proposed windows and doors have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall show sections, opening arrangements and glazing bar patterns. All windows and doors shall be of timber construction and painted.
(Reason - To ensure fenestration appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and to the setting of adjacent listed buildings in accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
4. The first floor windows in the roof slope of the east elevation of the buildings, hereby permitted, shall be fitted and permanently maintained with obscured glass.
(Reason - To safeguard the privacy of occupiers of the adjoining properties in accordance with the requirements of Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4 and HG10, of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
5. No further windows, doors or openings of any kind shall be inserted in the first floor north, east or south elevations of the development, hereby permitted, unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf.
(Reason - To safeguard the privacy of occupiers of the adjoining properties in accordance with the requirements of Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4 and HG10, of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
6. The development shall not be occupied until parking and turning for 6 cars has been laid out within the site (in accordance with the approved plans attached hereto), and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking and turning of vehicles.
(Reason - To ensure adequate space is provided and thereafter maintained on site for the parking (loading and unloading) (turning) of vehicles.)

7. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development.
(Reason - To enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area in accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
8. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
(Reason - To enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area in accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
9. Details of the treatment of all site boundaries shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the work completed in accordance with the approved details before the buildings are occupied or the development is completed, whichever is the sooner.
(Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the site does not detract from the character of the area in accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
10. During the period of construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the site before 08.00 hours on weekdays and 08.00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18.00 hours on weekdays and 13.00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays) unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions.
(Reason - To protect the occupiers of adjacent properties from an unacceptable level of noise disturbance during the period of construction.)
11. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), the following classes of development more particularly described in the Order are expressly prohibited in respect of the property and each unit thereon unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf:-

 - i) PART 1, (Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse, Classes A, B, C, D, E and F).
(Reason - To safeguard the character of the area and to ensure that additions or extensions which would not otherwise require planning permission do not overdevelop the site with consequent harm to the setting of the Conservation Area, nearby Listed Buildings and the visual quality of the street scene in

accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)

- ii) PART 2, (Minor operations), Class A (erection of gates, walls or fences).

(Reason - To safeguard the character of the area and to ensure that additions or extensions which would not otherwise require planning permission do not overdevelop the site with consequent harm to the setting of the Conservation Area, nearby Listed Buildings and the visual quality of the street scene in accordance with the requirements of Policies P1/3 and P7/6 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE4, HG10, EN28 and EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)

Informatives

1. 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.
2. The Environment Agency's advice on the construction of soakaways is attached.

Reasons for Approval

1. The approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**
P1/3 (Sustainable design in built development) and
P7/6 (Historic Built Environment);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
SE4 (List of Group Villages)
HG10 (Housing Mix and Design)
EN30 (Development in Conservation Areas)
EN28 (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Highway safety
 - Noise and disturbance during construction

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Planning Files reference S/0561/03/F, S/2364/04/F, South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

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