

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

S/1801/04/F - Hinxton
Conversion of Farm Buildings to 6 Dwellings at Barns at Lordship Farm, Mill Lane, for Wellcome Trust Ltd

Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 20th October 2004

Members will visit the site on 31st January 2005.

Departure Application

Conservation Area

Proposal Update

1. At the 1st December 2004 meeting of this Committee, this application was deferred for a site visit and to allow further discussions to take place to consider whether the buildings would lend themselves to being 'live/work units'. The report to the December meeting is attached as an Appendix.
2. Amended plans, date stamped the 4th January 2005, have now been received which show an office/studio for units 1-5. Unit 6 already had a studio/office annexe. The offices/studios would be provided within the existing buildings by reconfiguring the internal layouts and parking provision. At least 2 parking spaces are still proposed for each unit.
3. There was some discussion at the December Committee meeting as to whether the buildings could be put to an employment use. This matter was considered in paragraph 28 of the report to the December meeting. The agents have also now produced a plan which shows the improvements that would be required to the High Street access in order for it to serve an employment use of the site.

Planning Policy Update

4. In addition to those policies referred to in the report to the December Committee meeting, Local Plan 2004 **Policy EM9** is now of relevance. It states that the District Council will support proposals for teleworking schemes which bring home and workplace physically together on sites within village frameworks or by conversion/adaptation of rural buildings outside village frameworks provided that there would be no adverse impact on residential amenity, traffic, character and the environment generally.

Consultation Update

5. **Hinxton Parish Council** was consulted on the latest amended plans and any comments received will be reported orally. In relation to the amended plans

date stamped the 9th November 2004, it states that it continues to recommend refusal and comments that it was disappointed that an additional window has been included to the north elevation fronting Mill Lane and overlooking nearby properties. It was also disappointed that visitor car parking spaces have been lost.

6. **Conservation Manager** makes the following comments: Converting existing open fronted cart sheds to office/studios for units 1-5 will involve infilling the open fronts with either weatherboarding or glazing and insulating and lining the internal walls. The result is that the character and appearance of the open fronted cartsheds will become domestic in appearance and the traditional agricultural character will be eroded.
7. In addition, the loss of undercover parking will result in an increase in open parking which will adversely affect the setting of the curtilage listed barns. Visitors to the home/work units will increase the demand for parking and this will further erode the setting.
8. Improvements to the High Street access to satisfy the requirements of the Highways Authority for a commercial use would involve the demolition of substantial sections of curtilage brick and flint wall, which the residential scheme retained. The wider access would therefore result in a loss of historic fabric and be harmful to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the curtilage listed barns.
9. Conclusion: The proposed alterations to the access required for a solely employment use would result in a loss of historic fabric and be detrimental to the setting of the curtilage listed barns and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
10. The conversion of parts of the outbuildings for ancillary offices/work accommodation and the loss of undercover parking will be harmful to the character and appearance of the curtilage listed buildings and will adversely affect their setting.

Representations Update

11. Neighbours and objectors were notified of the receipt of the latest amended plans and any additional comments received will be reported orally.

Planning Comments Update

12. For the reasons set out in the report to the December meeting, I consider that the conversion of these farm buildings to 6 dwellings is acceptable. The introduction of the office/studio units would give residents the opportunity to work from home and thereby reduce the need to travel and thereby make the development more sustainable. However, it is difficult to see how this might be achieved other than in the manner proposed. In view of the concerns of the Conservation Manager, I consider that the scheme should be approved without the office/studio units. If Members resolved to approve the application as amended to include the office/studio units, a condition could be attached to the permission to ensure that they could not be used other than by the occupiers of the dwellings to which they relate as a studio/office (i.e. to ensure that they could not be put to any other use by the occupiers and thereby not be available for employment purposes).

Recommendation

13. Approval (as amended by drawing nos. A.24.397b, 01-54-100E, 01-54-101B, 01-54-102F, 01-54-111D, 01-54-112C, 01-54-201A, 01-54-104F, 01-54-200A and 01-54-202 and certificate date stamped 9.11.04 and facsimile message dated 11.11.04) subject to the following conditions:
- Conditions and reasons 1-12 as per report to December 2004 meeting.
 - Details of any external lighting to be installed on the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing before it is first operated. No lighting other than in accordance with approved details shall be operated - RC To ensure that lighting would not harm the visual amenities of this countryside site.

Reasons for Approval

1. Although the development is not in accordance with South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy SE8, it is considered to be acceptable as a departure from the Development Plan for the following reason: the proposal represents a suitable new use for these curtilage listed buildings and will thereby secure their future.
2. The development is considered to generally accord with the Development Plan in all other respects and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**
P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development) and
P7/6 (Historic Built Environment);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
EM9 (Teleworking),
EN26 (Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses),
EN28 (Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building) and
EN30 (Development in Conservation Areas)
3. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise: current and possible future alternative uses of the buildings; countryside planning policies; overdevelopment; residential amenity interests; parking and access matters; increase in village housing stock; archaeology; wildlife; and flood risk.

Informatives

All bats and their places of shelter received full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. As such, if any bats are found during the works, works should cease and advice taken from English Nature (tel: 01733-405850)

The site could provide an opportunity for bats and barn owls, particularly in view of the open countryside surrounding. Artificial bat boxes and/or barn owl

boxes could be erected upon the buildings. The District Council's Ecology Officer can provide details of suppliers and suggest suitable locations of where to erect them.

Should driven pile foundations be proposed, before development commences, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations should be submitted to and agreed by the District Council's Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.

During the conversion, there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the District Council's Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

A guidance note on dealing with potential land contamination is available from the Council's Environmental Health Department

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 Policy Statement 7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Area' 2004
- Planning file Refs: S/2191/04/LB, S/1801/04/F, S/0849/04/F, S/0848/04/LB, S/2165/03/LB, S/1952/03/F, S/0290/03/F, S/2387/02/PNA, S/1836/98/LB, S/1719/98/F, S/0774/93/LB and S/0773/93/F

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