

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

S/1102/04/F - Bourn
**Change of Use of Agricultural Barn to Electronics Workshop and Storage at
Long Barn, Manor Farm for P & A Gildersleeve and R & R Slack**

Recommendation: Approval
Target Determination Date: 2 August 2004

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. This application relates to circa 17th century Grade 2 Listed Barn, situated amongst a group of agricultural buildings within the grounds of Manor Farm, to the south east of Manor Farmhouse, also a listed building (Grade 2*). The barn is timber framed with weatherboarding, with a corrugated iron roof and has a floorspace of 450 square metres. The site is within the Bourn Conservation Area and Bourn village framework.
2. The barn is accessed off an existing farm access, which connects the site to Alms Hill, approximately 100m from the junction of High Street, Caxton End and Alms Hill. Alms Hill/High Street is a thoroughfare through the village of Bourn, with a 'C' road classification. The site is also located with a high flood risk area, as identified by the Environment Agency's flood zoning maps.
3. This full application, received on the 26 May 2004 and amended by a plan franked 12th October 2005 is for a change of use of the redundant barn from agricultural storage to electronics workshop and storage; in addition to the insertion of free-standing portable building within the middle of the barn, with an approximate floorspace of 58 square metres. The electronics workshop will be sited within the free-standing unit, with an approximate wall and ceiling height of 2.5m. The remaining floorspace of the barn is to be used for warehouse storage. Seven car parking spaces are proposed for the use of the building. The amended plan reduces the width of the free-standing unit, away from the side arcade posts/aisle ties of the barn. No changes are proposed to the external appearance of the building.
4. The agent in a letter dated 5 May 2004 states that the maximum number of lorries in or out of the site would be one per week, with the expected number of employees for the proposed use being 4 or 5. The proposed use will not generate any hazardous trade wastes, with metal and glass off-cuts created and recycled. The agent also acknowledges the presence of bats hibernating in the barn.

Relevant Planning History

5. In September 2001, a planning application for extension and conversion of an agricultural building along the Alms Hill road frontage, into offices, together with boundary wall and new access (**S/0865/01/F**) was withdrawn. This barn lies to the east of the site.

6. In December 2001, planning permission was given for a new vehicular access to Manor Farm (**S/2007/02/F**). Condition 7 of the consent required the closure of the existing vehicular access off Alms Hill/High Street.

Planning Policy

7. **Policy 2/6** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 20003 (“The County Structure Plan”) states that sensitive small-scale employment development in rural areas will be facilitated where it contributes to various objectives, including enabling farm or rural diversification where appropriate to the local area; enabling the reuse of existing buildings; enabling the reuse of vacant, derelict or under-used land within villages and helping to maintain or renew the vitality of rural areas.
8. **Policy P7/2** of the County Structure Plan outlines that all development should seek to conserve and enhance the biodiversity value of the areas which they affect.
9. **Policy P7/6** of the County Structure Plan states that Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
10. **Policy P8/1** of the County Structure Plan aims to encourage sustainable transport for new development. The policy states that new development should provide appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety.
11. **Policy SE9** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (“The Local Plan”) specifies “development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the Countryside.”
12. **Policy EM6** of the Local Plan states that within village frameworks, planning permission will be granted for small-scale developments in Class B1 - B8 providing that:
 - a) There would be no adverse impact on residential amenity, traffic conditions, village character and other environmental factors; and
 - b) The development would contribute to a greater range of local employment opportunities.
13. **Policy EM10** of the Local Plan outlines criteria for the assessment of planning applications for the change of use and conversion of rural buildings within the Countryside. Although this policy does not strictly apply to this application, due to its siting within the village framework, it is considered to raise relevant issues for consideration in the assessment of this application.
14. **Policy TP1** of the Local Plan aims to promote sustainable transport in new development.
15. **Policy CS5** of the Local Plan outlines that planning permission will not be granted for development where the site is liable to flooding, or where development is likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, unless it has been demonstrated that impacts on flooding can be overcome by appropriate alleviation and mitigation measures.
16. **Policy EN13** of the Local Plan points out that the District Council will not grant planning permission for development, which could adversely affect, either directly or indirectly, the habitats of plant and animal species, which are protected by law, unless the need for development clearly outweighs the importance of conserving that habitat and the advice of English Nature is to the effect that permission may be granted.

17. **Policy EN14** of the Local Plan states that the District Council will require the retention, enhancement or provision of roost sites for bats or barn owls in the conversion of farm buildings.
18. **Policy EN22** of the Local Plan outlines the ability of the District Council, when granting consent to alter a listed building, to impose conditions which may be necessary to protect the character of that building, insofar as the retention or reinstatement of traditional features or materials are concerned.
19. **Policy EN26** of the Local Plan states that in “judging applications for planning permission to change the use of listed buildings the Council will consider whether or not:
 1. The existing use can continue with reasonable utility or life expectancy;
 2. All other options for less damaging uses have been explored, including the outcome of any attempts at disposing of the building at a fair market price;
 3. The proposed use can take place without the necessity of extensive alterations which would be harmful to the fabric, character or setting of the building; and
 4. The building would harm the setting or amenity of adjacent buildings.”
20. **Policy EN27** of the Local Plan states that applications for planning permission for the change of use of listed buildings, will not be approved unless full details of the effects of the proposals on the fabric and character of the building and its setting are provided. In addition, the District Council will have regard to the implications of the proposals in terms of traffic, access, services and the amenity of neighbouring properties.
21. **Policy EN28** of the Local Plan aims to protect the setting, well-being and attractiveness of Listed Buildings.
22. **Policy EN30** of the Local Plan states that proposals in conservation areas will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of the area, especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. Schemes which do not specify traditional local materials or details that do not fit comfortably into their context will not be permitted.
23. **Policy EN31** of the Local Plan specifies that the District Council will expect to agree a high standard of design, planting and materials for the hard and soft landscaping of the open public or private spaces, connected to developments in Conservation Areas.

Consultation

24. **Bourn Parish Council** - recommendation of approval. No other comments made on the application.
25. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** - No objection. It adds that it is of the opinion that additional water supplies for firefighting are not required.
26. **Local Highways Authority** - Recommendation of refusal on the grounds of inadequate vehicular access off Alms Hill for light industrial use. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) adds that:

“the existing access (constructed to cater for both the traffic associated with the office development within Long Barn and the agricultural uses) at only 6.0m wide and with a radii of 7.5m, is not really suitable to cater for the type of traffic that is likely to be generated by any B1 use.

Whilst the traffic likely to be generated by the proposed user is very modest, another user may generate the type and level of traffic more in keeping with that expected for the use class and footprint of the building.

100 square metres of Use Class B1c has the potential to generate some 8 - 12 vehicle movements a day; and 350 square metres of storage (Use Class B8) has the potential to generate some 10 - 28 vehicle movements a day.

In view of the development not being restricted to office accommodation, I would recommend that the access be improved to provide a minimum width of 7.3m for a minimum distance of 15m measured from the channel line of the public highway. If the width is improved to the minimum recommended, I will accept the retention of the 7.5m radii.”

Additional advice obtained from LHA on 15 November 2004 stated

“my recollection of the proposals relating to the barns was that they were to be used for offices, I do not recall there being any discussions about light industrial/industrial uses on the site. The new access was, as far as I am aware, approved on the basis that the traffic likely to be generated by the proposals was predominantly cars, with the occasional farm vehicle.

Light industrial use has the potential to generate vans and trucks as well as cars every day. The access was not meant to cater for such vehicles on a daily basis”...

27. **English Nature** - has no objections based on information supplied by Council’s Ecology Officer that a healthy bat population is known to be present in the barn proposed for development and that the Cambridgeshire Bat Group had studied/surveyed this barn. In addition the owner has a very positive attitude towards this bat roost and does not wish to lose the roost as a result of the proposal.

Furthermore, providing that the proposed works can be undertaken in a manner that results in no disturbance or damage to bats or their roosts (i.e. appropriate timing of the works) and that the roost is maintained post development, a DEFRA licence is unlikely to be necessary.

28. **Ecology Officer** - No objection, subject to suitable conditions of consent to protect bats, including the submission of a bat mitigation strategy.
29. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** - No objection, subject to recommended condition of consent.
30. **Conservation Manager** - No objection. The form and use of the workshop is acceptable and the impact on the character and appearance of the barn is not considered to be significant. Conditions should require precise details of the proposed structure including drainage associated with staff facilities, water closets and method of ventilation and extraction to be provided, prior to the commencement of any development. Any works required by Building Control which may have an impact on the character and appearance of the barn should also be approved before work commences.

The Conservation Manager has subsequently stated that any further alterations to the new access may have an impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby Grade 2* Listed Building (Manor Farmhouse). However, the existing access, if it has been built in accordance with the approved plan and with the grass paving system, would appear to allow for vehicles to pass and is presumably acceptable for the additional traffic.

31. **Environment Agency** - Response to be verbally reported at Committee
32. **Cambridgeshire Bat Group** - Email received in support of planning application. The group confirms that the barn is used as a summer breeding site by a colony of Natterer's bats (*Myotis Nattereri*). The activity level and potential for disturbance to bats from the proposed use is not likely to be any greater than that of a typical barn used for normal agricultural purposes. Just one possible source of additional disturbance was identified, being the opening and closing of the main barn doors as personnel move in and out throughout the day. It is felt, however, that this can be minimised by the erection of some sort of screen to prevent light entering the main barn. The Group adds that *"overall it seems an excellent proposition that will enable (the applicant) to put the barn to good use and maintain it as an important site for bats"*.

Representations by Agent

33. The existing access road approved in December 2001 and constructed in the previous 12 months was intended to provide for both the existing heavy articulated lorries for the farm activity, in addition to the full development of the various barns with Manor Farm for B1 use.
34. Further:

"it is unacceptable to our clients to propose any modification (to the existing vehicular access), particularly bearing in mind that the heaviest use of this site will be via the farm during the harvest season when considerable numbers of large articulated lorries have already and will continue to use quite satisfactorily the constructed access".

Planning Comments

35. The main issues to be considered are whether the principle of a change of use to the barn to electronic workshop and storage is acceptable or not and whether the proposal would have an adverse impact on highway safety.

Principle of Change of Use

36. All parties are in agreement that the proposed use of the barn as an electronics workshop and storage is appropriate, subject to several conditions of consent to protect the historic value of the listed barn and bats present in the building.

Impact on Listed Building and Conservation Area

37. The proposal is considered to have an acceptable impact on the listed barn and the character and appearance of the Bourn Conservation Area, subject to recommended conditions of consent.

38. In that respect, I have had regard to the general duty of the Local Planning Authority in respect of listed buildings and conservation areas, required under Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listing Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (c.9).

Highway Safety

39. The LHA have objected to the application on the grounds that the existing vehicular access off Alms Hill at 6.0m wide, is too narrow to adequately cater for larger types of vehicles (vans and trucks) which a light industrial and storage use on the site is likely to generate. The authority adds that the access width should be increased to 7.3m for a minimum distance of 15m.
40. The approval of the current vehicular access in December 2001 (S/2007/01/F) occurred prior to the granting of any planning permission for a change of use of redundant barns on the site or adjacent land. As a result, the assessment of this application was unable to take into account the suitability of the proposed access for vehicles, which may be generated by the subsequent re-development of the site and surrounding area.
41. I am of the view that the proposed use of electronics workshop with ancillary storage will not generate a volume and type of vehicular traffic unsuitable for the existing vehicular access off Alms Hill. It is noted that the LHA has commented that the *“traffic likely to be generated by the proposed user is very modest”*. Nevertheless, I am concerned that a subsequent change of use to the building, which increases the level of activity of the building, could lead to an increase in the volume of traffic (particularly larger vehicles) beyond that suitable for the existing vehicular access, resulting in a possible loss of highway safety for vehicles using the access and vehicles along Alms Hill. I am of the view that the use of restrictive conditions of consent regarding the future use of the building, are adequate to control the type and volume of traffic entering and leaving the site.

Recommendation

42. Subject to the receipt of comments from the Environment Agency, approval, as amended by Drawing No, 04.961/01A franked 12 October 2004, and subject to the following conditions:

Conditions of Consent

1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
2. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of foul water drainage and surface water drainage, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans. (Reason: To ensure a satisfactory method of foul water and surface water drainage).
3. Sc5f – Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas (Reason – to ensure detailing appropriate to the listed building and the Bourn Conservation Area).
4. No development shall commence until precise details of the internal layout of the barn (including the provision of staff facilities and the position of the free-standing unit illustrated in Drawing No. 04.961/01A franked 12 October 2004)

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. (Reason: a) to ensure development appropriate to the listed building and b) to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).

5. No development shall commence until precise details of the free-standing unit (illustrated in Drawing No. 04.961/01A franked 12 October 2004) including size, materials, openings and method of installing and fixing to the building, 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. (Reason: a) to ensure detailing appropriate to the listed building and b) to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).
6. The free-standing unit illustrated in Drawing No. 04.961/01A franked 12 October 2004, shall be single storey in height and not fastened to the timber frame of the building. (Reason: a) to prevent harm to the historical value of the listed barn and b) to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).
7. The free-standing unit illustrated in Drawing No. 04.961/01A franked 12 October 2004 and hereby approved, shall not be increased in size, repositioned, replaced or new free-standing units added, without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority. (Reason a) to prevent harm to the historical value of the listed barn and b) to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).
8. No development shall commence until precise details of the method of ventilation and extraction 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. (Reason: a) to ensure development appropriate to the listed building and b) to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).
9. No external or internal lighting shall be installed other than in accordance with a scheme which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (Reason: a) to ensure that lighting is appropriate to the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Bourn Conservation Area and b) to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).
10. Prior to the commencement of any development, a bat mitigation scheme shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The scheme should provide measures to prevent heat and light loss from the free-standing unit to other areas of the barn and means of screening of the barn entrance to minimise natural light entering the barn. (Reason: to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).
11. The development shall not be occupied, until space has been laid out within the site, in accordance with Drawing No. 04.961/01A attached hereto) for seven vehicles to be parked, and for the loading and unloading of vehicles and for vehicles to turn so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear. The approved parking and turning areas shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking, loading and unloading and turning of vehicles. (Reason: to ensure that adequate space is provided and thereafter

maintained on site for the parking, loading and unloading and turning of vehicles).

12. SC27 – Details of the location and type of any power driven plant or equipment including equipment for heating, ventilation and for the control or extraction of any odour, dust or fumes from the building, but excluding office equipment and vehicles and the location of the outlet from the building of such plant and equipment, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before such plant or equipment is installed; the said plant or equipment shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and with any agreed noise restrictions. (Reason: a) to protect the occupiers of adjoining buildings from the effects of odour, dust and noise and b) to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).
13. SC36 – No materials or equipment shall be stored on the site outside the buildings save that waste materials may be kept in bins for removal periodically. (Reason: to safeguard the setting of the listed barn and the character and appearance of the Bourn Conservation Area).
14. The premises shall be used for electronic workshop and storage strictly in accordance with approved plan 04.961/01a and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class B1, B2 or B8 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification). (Reason: to prevent harm to the historical value of the listed barn and b) to protect the hibernation area of a known bat population).

+ conditions of Environment Agency

Informatives

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:**
 - P2/6** (Rural Economy)
 - P7/2** (Biodiversity)
 - P7/6** (Historic Built Environment) and
 - P8/1** (Sustainable Development - Links between Land Use and Transport)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
 - SE9** (Village Edges)
 - EM6** (New Employment within Village Frameworks)
 - TP1** (Planning More Sustainable Travel)
 - CS5** (Flood Protection)
 - EN13** (Protected Species)
 - EN14** (Protected Species in Farm Buildings)
 - EN22** (Conditions to Protect the Fabric and Character of Buildings)
 - EN26** (The Conservation of Listed Buildings to New Uses)
 - EN27** (Applications for Planning and Listed Building Consent)
 - EN28** (Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)
 - EN30** (Development in Conservation Areas) and

EN31 (Landscaping in Conservation Areas).

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
 - Impact on Conservation Area and Listed Building
 - Biodiversity

Other

The applicant's attention is drawn to the need to obtain Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission for alterations to the external elevation of the building. The applicant's attention is drawn to the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended 1985). The applicant is advised to consult English Nature as to whether works on the site require a DEFRA license.

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 Refs: S/1102/04/F, S/2007/01/F and S/0865/01/F

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