

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

S/2359/04/LB - Castle Camps
Alterations (Including Removal of Leans-to's and Extension) and Conversion of Barn to 4 Bedroomed Dwelling with New Lean to Forming Garages.

S/2360/04/F - Castle Camps
Extension and Conversion of Barn into Dwelling and Erection of and Alterations to Boundary Walls.

Barn at Whitensmere Farm for Mr & Mrs G Ford

Recommendation: Approval
Date of determination: 14th January 2005

Departure Application

Site and Proposal

1. The applications relate to a Grade II listed boarded and corrugated sheeting barn. The barn dates from the 17th century and is a three bay corn barn with an aisle on the northern side. The timber frame is complete. It is likely to have originally been thatched but now has a corrugated sheet roof. The barn was listed in 1991. Part two-storey, part single storey boarded and slate buildings and single storey red brick and slate buildings used as holiday accommodation lie to the north and are curtilage listed. Whitensmere Farmhouse, a two and a half storey render and plaintile Grade II listed dwelling, is situated to the northwest. The barn and holiday accommodation are served by a single width access to the west. Whitensmere Farmhouse has a separate access. There are fields/paddocks to the south. Storage buildings, silos and a building used for the sawing of timber are located to the east of the site.
2. The full planning and listed building applications, registered on the 19th November 2004 and amended by plan and details of proposed sound insulation date stamped the 10th December 2004, propose to extend and convert the barn into a 4-bedroom dwelling. Existing single storey front and side elements would be removed. The single storey element being replaced by the proposed extension. Alterations to the existing boundary wall and new boundary walls are also proposed. A landscaping scheme was submitted as part of the application and the amended plans were submitted in response to the comments of the Landscape Design Officer and show the originally proposed new wall to the south of the barn replaced by a hedge.

Relevant Planning History

3. Applications submitted in January 2004 to convert the barn into a dwelling were withdrawn (**S/0030/04/LB** and **S/0095/04/F**).
4. Planning and listed building applications to convert the barn into a dwelling were refused under references **S/1174/00/LB** and **S/1175/00/F** on the grounds that the proposal would change and be detrimental to the internal structure and the simple

agricultural character of the listed barn, would thereby adversely affect the setting of the listed Whitensmere Farmhouse, and would not provide for acceptable living conditions for future occupiers of the dwelling as a result of the noise and disturbance generated from the use of the adjacent access road and parking area by occupiers of the adjacent holiday accommodation and activities generated by the adjacent farm buildings.

5. Planning and listed building applications to convert barns at Whitensmere Farm into four dwelling were refused under references **S/1231/90/F** and **S/1090/90/LB**.
6. Planning permission and listed building consent was granted for conversion of the adjacent barns into holiday cottages under references **S/0746/92/F** and **S/0299/93/LB**.

Relevant Planning Policy

7. The site is within the countryside as defined in the Local Plan 2004.
8. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/2** states that development in the countryside will be resisted unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
9. Local Plan 2004 **Policy SE8** states that residential development outside village frameworks will not be permitted.
10. Paragraph 17 of Planning Policy Statement 7 'Sustainable Development in Rural Area' (2004) states that "The Government's policy is to support the re-use of appropriate located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Re-use for economic development purposes will usually be preferable, but residential conversions may be more appropriate in some locations, and for some types of building. Planning authorities should therefore set out in LDDs (Local Development Documents) their policy criteria for permitting the conversion and re-use of buildings in the countryside for economic, residential and any other purposes, including mixed uses.

These criteria should take account of:

- a) The potential impact on the countryside and landscapes and wildlife;
 - b) Specific local, economic and social needs and opportunities;
 - c) Settlement patterns and accessibility to service centres, markets and housing;
 - d) The suitability of different types of buildings, and of different scales, of re-use;
 - e) The need to preserve, or the desirability of preserving, buildings of historic or architectural importance or interest, or which otherwise contribute to local character.
11. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P7/6** states that Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
 12. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EN20** states that the District Council will refuse planning permission for extensions to listed buildings which: are not necessary to ensure the continuing use of the building; would dominate or detract from the listed building; would imply the loss of building fabric of architectural or historic interest; would damage archaeological remains of importance; or would harm the well-being or setting of adjacent listed buildings.

13. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EN26** relates to the conversion of listed buildings to new uses and states that, in judging applications for the change of use of listed buildings, the District Council will consider whether or not: the existing use can continue with reasonable utility or life expectancy; all other options for less damaging uses have been explored; the proposed use can take place without the necessity of extensive alterations or extensions which would be harmful to the fabric, character or setting of the building; the proposal would harm the setting and amenity of adjacent buildings.
14. Local Plan 2004 **Policy EN28** relates to development within the curtilage or setting of a listed building and states that the District Council will refuse applications which dominate a listed building; damage the setting, well-being or attractiveness of a listed building; or would harm the visual relationship between a listed building and its formal or natural landscape surroundings.

Consultation

15. **Castle Camps Parish Council** recommends approval.
16. **Conservation Manager** states:
 17. The building is currently in a low-key storage use. It is no longer required for agricultural use.
 18. Listed building consent was refused for its conversion to a residential use in 2000 for two reasons:
 - The proposed internal and external alterations would be detrimental to the character of the building
 - The change from a simple agricultural building to a dwelling would adversely affect the setting of the farmhouse
 19. Since this refusal a new Local Plan has been adopted. The relevant Policy in relation to the conversion of listed buildings is EN26 which sets out the key tests in considering such conversions:
 - a) The existing use can continue with reasonable utility

The building is weather tight but has no secure long-term use. The agricultural use has ceased for over 12 years - the farmland is no longer in the same ownership of the farmhouse.
 - b) Other options for a less damaging use have been explored

The supporting statement with the application shows that two options of further holiday accommodation and a B1 business use have been considered.

The holiday letting option would necessitate a similar residential conversion as is being proposed. The current units on site do not enjoy a high occupancy rate and this has fallen since their conversion in 1993 following the growing availability of cheap flights, and the events of 9/11 and following the foot and mouth outbreak all of which have had an impact on the British tourism industry. A further letting unit or units are not seen as being viable.

Any alternative commercial use would need to operate without any detriment to the residential use of the farmhouse or the holiday let units. Such a use is

not considered to be compatible with the local road network or the existing uses on site.

On this basis, unless the barn continues to be used for a storage use, the only viable option is considered to be a residential use.

c) The level of alterations

The scheme has been revised externally since the 2000 refusal to seek to reduce the amount of new openings to be formed for the fenestration. A total of five windows have been deleted. Two roof lights are now included in the new proposals. The principle windows to the northern and southern elevations are contained within the original door openings. All other windows will be inserted between the studs to ensure their retention. The roof would be recovered in slate, which would replace the existing corrugated iron and better harmonise with the roof covering to the holiday let buildings, although contrasting with the peg tile roof of the main farm. This could be achieved without any significant structural interventions to the building.

The main alterations will be to the internal void of the building. The barn currently is one large space - this would be dissected by a new floor with only a full height void being retained to the main central area to the living room. Concern has been focused on the internal treatment of the timber frame. Given the quality of the frame, a key planning objective must be for as much of this as possible to remain exposed.

In order to meet the sound attenuation levels required, sound proofing measures are needed to the building. Details of an infill boarding system have been included as part of the proposals which would enable the main timber members and studs to be exposed but achieve the required acoustic/fireproofing and thermal standards.

d) Setting of the adjacent buildings

Details of how the vehicles are to be accommodated and the means of enclosing the site have been detailed on the current application. On the 2000 application parking was proposed to be on the hard surfacing to the front (southern) elevation of the barn. As part of the measures to buffer the site from the operations of the adjacent saw mill a new lean to garage structure is proposed - replacing an existing structure in this location.

The amenity area is to the north of the barn so that the domestic curtilage will not spread out into the adjacent farmland. This is to be defined by a hedge with new walling to the eastern boundary. The walls will be a mix of flint and brick reflecting the character of the existing boundary treatments to the site. By using hedging to enclose the existing courtyard to the north of the barn this retains a soft boundary preserving the relationship between the existing buildings on the site. The visual appearance of the other outbuildings has been altered as part of the conversion to holiday lets. The changes in the external appearance of the barn currently proposed are not considered to harm the harmony of this group of buildings.

20. In conclusion, the proposal overcomes the difficulties presented by the earlier scheme and addresses listed building concerns. It is therefore considered to be appropriate.

21. **Landscape Design Officer** raises no objections to the scheme as amended but expresses some concern in relation to the practicality of planting the proposed trees in terms of their proximity to the boundary wall.
22. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections to the planning application but recommends that a condition requiring a site investigation relating to possible ground contamination and appropriate remedial works be attached to any approval.
23. **Environment Agency** states that the District Council is required to consider the planning application in respect of flood risk and surface water drainage in light of the published standing advice. Nonetheless, it makes advisory comments and recommends that Anglian Water be consulted.
24. **Anglian Water** has been consulted on the planning application and any comments received will be reported verbally at the meeting.

Representations

25. None received.

Planning Comments - Key Issues

26. The key issues in relation to this application are:
 - a) Whether there are any material considerations which outweigh the presumption against residential development in the countryside;
 - b) Whether the proposal would retain the character and appearance of this listed building and not adversely affect the setting of Whitensmere Farmhouse, also a listed building; and
 - c) Whether the future occupiers of the dwelling can be adequately safeguarded against noise and disturbance generated by the use of the adjacent access, parking area and farm activities, including the sawmill.
27. At this Committee, Members will recall approving applications for the conversion of vernacular buildings in the countryside to dwellings where the planning benefits in terms of matters such as finding an appropriate use for a historic and/or vernacular building outweigh the harm of allowing a dwelling away from settlements and local facilities. Applications have also been refused where the benefits do not outweigh the harm. In this instance, I consider that the conversion of the barn to a dwelling may be acceptable if it would ensure the future of this listed building.
28. In this regard, the Conservation Manager states that the building has been mothballed for the last 12 years. An agricultural use is no longer viable and other commercial uses are either unviable or incompatible. The scheme has been revised from the previous refusal to limit the number of new openings to the exterior and to provide additional information on how the interior frame would be treated with regard to the acoustic requirements. The Conservation Manager is satisfied that the proposed sound insulation would not detract from the timber framing of the barn, which is a fundamental element of its special character. It is my view that the proposal would retain the character and appearance of this listed building and would not adversely affect the setting of Whitensmere Farmhouse.

29. The Chief Environmental Health Officer has carefully considered the proposed insulation scheme and proposed boundary treatments and is satisfied that they would adequately safeguard the occupiers of the dwelling in terms of noise and disturbance generated by the use of the adjacent access, parking area and farm activities, including the sawmill.
30. Whilst the existing access which serves the holiday units and the site is only single width and visibility from the access is restricted, particularly to the west, I consider that its use to serve the proposal would be acceptable in view of the Conservation Manager's comments that the proposal would secure the future of the building.
31. The proposal would not unduly affect the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties.
32. Approval of the scheme would not significantly prejudice the implementation of the development plan's policies and proposals. If Members are minded to approve the application, it would not therefore be necessary to refer it to the Secretary of State.

Recommendation

33. Listed Building Application - S/2359/04/LB (as amended)

Approval

1. Standard time condition - LBC1;
2. Defining the consent LBC2: Drawings number 1,2,3c,4,5c, 6 and 7, illustration No 3 and supporting statement;
3. Full specification/schedule of works to be submitted - LBC3;
4. Site meeting to discuss conditions - LBC4;
5. Protection measures - LBC5;
6. Full recording of building - LBC11;
7. Detailed drawings at a scale of at least 1:20 shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the LPA for all new windows, roof lights, external and internal doors. The proposed windows and doors shall be of timber construction and without trickle vents. The details shall show sections, opening arrangements, the exact stain colour finish, the door furniture and how the windows will be fitted in relation to the existing timber frame.
(Reason: To ensure fenestration and detailing appropriate to this listed building);
8. The proposed replacement weather boarding shall be feather edged and of the same width boards to match the existing cladding and stained black
(Reason: To ensure a traditional finish to the weather boarding);
9. Details of hard surfacing - LBC 20;
10. The boundary details shown on drawings number 5c, 6 and 7 shall be fully implemented before the dwelling hereby permitted is first occupied
(Reason: To ensure an appropriate setting to the Listed Building);
11. Details of rainwater goods - LBC 32;
12. The proposed roof lights shall be of a conservation format, the exact details of which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the LPA before works commence. The roof lights shall be fitted with a flush detail in accordance with the approved details
(Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the Listed Building);
13. The roof of the barn shall be covered in natural quarried blue/grey Welsh slate, a sample of which shall be submitted for the prior written approval of the

- LPA before works commence. The roof shall be covered in the agreed material (Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the Listed Building);
14. Details to be submitted - LBC 28
 - The details and position of all external flues, soil vent pipes, ducts or vents;
 - The details of the heating system for the building;
 - Floor surfaces and wall finishes for all rooms in the building;
 - Details of the eaves and verges of the roofs;
 - Details of the new floor construction to the first floor and how this will be supported in relation to the existing timber frame;
 - Detailed drawings at 1:20 of the new internal staircase and gallery and how this will relate to the existing timber frame;
 - Details of how the services are to be routed around the building showing how these will relate to the timber frame.
 15. The internal timber frame shall at no time be sand blasted. Any works to the frame including any chemical treatments or cleaning shall first be agreed in writing with the LPA (Reason: To protect the fabric of the Listed Building);
 16. No part of the timber frame to be removed - LBC 47;
 17. Prior to the commencement of development a schedule of repairs shall be produced for the timber frame. Any repairs or replacements of the timber frame shall be fully justified with a structural engineers report. The repairs shall be undertaken in green oak of a similar size and section to the existing property and the means of joining the new timber to the existing frame shall be agreed in writing with the LPA including the type of joint to be used if applicable
(Reason: To secure the works are in keeping with the listed building);
 18. No external lighting shall be installed to the exterior of the building unless first being agree in writing with the LPA
(Reason: To protect the external appearance of the Listed Building);
 19. Use of lime mortars and plasters - LBC 29;
 20. Before the development commences a detailed specification for the acoustic/thermal and fire prevention measures for the building - following the preliminary submission contained in illustration 3 - shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the LPA. These details shall show in detail how such measures will be fixed to the existing timber frame of the barn. The works shall be implemented solely in accordance with the approved details.

34. Planning Application - S/2360/04/F

Approval (as amended by drawing no. 5c date stamped 10.12.04)

1. Standard time condition A - RCA;
2. Prior to the commencement of development, an investigation of the site shall be undertaken to establish the nature and extent of any contamination and any remedial works to deal with contamination. This shall initially consist of a desktop study, which shall include details of the site history, development of a site conceptual model and a preliminary qualitative risk assessment. If any likelihood of contamination is indicated by the initial study, a further detailed site assessment shall be carried out which shall include intrusive investigations and which shall fully characterise the nature, extent and severity of contamination. Recommendations for a remediation strategy and post-remediation validation testing shall be included. Details of the site investigation and any necessary remediation strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. Remedial work shall be carried out in accordance with the

- approved details before the dwelling is first occupied - RC To protect future occupiers of the hereby permitted dwellings from possible contamination of the site;
3. Standard condition 52 'Implementation of landscaping scheme - RC52;
 4. The boundary walls shown on drawing nos. 5c, 6 and 7 shall be in place before the dwelling hereby permitted is first occupied - RC To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development and to protect future occupiers from noise and disturbance generated by the use of the adjacent access, parking area and farm activities, including the sawmill;
 5. Before development commences, precise details of a scheme of sound insulation of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the approved scheme shall be implemented before the use commences - RC To protect future occupiers from noise and disturbance generated by the use of the adjacent access, parking area and farm activities, including the sawmill;
 6. As recommended by Conservation Manager.

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 reasons: the proposal represents a suitable new use for this listed building and thereby ensure its 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:**
EN20 (Extensions to Listed Buildings)
EN26 (Conversion of Listed Buildings to New Uses) and
EN28 (Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building)
3. The proposed works will not adversely affect the special character or appearance of the Listed Building.
4. The proposed works will not result in any significant loss or harm to the historic fabric.
5. The proposed works would not have any adverse impact on the setting and appearance of the group of historic buildings on the site.

Informatives

A guidance document on the procedures for dealing with potential land contamination is available from the District Council's Environmental Health Department.

Environment Agency's advisory comments.

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/2360/04/F, S/2359/04/LB, S/0095/04/F, S/0030/04/LB, S/1175/00/F, S/1174/00/LB, S/1231/90/F, S/1090/90/LB, S/0299/93/LB and S/0746/92/F.

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