

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

11 May 2011

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

S/2258/10/F & S/2259/10 – HISTON

Partial demolition of unlisted C19 and early C20 buildings. Refurbishment and extension of remaining to form new church halls, meeting rooms, church office and cafe at St Andrews Church Halls, School Hill.

(for Histon Parochial Church Council)

Recommendation: Approve Conditionally

Date for Determination: 17th February 2011

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the recommendations of the Parish Council conflicts with the recommendation of officers. District Councillor Mike Mason has also requested the application be determined at Planning Committee.

Members will visit the site on 11th May 2011.

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. The site comprises a former school building, which is now owned and run by St Andrew's Parochial Church Council for a variety of community uses. The building was built in the 19th century and overlooks a small informal green, which is all that remains of a large oval medieval green.
2. The original school building (1839-40) is a modest single storey 3-bay structure, which has lost its former school bell, front porch and chimney stack. Attached to the north of this building is a grander single storey element dating to around 1870 and finished in gault brick with decorative red brick detailing. The southern building dates to around 1900 and has been unsympathetically extended with a single storey lean-to to the front elevation. To the rear of the site are several outbuildings including a former First World War hospital.
3. The building is not listed but is prominent within the local area and falls within the village framework and Conservation Area of Histon. The site also falls within a flood zone area 3, which comprises land assessed as having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding.
4. The proposal is as follows:

(a) Demolish and replace the original (1839-40) school building with a slightly higher single storey building to provide a new community café area.

(b) Extend the gable of the c1900 southern hall forwards towards the edge of the public footpath to provide church offices, meeting rooms and toilets. This would include the demolition of the existing front lean-to extension.

(c) The front elevation of the 1870 schoolroom would remain relatively unchanged in this proposal except for a proposed front roof dormer and the existing rear lean-to element of this building would be rebuilt and extended across the width of the building.

(d) A flat-roofed extension would then be added to the rear of the site, in the inner-courtyard, linking the existing southern hall and proposed community café to a 154-seater hall.

(e) A single storey store would be erected and attached to the proposed new hall at the rear of the site and the former First World War hospital, turned store room, would be demolished.

Planning History

5. Planning approval was given for a change of use of the building to a day nursery in 1973 (C/0836/73/F)
6. Both planning and conservation area consent applications were submitted in 1998 for the erection of a new hall and demolition of the existing church hall but were subsequently withdrawn (refs. **S/1443/98/F & S/1406/98/CAC**).

Planning Policy

National

7. Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5): Planning for the Historic Environment
Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide

South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD, 2007:

8. DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
DP/7 Development Frameworks
CH/5 Conservation Areas
NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure
NE/10 Foul Drainage –Alternative Drainage Systems
NE/11 Flood Risk
NE/14 Lighting Proposals
NE/15 Noise Pollution
NE/16 Emissions
SF/1 Protection of Village Services and Facilities
TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel
TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards

South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):

9. District Design Guide SPD – adopted March 2010
Development Affecting Conservation Areas SPD - Adopted January 2009

Consultations

10. **Histon Parish Council** - (i) Recommend refusal due to: lack of parking and nuisance parking, narrow footpath next to the site and the adjoining busy road, potentially lengthy construction period and lack of access for trade vehicles, disposal of waste, increased use of site, noise disturbance to neighbours, terrace café out of keeping with the Conservation Area, overspill from café onto public footpath and the limited right of way to the rear of the site due to the weight-limited bridge.
11. (ii) Response on 4th Feb 2011 - No recommendation. The Parish Council maintain concern in relation to lengthy construction period and lack of access for trade vehicles, disposal of waste. Concern with noise, traffic and parking, the construction and efficiency of the removable barriers to the terrace café. If the Local Planning Authority are minded to approve the proposal, then the Parish Council recommends conditions in relation to: exterior light restriction, a construction scheme, waste management, conservation and design issues, a removable barrier to the terrace café, a sustainable transport strategy and a restriction on deliveries.
12. **Impington Parish Council** – (i) Recommend refusal due to: lack of detail from the existing building carried over into the new scheme e.g. red brick string course. There is concern regarding overspill from the café onto the public footpath increasing danger to an already unsafe junction and the lack of consultation between the applicant and the Local Highway Authority. However the committee were encouraged to see plans for the refurbishment of an important village site.
13. (ii) Response on 4th Feb 2011 - Recommend refusal. There are two main concerns with the scheme: highway safety and access for construction vehicles. The proposal includes 150 seats in one hall and this indicates much more extensive visitor numbers than existing. Parking, drop-off access for these numbers needs proper consideration given the poorly laid out highway bend and island which confuses many drivers. In addition, the lack of a strong bridge to the rear of the site prevents most construction vehicles using the rear access. The iconic string of bricks is a design feature of this village and should be sought with the Conservation Area.
14. **Acting Environmental Health Manager** – There is concern that noise problems could arise from the demolition and construction process and to minimise the effects on nearby residents or occupiers conditions are recommended in respect of the following:
 - a) details of any power driven plant or equipment, including any equipment for heating, ventilation and for the control or extraction of any odour, dust or fumes from the building. Said plant or equipment shall then be installed in accordance with approved details and any agreed noise restrictions.
 - b) restriction on hours during which power operated machinery shall operate during the construction process.
 - c) a method of construction should driven pile foundations be proposed.
 - d) details of a lighting scheme, including any external lighting on the site.
 - e) restriction on the timing of deliveries or collections.

15. **Council's Drainage Manage** – A structural engineers report should be subject to a condition in order to outline the impact of the new development on the existing brick arch culvert. The applicant is required to provide this detail to show that the development would comply with the Council's land drainage Byelaws.
16. **Environment Agency** – No objections
17. **Conservation Officer** – Recommend refusal due to the loss of the original school building and the form and design of the proposals, which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area, contrary to CH/5 and PPS5 Policies HE7 and HE9.
18. **Local Highway Authority** – Whereas the proposed café is unlikely to be a traffic generator in and of itself given the other commercial units in the area it is most likely that this will serve a secondary function as a place to visit. However, the same cannot be said for the childcare facility or the extended hall, which the applicant states may on occasion serve 150 people. The Highway Authority therefore, requests that the applicant provide a Transport Statement demonstrating how the impact on the adopted public highway will be mitigated, before the Planning Authority issues any permissions.
19. Please add a condition to any permission that the Planning Authority is minded to issue in regard to this proposal requiring that no demolition or construction works shall commence on site until a traffic management plan has been agreed with the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. Schools Lane is subject to a Traffic Regulation Order in parts and other lengths serve as on-street car parking for the surrounding commercial premises. No contractors' vehicles should be parked on the highway and a carefully designed delivery strategy will have to be provided, as the site is constrained.
20. Please add a condition to any permission that the Planning Authority is minded to issue in regard to this proposal requiring the site shall not be occupied until a traffic management plan for the serving of the proposed facilities has been agreed with the Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.
21. The doors to the escape exit onto School Hill will need to be inward opening to ensure they do not oversail onto the public highway.

Representations

22. 16 Letters of support have been received, which raise the following comments:
 - a) Community use of the building bringing benefits to a wide range of people and groups.
 - b) Improved frontage design to the building
 - c) More modern and appropriate design
 - d) New focal point for the village
 - e) Improved amenity and aesthetics of the site given existing poor state of buildings.
 - f) Sensitive renewal of existing church halls
 - g) Existing buildings not fit for use in the 21st Century

5 letters of objection have been received, which raise the following comments:

- a) The development should adopt a phased approach, otherwise the project will be abandoned and in a semi-complete state to the detriment of the local environment.
- b) Contamination of ground water from ground source heat pump
- c) Potential damage and security issues to immediate neighbours during construction process.
- d) Adequate foul and surface water drainage
- e) Inadequate consultation between applicant and neighbours
- f) Maintenance and visual appearance of proposed west and south facing walls of Hall 1.
- g) Inappropriate scale of development
- h) Overspill of café terrace area onto the public highway
- i) Inappropriate development within the Conservation Area
- j) Noise, vibration, odour, dust and lighting concern
- k) Inadequate storage and disposal of refuse
- l) Inadequate parking provision, increase in traffic and highway safety issues
- m) Lack of justification for the proposed community café.
- n) Hours of business operation
- o) Space for deliveries of goods
- p) Detrimental impact on rights of way across 1 Park Lane due to potential construction traffic.
- q) Increased use of public right of way next to the stream on the south side
- r) Overlooking from proposed front dormer window
- s) Access to the rear of the site via the bridge is unsuitable for construction or delivery vehicles.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

23. The main issues in this instance are: impact on the Conservation Area, highway safety, parking and access, refuse collection, noise, vibration, odour, dust and lighting concern, loss of privacy, drainage, flood risk, boundary treatment and public rights of way.

Impact on the Conservation Area

24. The development is assessed in relation to Policy CH/5, which requires planning decisions to pay special attention to the desirability to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Conservation Areas. The development is also assessed in relation to national policy PPS5 (in particular policies HE/7 and HE/9), which requires local planning authorities to take into account the significance of any heritage assets affected by the development and the value that they hold for this and future generations. Local planning authorities are also required to take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. Where a proposal has a harmful impact on the significance of a designated heritage asset which is less than substantial harm, in all cases local planning authorities should: (i) weigh the public benefit of the proposal (for example, that it helps to secure the optimum viable use of the heritage asset in the interests of its long-term conservation) against the harm; and (ii) recognise that the greater the harm to the

significance of the heritage asset the greater the justification will be needed for any loss.

25. The existing former school buildings are prominent with the Conservation Area and, overall, make a positive contribution to the area. The building has however suffered unfortunate alterations and extensions over the years that have eroded its character: for instance the addition of the front lean-to extension, creating an unwelcoming, blank front wall elevation, and the loss of the school bell, front porch and chimney stack to the original school building. The buildings are also in a state of disrepair and this is particularly evident from public views along School Hill.
26. The conservation officer has expressed main concern at the demolition of the earliest of the school buildings, which relates to the middle, single storey building along the front elevation. Whilst this building traces back to the early origins of the school, its architectural value is considered to be less significant given its plain appearance and the aforementioned alterations that have occurred over time. In contrast, the taller Victorian school building to the north of the front elevation is significantly grander in terms of scale and detailing and instantly recognisable. Consequently, the loss of the original school building and its replacement, where that replacement would enhance the existing character of the site, is considered to bring positive benefits to the Conservation Area.
27. The replacement extension would be 1.2m higher than the existing (1839-40) building and would extend further forwards with a canopy adjacent to the public footpath. The proposal would be subsidiary in height to the Victorian building to the north and therefore would retain a subservient relationship with this building. The design of the building is notably different to the existing building, including more openings and glazing resulting in a more open, active frontage but the overall form of the building is not considered to be significantly different to the existing building. The projecting canopy would potentially be adversely prominent in the streetscene and amended drawings (stamped 8th April 2011) have drawn the front canopy away from the 1870 building to mitigate any adverse visual obstruction. High quality materials to this canopy would also make a significant difference to its successful integration with the building and a condition is recommended to agree materials.
28. The front gable projection to the southern building (c1900) would continue the existing eaves and ridge height of this building and extend the building to the edge of the footpath. No objection is raised to this proposal given the existing prominence of the building in the streetscene but also the simple front elevation design, which would preserve the character of this building. The building would also enclose some of the external café seating area, which would otherwise be more exposed in the street.
29. No objection is raised to the proposed front roof dormer of the Victorian building, which was previously evident in this location in historic photographs. The main hall to the rear of the site would be flat-roofed and set below the front range of buildings to be mostly screened from public views. Whilst the flat-roofed structure would be modern in appearance it would not be in a prominent location on the site and would allow for the installation of solar panels and air conditioning units in a location that would not detract from the Conservation Area.

Highway Safety, Parking and Access

30. Several concerns have been raised in relation to the proposal, as follows:
 - (a) construction vehicles and storage
 - (b) lack of parking
 - (c) unsafe parking next to the road junction
 - (d) unsuitable access to the rear of site
 - (e) increase in traffic
 - (f) overspill of the café onto the public footpath
31. A traffic management plan, as suggested by the Local Planning Authority, is considered to be an appropriate means of addressing highway and access issues during the construction period and is recommended to be agreed by condition.
32. No parking exists on the site and therefore on-street parking already arises from the various uses in the church halls. The proposal, in particular the main hall, would provide for a larger capacity within the buildings as well as a wide range of uses, increasing the intensity of the use of the site overall. Maximum parking provision (Policy TR/2) for the proposed floor space of the building would amount to approximately 52 spaces compared to the 30 spaces calculated for the current floor space and use of the building. However, these calculations reflect the total parking spaces required for all uses within the total building occurring concurrently, which in reality is unlikely to be the case; moreover, the uses within the building could be managed to mitigate any travel and parking increase to the site. Consequently, parking demand is expected to be lower than calculated under Policy TR/2 and the applicant is preparing a transport statement to be submitted prior to planning committee.
33. Furthermore, positive factors also need to be considered such as the sustainable, central location of the site in the village and the convenient access by foot, bicycle and public transport with the nearby bus stop. The proposal also involves cycle parking provision for up to 12 spaces, which are currently not provided on the site. Vehicular parking is available directly outside the site on School Hill (approx. 5 spaces), opposite along the parade of shops (approx. 8 spaces) and in the nearby village car park to the north of the High Street (approx. 30 spaces)
34. Concern has been raised with regard to parked vehicles at the road junction of School Hill and Park Lane but it is noted that parking restrictions are already in place at this highway bend to make such parking a highway offence. Improving the safety of this junction, through its design, is also considered to be a separate highways matter to this application.
35. Vehicular access to the rear of the site would be limited by a weak bridge, as raised by local residents. Consequently, this issue would need to be addressed by the applicant in the traffic management plan recommended as a condition above.
36. Overspill from users of the outside café dining area onto the public footpath would be a highway offence in the first place and the applicant has submitted a revised plan to show the inclusion of a 750mm high barrier to enclose the outside café area. The front emergency exit doors would need to open

inwards to avoid oversailing the public highway and this advice can be passed on to the applicant by an informative.

Noise, Vibration, Odour, Dust and Lighting

37. The site is located within a residential area and the recommended conditions of the acting environmental health manager are considered to address several of the issues raised by neighbours and with particular regard to deliveries or collections, external lighting, power driven plant or equipment, including any equipment for heating, ventilation and for the control or extraction of any odour, dust or fumes from the building and methods of construction should driven pile foundations be proposed.
38. The church halls currently benefit from unrestricted hours of use and can accommodate a large gathering of people. The proposed halls would have a similar use as existing and therefore it is considered unreasonable to now subject the halls to a restrictive condition governing hours of use. However, the café area would introduce a new commercial use, which could introduce an adverse level of noise and disturbance to local residents during unsocial hours. Consequently, a condition is recommended to limit the hours of opening in the café.

Loss of Privacy

39. Concern has been raised in relation to overlooking from the proposed front dormer on the 1870 building, which would serve a meeting room. The submitted plans show that the nearest neighbouring windows near to this dormer would be in excess of 25 metres and subsequently the development would be in accordance with the District Design Guide SPD (paragraph 6.68) and would not result in undue loss of privacy.

Surface and Foul Water Drainage and Flood Risk

40. Concern has been raised in relation to current inadequate foul and surface water drainage systems to cope with the increased flow from the development. The application forms state that the proposal would connect to the existing mains sewer and details of the existing drainage capacity were submitted by the applicant on 25th March 2011, which will be commented upon by the Council's drainage manager at planning committee.
41. The Council's drainage manager has made comment with regard to the existing culvert running east to west under the site and a condition is recommended to secure a structural engineers report to outline any impact of the new development on the existing brick arch culvert and remedial works.
42. Potential groundwater pollution has been raised as a concern by a local resident with regard to a new ground source heat pump; however, it is arguable whether such works constitute development and require planning permission in this application. The applicant has however explained that if a ground source heat pump is chosen it will need to be installed via collection pipes within piles that are self contained.

West Boundary Treatment

43. The proposed demolition of the former Red Cross building towards the rear of the site comprises the boundary wall of the neighbouring garden at 1b Park Road and concern has been raised by this neighbour with regard to damage to this wall and resulting security issues. Works to the wall would be dealt with separately under the Party Wall Act 1996 but the permanent resolution of the boundary treatment can also be required by condition to address the neighbour's concern.

Refuse Collection

44. The applicant has confirmed in the application forms that refuse will be stored in the proposed external store to the rear of the site.

Other Issues

45. Concern has been raised with regard to the increased use of the public footpath right of way next to the stream on the south side. Increased use of the public footpath is not considered to be a concern in this application and would not appear to present a problem for existing users of this public highway.

Conclusion

46. The development has gone through several revised schemes and is considered to be appropriate in design, massing and scale in relation to the Conservation Area. The development is not considered to cause an unacceptable adverse impact with regard to issues of highway safety, parking and access, refuse collection, noise, vibration, odour, dust and lighting concern, loss of privacy, drainage, flood risk, boundary treatment and rights of way, subject to the conditions set out below. The development is considered to enhance the site and bring about benefits to the village through the existing and proposed community uses.

Recommendation

47. Approve, as amended, subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. **The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 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. **The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 0208-009, 0208-110h, 0208-111i, 0208-112d, 0208-120h, 0208-121h and 0208-130g (stamped 8th April 2011).**
(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

- 3. No development shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**
(Reason - To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 4. During the period of construction, no power operated machinery shall be operated on the site before 0800 hours and after 1800 hours on weekdays and 1300 hours on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays and Bank Holidays, unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions.**
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance for adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 5. No development shall take place until a structural engineers report outlining the impact of the new development on the existing brick arch culvert running through the site, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason - The applicant is required to provide this detail to show that the development would comply with the Council's land drainage Byelaws and in accordance with Policy DP/1 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 6. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method of construction of these foundations shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 7. During the demolition of the former Red Cross and the construction of the new external store building to the rear of the site, as shown on drawing 0208-110f, a temporary security fence of at least 1.8m height shall be installed along the shared western boundary with 1b Park Lane.**
Reason – To maintain the security of the adjoining neighbouring site during the demolition and construction process in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 8. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected and timescale for its implementation. The boundary treatment shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained.**
(Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the site does not detract from the character of the area in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 9. No development shall take place until details of any power driven plant or equipment, including any equipment for heating, ventilation and for**

the control or extraction of any odour, dust or fumes from the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Said plant or equipment shall then be installed in accordance with approved details and any agreed noise restrictions.

(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- 10. No demolition or construction works shall commence on site until a traffic management plan for these works has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 11. Deliveries or collections for the construction of the development, hereby permitted, shall not take place outside the hours of 08 00 – 18 00 on weekdays and 08 00 – 13 00 hours on Saturdays (nor at anytime on Sundays and Bank or Public Holidays) unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 12. The café premises, hereby permitted, shall not be open to the general public before 08 00 hours on weekdays and 09 00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18 00 hours on weekdays and 15 00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank or Public Holidays), unless otherwise previously agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 13. No commercial deliveries shall be taken at or despatched from the cafe premises outside the hours of 08 00 – 18 00 on Mondays to Fridays and 08 00 – 13 00 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public holidays unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason - To limit the impact of vehicle movements on residential amenities in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 14. No external lighting shall be provided or installed within the site other than in accordance with a scheme which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**
(Reason -To minimise the effects of light pollution on the surrounding area in accordance with Policy NE/14 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD, adopted July 2007.
- South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD): District Design Guide SPD and Development Affecting Conservation Areas SPD.

- Planning Applications: S/0741/07/F, S/2237/07/F, S/1216/07/F, S/0087/08/F and S/1157/08/F.

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