

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 2nd March 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/0559/04/F - Great Eversden
Conversion of Farm Buildings into Four Dwellings
Holbeins Farm, High Street, for P & M Tebbit**

**Recommendation: Refusal
Date for Determination: 13th May 2005**

Departure Application

Members will visit this site on Monday 28th February 2004.

Site and Proposal

1. Holbeins Farm, Gt Eversden is located to the north of the main village. This full application, as amended by drawings received 18th August 2004, proposes the conversion of existing barns to four dwellings.
2. It is proposed to convert an existing timber barn, with corrugated roof, on the High Street frontage to a one bedroom unit and a larger linked barn to the south, of similar construction, gable end to the road, into 2 two bedroom units. An open timber framed barn to the rear of the roadside barn is to be converted into a 2-bedroom unit. The buildings are all single storey. A number of new openings are proposed along with the insertion of rooflights.
3. A further barn to the rear, original to be converted to a further dwelling, is now to be demolished. A total of eight car parking spaces are provided at the rear of the site. Behind the car parking spaces is a further agricultural building owned by the applicant.
4. Garden areas are provided to the west and south of the buildings, on the outside of the site, with Unit 1 being provided with a courtyard within the site.
5. Immediately to the north of the site are two bungalows. To the south is agricultural land. On the opposite side of the road, and a little to the north east is Fox Farm which is the subject of the following item.
6. A statement in support of the original application is attached as Appendix 1. It states that the aim is to convert the buildings to self catering units and visitors to the development would have the use of the brick pit fishing ponds and also have access to numerous walks, linking the farm to nearby villages, Wimpole Hall and Cambridge.
7. The applicants own Red House Farm on the opposite side of the road and to the south east of the site where there is an existing barn that has been converted to holiday accommodation

8. A structural survey submitted with the application states the existing structure of the buildings appear to be in a reasonable condition, and although some strengthening and repair will be required significant sections can be retained and incorporated into the new structures. Materials used for repairs will in general be complimentary to the existing structures.
9. The site is outside the village framework and in the Cambridge Green Belt

Planning History

10. There is no relevant planning history.

Planning Policy

11. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") states that development in the countryside will be restricted to that which is demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
12. **Policy GB2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") states that planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development in the Green Belt unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Development is defined as inappropriate unless it comprises, amongst others, the re-use of buildings provided that a) the development does not result in a materially greater impact on the openness and purpose of the Green Belt; b) strict control is exercised over any proposed extensions and associated uses of surrounding land; c) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction and; d) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings.
13. **Policy RT10** of The Local Plan states that the District Council will support the conversion of buildings to holiday accommodation where a) the building is in sound condition and is capable of being reused without significant extensive rebuilding, extension, or alteration; b) the building itself and the proposal are of an appropriate scale, environmentally acceptable and in keeping with the character of the area and any surrounding buildings and; c) together with the cumulative effect of neighbouring proposals, development would have an acceptable impact on the character and amenity of the locality. Planning permission will be dependent on a Section 106 Agreement to limit the use of the accommodation to short-term holiday lets.

Consultations

14. **Great Eversden Parish Council** recommends approval. "This development is approved provided the dwellings are not to be used as permanent residences."
15. The **Environment Agency** request for conditions requiring the submission of schemes for foul and surface water drainage and adds safeguarding comments.
16. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** requests conditions restricting the hours of operation of power driven machinery during the period of construction, and a scheme for the investigation of any contamination of the site. Informatives should be attached concerning the use of driven pile foundations, burning of waste.
17. The **Local Highway Authority** states that the existing access should be improved to provide a uniform width of minimum 5.0m for a minimum distance of 15.0m from the channel line of the High Street. Gates should be set back a minimum of 5.0m

18. The comments of the **Building Control Manager** will be reported at the meeting.

Representations

19. None received.

Planning Comments - Key Issues

20. The key issue to be considered are whether the proposed scheme complies with the aims of Policies GB2 and RT10 of the Local Plan.
21. The buildings are traditional in style and are important visually in the street scene. In my view it is appropriate to consider some form of re-use. Whilst the conversion of buildings to a general residential use in the Green Belt would be a departure the conversion to holiday lets would accord with Policy RT10.
22. I will report the comments of the Building Control Manager in respect of the structural survey. It is important to ensure that any scheme for conversion of buildings in the Green Belt can be achieved without major or complete reconstruction. I am particularly concerned about the open barn within the site where conversion results in a significant change to the appearance of the building.
23. It is important that the elevation of the buildings facing the High Street remains as unaltered as possible in order to minimise the impact of any conversion on the character of the area. In my view the scheme achieves this with the exception of the introduction of two rooflights. In general I would wish to see a reduction in the number of rooflights throughout the scheme and will discuss this further with the applicant
24. The proposal shows garden land being provided to the west and south of the group of buildings. In my view this element of the scheme has the potential to detract from the openness of the Green Belt. If the units are to be provided as holiday lets it is my view that the residential curtilages can be significantly reduced.
25. I am of the view that the scheme will not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of the bungalows to the north. The comments of the Local Highway Authority can be addressed by condition.

Recommendation

26. Subject to confirmation from the Building Control Manager that the proposed conversions can be carried out without requiring major or complete reconstruction and the receipt of further amended plans addressing the issues of the number of rooflights and extent of the residential curtilage, that the applicant be invited to enter into a Section 10 Agreement securing the units as holiday lets. Subject to the aforementioned delegated powers be given to officers to approve the application, subject to safeguarding conditions.

If the applicant is unwilling to enter into the Section 106 Agreement consent should be refused.

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:

GB2 (General Principles)

RT10 (Development for Holiday Accommodation)

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 Ref. S/0559/04/F

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