

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

5 September 2012

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

S/1492/12/FL – GREAT SHELFORD

Extensions, Alterations and Conversion of Outbuilding to Office at 1 Caius Farm Cottages, Babraham Road for Mr & Mrs D. Levien

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 28 September 2012

Notes:

This application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination as it is a minor application and the recommendation of Great Shelford Parish Council conflicts with the officer recommendation.

To be presented to the Committee by Karen Pell-Coggins

Site and Proposal

1. The site is located outside the Great Shelford village framework and within the Green Belt and countryside. It measures 0.11 of a hectare in area and currently comprises a two-storey, semi-detached, render and slate dwelling and garden on the western side and a four bay, brick /timber and slate/corrugated tin outbuilding and two timber garages and a parking area on the eastern side. The main section of the outbuilding is used for garden storage and the side sections are empty. There is a central gravel driveway that measures three metres in width with access off Babraham Road that is a busy straight road with a speed limit of 40 miles per hour. A number of trees and substantial landscaping are on the site. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 (low risk). Open agricultural land is situated to the south and east. A small group of dwellings are situated to the west.
2. The application, received as valid on 3 August 2012, seeks extensions, alterations and conversion of the outbuilding to an office following demolition of the existing garages. The central section of the outbuilding would be increased in height by 0.2 metres and the side sections of the outbuilding would be increased in height by 0.8 metres. A new extension that provides an additional 20 square metres of floor space would be attached to the south elevation of the outbuilding. The alterations include the insertion of windows and doors to the building, sections of timber cladding, and new slate roofs. The parking area would be extended to provide four parking spaces to the rear of the office and two parking spaces to the rear of the dwelling. The office would be used independently to the dwelling. It would have four employees and be open from 0800 hours to 1800 hours. A number of trees would be removed.

Planning History

3. **S/2277/02/F** - Conversion of Barn into Dwelling – Approved
4. **S/0556/91/F** - Access - Approved

Planning Policy

5. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Core Strategy DPD, 2007:**
ST/1 Green Belt
6. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD, 2007:**
DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
DP/7 Development Frameworks
GB/1 Development in the Green Belt
GB/2 Mitigating the Impact of Development in the Green Belt
ET/1 Limitations on the Occupancy of New Premises in South Cambridgeshire
ET/7 Conversion of Rural Buildings for Employment
ET/8 Replacement Buildings in the Countryside
NE/1 Energy Efficiency
NE/6 Biodiversity
NE/11 Flood Risk
TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel
TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards
7. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):**
Trees & Development Sites SPD - Adopted January 2009
Biodiversity SPD - Adopted July 2009
Landscape in New Developments SPD - Adopted March 2010
District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010

Consultation by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Local Planning Authority

8. **Great Shelford Parish Council** – Comments that the proposal appears to comply with sections 89 and 90 of the NPPF recommendations for development in the Green Belt but it recommends refusal for the following reasons: -
 - i) It would set a precedent for additional development in the Green Belt;
 - ii) The use of the outbuildings for commercial purposes and the associated traffic movements to the rear of the buildings would be intrusive to the occupants of 1 Caius Farm Cottages;
 - iii) The larger area for car parking would be intrusive and inappropriate in the Green Belt; and,
 - iv) There are several vacant office buildings within the village envelope that could be used by the applicant's.
9. **Local Highways Authority** – Requests that the access is a minimum width of 5 metres for a minimum distance of 10 metres measured from the highway carriageway and conditions in relation to the provision of pedestrian visibility splays measuring 2.0 metres x 2.0 metres either side of the access that are kept clear from obstruction over a height of 600mm, that the driveway is constructed so that falls and levels are such that no private water would drain across or onto the public highway, and that the access is constructed from bound materials so that loose debris does not spread on to the public highway. Also requests an informative with regards to works to the public highway.

10. **Environmental Health Officer** – Has concerns that problems could arise from noise and suggests conditions in relation to the hours of use of power operated machinery during construction and details of any power driven plant to be installed within the office. Also requests informatives with regards to the burning of waste on site and disposal of asbestos.
11. **Contaminated Land Officer** – Comments that a condition in relation to the investigation of contaminated land is not required.
12. **Environment Agency** – Has no objections in principle but comments that foul drainage should be discharged to the public foul sewer unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that a connection is not reasonably available. Any non-mains drainage system requires the consent of the Agency. Suggests informatives with regards to foul water drainage connections to existing or new septic tanks.
13. **Trees and Landscapes Officer** – Comments that the trees are not afforded any statutory protection. Suggests an informative in relation to access for construction vehicles and the impact upon low canopies given that the frontage of the site is well treed
14. **Landscape Design Officer** – No response to date.
15. **Ecology Officer** – No response to date.

Representations by Members of the Public

16. The owner of the property has commented that he has not been correctly served notice of the application.

Material Planning Considerations

17. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are whether the proposal would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt in policy terms, whether there is any other harm, and whether any very special circumstances could be demonstrated that would outweigh any harm identified through inappropriateness or other harm.

Inappropriate Development

18. Paragraph 87 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
19. Paragraph 89 states that the extension or alteration of a building is not inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building and the replacement of a building is not inappropriate provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.
20. Paragraph 90 states that engineering operations and the re-use of buildings of permanent and substantial construction are not inappropriate provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt.
21. Policy ET/7 of the LDF supports the conversion of existing rural building for employment purposes providing: - (i) the buildings are structurally sound; (ii) the buildings are not makeshift in nature and are of permanent, substantial construction;

(iii) the buildings are capable of re-use without materially changing their existing character or impact upon the surrounding countryside; and, (iv) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings. Any increase in floor area will be strictly controlled, and must be for the benefit of the design, or in order to better integrate the development with its surroundings. There will be a general presumption against future extensions of such buildings. Incidental uses such as car parking and storage should be accommodated within the group of buildings, or on well related land where landscaping can reduce the visual impact of the new site. Employment generated must be in scale with the rural location. Developments resulting in significant numbers of employees or visitors must only be located near to larger settlements or accessible by public transport, cycling, or walking.

22. The existing outbuilding is in a good state of repair and considered to be of permanent construction and therefore capable of conversion. The development would not result in encroachment outside the existing residential curtilage and lead to a loss of openness to the Green Belt.
23. The existing outbuilding has a floor space of 70 square metres. The proposed extension to the south would increase the floor space of the building by 20 square metres. This enlargement in footprint would result in an increase of 30% in the floor space of the building. This is considered proportionate to the scale of the original building and would not be materially larger than the existing garages on the site to be replaced although not in the same use.
24. The proposed roof extensions would increase the height of the central section of the building by 0.8 metres and the side sections of the building by 0.2 metres. These enlargements are necessary to raise the eaves height and make the internal floor space more usable. They are not considered to result in disproportionate additions above the size of the original building and would retain its subservient scale to the dwelling on the site.
25. The increase in the width of the driveway by two metres and enlargement of the parking area is not considered to result in encroachment in the Green Belt as it would be well related to the building and within the existing residential curtilage. It would not lead to a loss of rural character and openness given its limited scale, lack of visibility from public viewpoints, and landscaping along the boundary that could be improved if necessary.
26. The extensions would replicate the traditional agricultural form and design of the building. The proposed external alterations to provide new cladding to the open side sections of the outbuilding would retain its original character and appearance. The windows and doors would be simple in design and located within existing openings or be the minimum required for the proposed use. The replacement slate roofs to the side sections of the building are considered to improve the appearance of the building.
27. Given the above reasons, the proposal is not considered to represent inappropriate development that would, by definition, be harmful in policy terms.

Other Harm

28. The proposal would not result in any further encroachment to the Green Belt from the previous use or lead to a visually intrusive development that would adversely affect the openness or rural character and appearance of the Green Belt.

29. The conversion of the building to an office use for a business that supplies automatic identification products is considered to provide an essential service for Cambridge as a local centre in accordance with Policy ET/1 of the LDF.
30. The employment of four staff is considered an acceptable scale for the sustainability of the location. The site is located a two minute walk from the Babraham Road Park and Ride site where there is a frequent bus service to Cambridge and within cycling distance of Cambridge and the village of Great Shelford. The proposal is not therefore considered to result in sole reliance on private modes of transport such as the car.
31. The proposal is not considered to be detrimental to highway safety subject to the receipt of amended plans that widen the access to 5 metres in order to comply with Local Highways Authority standards and conditions to be attached to any consent to ensure pedestrian visibility splays are provided and the driveway is constructed with adequate materials and drainage.
32. The office use would require 1 vehicle parking space per 25 square metres of gross floor area. The proposed floor space is 91 square metres. Therefore, four parking spaces are required. Four parking spaces and turning space would be provided within the site. The dwelling would require a maximum of 2 vehicle parking spaces. Two parking spaces and turning would be provided. The proposal would therefore comply with the Council's parking standards and not result in on-street parking. It should also be noted that there is a layby directly in front of the site.
33. The office use would require 1 secure cycle parking space per 30 square metres of gross floor area. Therefore, three cycle parking spaces are required. No cycle parking is provided on site and a condition would be attached to any consent to secure this provision and encourage a sustainable mode of transport.
34. The proposal would not result in the loss of any significant trees or hedges that contribute to the visual amenity of the area. A landscaping condition would be attached to any consent to agree additional planting in order to enhance the character and appearance of the area.
35. The conversion of the outbuilding is not considered to lead to the loss of an important habitat for protected species. A biodiversity survey was submitted with the application that states there was no evidence of bats or barn owls within the building.
36. The office would be situated a distance of 7 metres from the boundary of the garden to No. 1 Caius Farm Cottages and 11 metres from the first floor window in the side elevation of that dwelling. The proposal is not considered to adversely affect the amenities of that neighbour through any unduly overbearing mass, through a loss of light, or through overlooking that would lead to a loss of privacy. The extensions would be limited in scale and orientated to the south east an adequate distance from the boundary. The windows would be at ground floor level only and the garden would be screened by significant landscaping. This relationship is therefore considered acceptable.
37. The access to the office would run along the boundary of the garden to No. 1 Caius Farm Cottages and 4 metres from the first floor window in the side elevation of that dwelling. The proposal is not considered to adversely affect the amenities of that neighbour through noise and disturbance given the limited traffic generation and nature of traffic that would result from four employees from an office use within normal working hours.

38. Conditions would be attached to any consent to agree details of any plant or equipment to be used within the office and hours of use of power operated machinery during construction.
39. Given the above reasons, the proposal is not therefore considered to result in any other harm to the Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances

40. Given that the proposal is not considered to represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt in policy terms and no other harm has been identified, the need for the demonstration of very special circumstances is not applicable in this case.

Other Matters

41. The approval of this particular application would not set a precedent for future development in the Green Belt as each application is determined upon its own merits.
42. Informatives would be attached to any consent to advise the applicants of foul drainage issues if there is not a connection available to the public foul sewer.
43. A condition would be attached to any consent in relation to the provision of an appropriate refuse store.
44. The fact that there are existing office premises available in the village does not justify refusal of the application if it is considered acceptable in planning terms.
45. The Council considers that notice has been served on the owners of the property correctly as part of the planning application process.

Conclusion

46. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that planning permission should be granted in this instance.

Recommendation

47. Approval subject to receipt of amended plans that widen the access and change the roof design of the side extension. The following conditions and informatives are suggested: -

Conditions

- i) 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.)
- ii) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing numbers as per amended plans.
(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

- iii) No development shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development 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.)
- iv) 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. The boundary treatment shall be completed before the dwelling is occupied 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.)
- v) No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development. The details shall also include specification of all proposed trees, hedges and shrub planting, which shall include details of species, density and size of stock.
(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- vi) All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.
(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- vii) The access shall have a minimum width of 5 metres for a distance of 10 metres from the near edge of the highway carriageway.
(Reason - In the interest of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- viii) No development shall take place until details of the method of surface water drainage for the driveway has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - In the interest of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- ix) Visibility splays shall be provided on both sides of the access and shall be maintained free from any obstruction over a height of 600mm within an area of 2m x 2m measured from and along respectively the highway boundary (Reason - In the interest of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- x) The use, hereby permitted, shall not commence until four vehicle parking spaces for the office use and turning space has been laid out within the site in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The spaces shall thereafter be retained for vehicle parking and turning.
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- xi) The use, hereby permitted, shall not commence until three covered and secure cycle parking spaces for the office use have been provided within the site in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the spaces shall thereafter be retained for cycle parking.
(Reason - To ensure the provision of covered and secure cycle parking in accordance with Policy TR/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- xii) The use, hereby permitted, shall not commence until a scheme for the siting and design of the screened storage of refuse has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the refuse store shall thereafter be retained.
(Reason - To provide for the screened storage of refuse in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- xiii) Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision and implementation of foul water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the implementation programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To reduce the risk of pollution to the water environment and to ensure a satisfactory method of foul water drainage in accordance with Policy NE/10 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- xiv) 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(s) but excluding office equipment and vehicles and the location of the outlet from the building(s) of such plant or 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 - To protect the occupiers of adjoining buildings (dwellings) from the effect of odour, dust or fumes in accordance with Policy NE/16 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- xv) No deliveries shall be taken at or despatched from the site before 0800 hours and after 1800 hours on weekdays and before 0800 hours and after 1300 hours on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays and Bank Holidays
(Reason - To limit the impact of vehicle movements on residential amenities)

in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- xvi) During the period of demolition and construction, no power operated machinery shall be operated on the site before 0800 hours and after 1800 hours on weekdays and before 0800 hours and after 1300 hours on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays and Bank Holidays, unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance for adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- xvii) Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification), the premises shall be used for offices or research and development and for no other purpose (including any other purposes in Class B1 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 or re-enacting that Order with or without modification).
(Reason - To protect the amenities of adjoining residents in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- xviii) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no development within Classes A and B of Part 41 of Schedule 2 of the Order shall take place unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf.
(Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the site does not detract from the character and openness of the Green Belt in accordance with Policy GB/1 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- xix) 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. This information shall include a layout plan with beam orientation, full isolux contour maps and a schedule of equipment in the design (luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and luminaire profiles, angle of glare) and shall assess artificial light impact in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Engineers (2005) 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of obtrusive Light'. The approved lighting scheme shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details.
(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.)
- xx) 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 - In the interests of visual/residential/rural amenity in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Informatives

- i) During demolition and construction, there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the District Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

- ii) The granting of a planning permission does not constitute a permission or licence to a developer to carry out any works within, or disturbance of, or interference with, the Public Highway, and that a separate permission must be sought from the Highway Authority for such works.
- iii) Foul drainage from the proposed development shall be discharged to the public foul sewer unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that a connection is not reasonably available.
- iv) Any 'non mains' foul water drainage system may require the prior written Consent of the Agency under the term of the Water Resources Act 1991. Such consent may not be forthcoming. This would ultimately be decided by the Agency's National Permitting Team. The applicant can download the application form from our website or our National Customer Contact Centre can send one. The contact number is 03708 506 506 (Monday–Friday, 8am–6pm).
- v) New Septic Tanks (where permitted):
Foul drainage may be discharged to a septic tank and soakaway system which meets the requirements of British Standard BS 6297: 1983 and which complies with the following:- (a) there is no connection to any watercourse or land drainage system and no part of the soakaway system is situated within 10 metres of any ditch or watercourse, or within 50 metres of a well, borehole or spring. (b) porosity tests are carried out to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate that suitable subsoil and adequate land area is available for the soakaway (BS 6297: 1983 refers).
- vi) Connection to an Existing Septic Tank:
The applicant is advised to obtain professional advice as to whether the septic tank and its associated soakaway system is adequate to accept the additional drainage resulting from this development.
- vii) The applicant must ensure that there is no discharge of effluent from the site to any watercourse or surface water drain or sewer.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents: Trees & Development Sites SPD - Adopted January 2009, Biodiversity SPD - Adopted July 2009, Landscape in New Developments SPD - Adopted March 2010, and District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Planning File References: S/1492/12/FL , S/2277/02/F and S/0556/91/F

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