

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

6th April 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0045/05/F - Great Shelford
Extension and Alteration of Clubhouse and Erection of New Golf Professional Shop at
Gog Magog Golf Club

Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 8th March 2005

Site and Proposal

1. The application site comprises a golf course and associated clubhouse/shop facilities located at Shelford Bottom which lies within the countryside and Green Belt. The site is bounded by Babraham Road to the south and Cherry Hinton Road to the west. The clubhouse is a single storey brick and tile building
2. The full application, submitted on 11th January 2005, and amended on 21st February 2005, comprises two elements:
 - The addition of a single storey pitched roof extension on the south-west side of the clubhouse in order to provide improved dining/restaurant facilities; and
 - The erection of a new detached building on the east side of the existing clubhouse and to the north of the putting green for use as a golf professionals shop. The existing pro shop is contained within the main clubhouse building and this would be converted to a meeting room. The new building would result in the loss of some silver birch trees and car parking spaces.
3. A covering letter submitted with the application states that the application is the culmination of several years of deliberation by the committee of the Golf Club and extensive consultation with its membership. The proposal follows recent expansion of the playing facilities from 27 holes to 36, which was accompanied by an increase in the number of members. The non-playing facilities have not seen expansion or modernisation for many years and the club feels it is important to improve this part of the complex in order to continue to attract the larger and more prestigious regional and national tournaments and events. Currently the club only has a small dining room and can only host larger formal dinners by closing the lounge area to other members and visitors and setting this area as a temporary banqueting room. The kitchen also struggles to cope with larger dinners and part of the proposal includes for its alteration and enlargement. The existing pro shop is too small and the proposal includes for a new detached shop with the vacated space being adapted to provide additional office and meeting room space which is needed as staff are currently working in cramped conditions.

Planning History

4. Extensions to the clubhouse have been permitted under planning refs: **S/2052/88/F** and **C/0124/72**.

5. **S/1059/93/F** - Consent granted for practice area, car park extension and relocation of the access
6. **S/1258/98/F** - Permission given for shelter for ball dispenser/washing facilities on driving range

Planning Policy

7. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 states that development in the countryside will be resisted unless the proposals can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular rural location.
8. **Policy 9/2a** of the Structure Plan states that within the Green Belt, new development will be limited to that required for agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport, cemeteries, or other uses appropriate to a rural area.
9. **Policy GB2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 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 [in part] buildings providing essential facilities for outdoor sports and recreation or for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with Green Belt purposes.
10. **Policy GB5** of the Local Plan states that the Council will not support proposals for outdoor sport and recreation in the Green Belt which require substantial buildings, car parks, floodlights or which frequently attract large numbers of participants or spectators. The preamble to this policy states that certain recreational facilities, such as country parks and golf courses, need extensive areas of land but generally preserve its openness. Any associated buildings must only provide the functions to support these uses.
11. **Policy RT1** of the Local Plan requires new recreation/tourism development to avoid creating an intrusive feature in the landscape.

Consultation

12. **Great Shelford Parish Council** objects to the application stating:

"No objection to extension and alterations to the clubhouse but the proposed profession shop is unacceptable in its present location. It does not sit happily in relation to the existing clubhouse and will be intrusive and prominent in views from the south east of the clubhouse. We would prefer to see it resited so that it links in with the existing building and is not a further encroachment into the green belt."
13. **The Local Highways Authority** has expressed concern that the increase in retail and restaurant areas may impact on the number of car and cycle parking numbers required within the development. It is requested that the applicant provide details of membership numbers and available parking so an assessment of this can be made.
14. **The Trees and Landscape Officer** raises no objection stating that the proposal will impact on 2 or 3 Silver Birch mediocre quality.
15. **The Environment Agency** raises no objections subject to informatives relating to surface and foul water drainage being attached to any planning consent.

Representations

16. None

Planning Comments - Key Issues

17. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application relate to:
- The impact of the development upon the character, appearance and openness of the countryside and Green Belt;
 - Loss of trees; and
 - Loss of parking/highway safety issues.
18. The erection of extensions and new buildings for recreational purposes are generally supported within the development plan providing the development does not affect the openness of the Green Belt and the character of the countryside and providing the buildings can be demonstrated to be essential.
19. As stated within the applicant's covering letter, the facilities at the golf club are in need of upgrading, with the pro shop and dining areas being inadequate to meet the needs of the users of the golf club. I am satisfied that, based on the supporting information, there is a need for the development proposed and that the scale of the shop and dining facilities are not unreasonable.
20. The Parish Council has objected to the visual impact of the detached pro shop building and requested that it be attached to the existing building in front of the female changing room area. This issue has been discussed with the applicant's agent who is extremely reluctant to change the plans requesting that the application be determined as it stands. It is stressed that the pro shop performs several functions, including day to day supervision of the course and car park as well as acting as a gateway to the clubhouse. The shop also needs to be well located in relation to the practice ground on the north east side of the car park.
21. Whilst I concur that the proposed building would be visible in views from the south-east of the clubhouse, these views would be from within the confines of the golf club itself. The building would be grouped with existing buildings on the site and would be in keeping with the scale, style, character and materials of the existing clubhouse. There is a high close boarded fence along the Babraham Road boundary of the site together with some screening and I consider that neither the pro shop nor the extension would be intrusive in the landscape or materially increase the impact of the site upon its surroundings.
22. The comments of the Trees and Landscape Officer in respect of the removal of a number of silver birch trees have not been received to date and the recommendation made is subject to no objections being raised in this regard.
23. The new pro shop building would result in the loss of a number of car parking spaces. I would estimate this to be approximately 6 spaces. Further information on membership numbers and available parking spaces has been requested following receipt of the Local Highways Authority's comments. Any information received will be reported verbally at the Committee meeting.

Recommendation

24. Providing no objections are raised by the Trees and Landscape Officer to the loss of trees and providing there is sufficient car/cycle parking on the site to cater for the demands of the development, approval, as amended by drawing numbers 707/29/B and 707/30/F date stamped 21st February 2005:

1. Standard Condition A - Time limited permission (Reason A);
2. Sc5a - Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5a(ii));

Informatives

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:** P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development) and P9/2a (Development in the Green Belt);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** GB2 (Development in the Green Belt), GB5 (Recreational Role of the Green Belt) and RT1 (Recreation and Tourism Development)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Impact upon the openness of the Green Belt and upon the character and appearance of the countryside.

General

1. See Environment Agency letter dated 18th January 2005

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

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- File Refs: S/0045/05/F

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