

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

6th April 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/0254/05/F - Willingham
Erection of Dwelling Following Demolition of Existing Dwelling
At Flat Road Farm, Flat Road for Mr & Mrs Clover**

Recommendation: Refusal

Site and Proposal

1. Flat Road Farm is situated to the north west of Flat Road approximately 1500 metres outside the Willingham village framework, surrounded by flat fields and relatively open countryside. The existing dwelling on the site comprises of a detached red brick bungalow with roof space converted to additional accommodation, set within large gardens. A number of agricultural buildings are located to the north of the dwelling. There are a number of mature trees on the site which help to screen the existing dwelling from Flat Road and a low hedgerow which surrounds the south western and north western boundaries of the site. Views of the existing dwelling are afforded across the adjacent fields from Earith Road.
2. The application, received on 2nd February 2005, proposes the erection of a detached 1-½ storey chalet style 4 or 5 bedroom dwelling following the demolition of the existing dwelling. The application also proposes the demolition of a number of existing outbuildings which are located to the north-west of the existing dwelling.

Planning History

3. No relevant planning history on this site.

Planning Policy

4. The existing dwelling and its curtilage is located a considerable distance outside the Willingham village framework. As such the site is defined as being located in the countryside.
5. Policy **HG15** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004** states that proposals for the replacement of a dwelling in the countryside will be permitted where the proposed replacement dwelling is in scale and character with the dwelling it is intended to replace; and the proposed replacement dwelling would not materially increase the impact of the site on the surrounding countryside.
6. Replacement dwellings in accordance with **Policy HG15** would be an exception to **Policy P1/2** of the County Structure Plan which normally restricts development in the countryside.

Consultation

7. **Willingham Parish Council** recommends approval.

8. **Old West Internal Drainage Board** has no comment from a drainage point of view.
9. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** recommends an informative, in respect of the need for a Demolition Notice, to be attached to any approval to ensure the protection of the residential environment of the area.
10. **Environment Agency** does not object in principle but comments that the application does not consider sufficiently foul water and surface water drainage and as such recommends conditions and informatives to be attached to any approval to prevent increased risk of pollution to the water environment and to ensure a satisfactory method of surface water drainage.

Representations

11. None received.

Planning Comments - Key Issues

12. The key issues in relation to this application are:
 - The scale and character of the proposed dwelling against that of the existing; and
 - The impact of the proposal on the openness and rural appearance of the countryside.
13. The existing dwelling on the site is a relatively modest structure which has a floor area of approximately 85m² and measures approximately 6.2 metres to the ridge. It has the appearance of a bungalow which has had the roof space converted to additional living accommodation, with roof lights serving the upstairs rooms. In terms of volume the existing structure measures approximately 334m³. Although the existing dwelling is a relatively modest structure long range views are afforded of the site, particularly when viewed from Earith Road. The existing dwelling, although situated in a farm setting, is not the subject of an agricultural occupancy condition.
14. The proposed replacement dwelling is significantly taller than the existing dwelling, measuring approximately 9.6 metres to the ridge, an increase of approximately 3.4 metres, and has a floor area of approximately 134m². The overall volume of the proposed dwelling is also significantly greater, measuring approximately 799m³. The proposed replacement dwelling would therefore constitute a volume increase of approximately 239% above the existing dwelling.

Scale and Character

15. Policy HG15 states that proposals of a replacement dwelling in the countryside will be permitted where the proposed replacement dwelling is in scale and character with the dwelling it is intended to replace. Whereas the existing dwelling is a relatively modest structure, with a simple form, the proposed dwelling is much more elaborate, featuring dormer windows at first floor level and an open sided veranda to the rear. Whilst the proposed dwelling has been designed as a 'chalet', in keeping with the principles of the existing dwelling, the scale and character are such that it bears no relationship to the existing. Given the difference between the design, height and overall volume of the proposed dwelling compared to the existing dwelling it would be difficult to argue that the two dwellings compare with one another.

Impact on the Surrounding Countryside

16. Policy HG15 also seeks to ensure that the proposed replacement dwelling would not materially increase the impact of the site on the surrounding countryside. Whilst I appreciate that the site is in a relatively remote location, public views of the site are afforded from Earith Road. The proposed dwelling, particularly by virtue of its height and overall mass, would have a significantly greater impact on the surrounding countryside than the existing property. Although the proposed dwelling is in a similar location to the existing, the overall floorspace of the dwelling increases from approximately 85.41m² to approximately 134m². Even allowing for the proposed demolition of a number of detached outbuildings, the increased built mass of the proposed dwelling combined with an increase of approximately 3.4 metres in height the resultant impact would make the dwelling much more visible and overbearing on the surrounding countryside.

Recommendation

17. Refusal

Flat Road Farm is situated in a remote location, detached from Willingham village and outside the village framework, as identified in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004. The existing dwelling is a relatively modest structure, with a ridge height of approximately 6.2m. The proposed replacement dwelling is a much larger structure, measuring approximately 9.6m to the top of the ridge.

The proposed replacement dwelling, by virtue of its design, scale and form would be out of scale and character with the existing dwelling and would materially increase the impact of the site on the surrounding countryside. It is therefore contrary to the provisions of Policy HG15 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

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 files Ref: S/0254/05/F

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