

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 13th May 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/0455/05/O - Stow-cum-Quy
Bungalow and Garage Rear of 54 Station Road
for Mrs E Theobald**

**Recommendation: Refusal
Date for Determination: 3rd May 2005**

Site and Proposal

1. This site comprises of garden land with an area measuring 0.054 hectares. The site is adjoined to the northwest by garden land serving no. 58 and to the southeast by garden land to no. 52. The rear of the site adjoins open fields. The site is adjacent to the village edge and Green Belt, but falls within the village framework. Station Road has a linear character, where opportunities for development are limited. It is served by two accesses off Station Road at the north and south ends of the frontage. There is an attached garage, adjoining the boundary with no. 52 on the southeastern side of the site.
2. This application, submitted on 8th March 2005, seeks outline planning permission for a bungalow with a detached garage on a plot to the rear of the existing bungalow. All matters are to be reserved, with the exception of access. The development would be at a density of 18.52 dwellings per hectare.
3. The development site will be accessed via a drive leading from the northern crossover off Station Road. Plans submitted indicate that pedestrian visibility splays of 2m by 2m can be provided. A drive will run between the existing bungalow and the side boundary with no. 58 Station Road. Demolition of a side extension to the existing dwelling at no. 54 would provide a strip of land at least 3 metres wide between the new drive and the existing bungalow. A turning area to rear of no. 54 will be provided and car parking in the form of a single garage with space in front for a parked car. The southern crossover, drive and attached garage will be retained to serve the existing dwelling.

Planning History

4. **S/0947/82/F** gave planning permission for an extension to no. 54 Station Road.

Planning Policy

5. **Policy P1/3 'Sustainable Design in Built Development'** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("Structure Plan") states that a high standard of design and sustainability should be adopted for all new forms of development, responding to the local character of the built environment.
6. **Policy P5/3 'Density'** of the Structure Plan sets out density standards for housing development. It states that densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be

acceptable and the need to maximise the use of land by applying the highest densities possible and which are compatible with local character.

7. Structure Plan policy **P5/5 'Homes in Rural Areas'** permits small-scale housing developments in villages, where appropriate, taking into account three criteria which include affordable housing need, character of the village and setting, and the level of jobs, services, infrastructure and passenger transport in the immediate area.
8. Policy **SE5 'List of Infill Villages'** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, adopted 2004 ("Local Plan") identifies Stow-cum-Quy as an Infill Village and sets out the criteria against which residential development will be assessed. It restricts developments to not more than two dwellings, except in very exceptional cases where a slightly larger development may be permitted if it would lead to the sustainable recycling of a brownfield site bringing positive overall benefit to the village.
9. Policy **SE9 'Village Edges'** of the Local Plan requires development on the edge of villages to be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact upon the countryside and to ensure that harmony with the prevailing landscape character is achieved.
10. Policy **HG10 'Housing Mix and Design'** of the Local Plan requires residential developments to include a mix of units in terms of type, size, and affordability, making best use of land and for the design and layout of schemes to be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape.
11. Policy **HG11 'Backland Development'** of the Local Plan only permits development to the rear of existing properties when it would not 1) result in overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of existing properties 2) result in noise and disturbance to existing residential properties through the use of its access, 3) result in highway dangers through use of its access or 4) be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.

Consultations

12. **Stow-cum-Quy Parish Council** recommends approval of the development, commenting that it has no objections but queries whether this is backland development and over-development of the site?
13. **Swaffham Internal Drainage Board** has no comment from a drainage point of view.
14. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** comments that conditions should be imposed to minimise the impact of development works on neighbouring residents.
15. The comments of the **Trees and Landscape Officer** will be reported verbally to the Committee.

Representations

16. One letter has been received from neighbours at no. 52 Station Road. They have no objection in principle but seek assurance that the building would be single storey with no rooms allowed in the roof area. They would require a wall to be erected on the boundary line in order to take away some of the noise which the car turning area would create.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

17. The key planning considerations in determining this application relate to the impact of the proposed development upon the village edge, village character and residential amenities.

Impact on the village character

18. Planning permission for a similar proposal for two houses on neighbouring land to the rear of nos. 58-60 was refused in 2000 and an appeal dismissed (see Appendix A for a copy of the appeal decision and site layout plan). In the Inspector's appraisal of the issues relating to that development he acknowledged the character and appearance of Station Road as one of:

“Relatively low density residential development limited to frontages. There is a mix of traditional cottages and modern bungalows. Dwellings are fairly generously laid out with gaps between buildings offering views of countryside beyond. The area retains a spacious rural village character.

Siting of the proposed detached houses behind a pair of semi-detached cottages would be out of accord with and would intensify this established pattern of development. The impact on village character would on its own be fairly limited, but a permission would make it difficult to resist similar developments in the area which cumulatively would be much more harmful to village character. The layout and depth of individual sites suggests that such opportunities could be identified fairly readily along Station Road.”

19. This is certainly, also the case with the proposal at land rear of no. 54.

Impact on the village edge

20. The Inspector goes on to note that the development at nos. 58-60 would intrude into the rural landscape, urbanising the village edge. The site rear of no. 54 will have a similar impact, projecting beyond the obvious built area of the village due to the staggered nature of northeastern edge of the village along Station Road. In order to retain the acknowledged linear character of Station Road backland development is to be resisted (paragraph 87.13 of the Local Plan).

Backland Development

21. Notwithstanding the obvious concerns regarding the wider impact upon the village character and village edge, the backland development proposed for this site also fails to meet several of the requirements under policy HG11 of the Local Plan.
22. The angle of the access to the new dwelling will require it to pass within 3 metres of the existing bungalow, having the effect of also reducing the private garden area to, at its closest point, 5 metres deep, increasing to 10.5 metres where it adjoins the proposed turning area. While the garden area itself will be adequate to serve the dwelling, the close proximity of the access and turning area will seriously impact upon the enjoyment of the existing property and its reduced garden area.
23. Similarly, the access will run adjacent to the side boundary with no. 58 for the entire length of its garden. The close proximity and length of the access will result in unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to its occupiers.

24. Turning adjacent to the private garden of no. 52 will result in some noise and disturbance to its occupiers. The siting of a wall for the part of the boundary where the turning is proposed could relieve this to a degree but is not entirely satisfactory.
25. As discussed previously, the proposal is also out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity and would be detrimental to the village.

Recommendation

26. In light of the issues raised, the application is recommended for refusal, on the following grounds:
 1. Station Road has an acknowledged linear built form, as noted in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, paragraph 87.13. Existing development is of a low density and the area retains a rural village character. The layout and depth of plots on Station Road provide a number of potential backland development plots. In dismissing an appeal for residential development on adjacent land to the rear of numbers 58-60 Station Road, the Planning Inspector agreed with the Local Planning Authority, that allowing backland development would set a precedent for development in depth in the area, and which cumulatively, would be harmful to the village character of Stow-cum-Quy. The situation at number 54 is identical in this respect and as such is contrary to policies P1/3 'Sustainable Design in Built Development' and P5/5 'Homes in Rural Areas' of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and SE5 'List of Infill Villages', SE9 'Village Edges', HG10 'Housing Mix and Design' and HG11 'Backland Development' of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, adopted 2004.
 2. The proposed bungalow and garage are, by definition, backland development. Local Plan policy HG11 sets out the criteria against which such proposals will be considered. The development fails to meet these requirements:

The angle of the access to the new dwelling will require it to pass within 3 metres of the existing bungalow, having the effect of also reducing the private garden area to, at the closest point, 5 metres deep, increasing to 10.5 metres where it adjoins the proposed turning area. While the garden area itself will be adequate to serve the dwelling, the close proximity of the access and turning area will seriously impact upon the enjoyment of that property and its garden area.

Similarly, the access will run adjacent to the side boundary with no. 58 for the entire length of its garden. The close proximity and length of the access will result in unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance to its occupiers, impacting upon the enjoyment of the private garden area to that property.

Turning adjacent to the private garden of no. 52 will result in some noise and disturbance to its occupiers. The siting of a wall for the part of the boundary where the turning is proposed could relieve this to a degree but is not entirely satisfactory.

As set out in the above reason, the proposal is also out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity and would be detrimental to the village.

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/0455/05/O and S/1827/00/O

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