

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee

13th May 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0483/05/F - Castle Camps

Change of Use of Agricultural Land to Paddock, Erection of Boundary Fence and Excavation of Open Ditch at Land Adjacent Sunnyside, Haverhill Road for Mr & Mrs O'Malley

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 5th May 2005

Members will visit the site on Wednesday 11th May 2005.

Site and Proposal

1. The 0.228 hectare site forms part of a large open field that is situated immediately to the north of the Castle Camps village framework, within the countryside. There is a wide grass verge comprising a number of trees and an open ditch that adjoins Haverhill Road to the west. Sunnyside is a modern dwelling that is situated to the south. It has a hedgerow along its northern boundary. Open fields lie to the north and east.
2. The application, received on 10th March 2005, proposes the change of use of agricultural land to a paddock, the erection of a boundary fence and the excavation of an open ditch. The proposed 1.5 metre high post and rail fence will enclose the site except at the point of access to Haverhill Road. The proposed landscaping includes the planting of small groups of trees within the paddock and a hawthorn hedge along the north, east and west boundaries of the site. The existing hawthorn hedge along the southern boundary will be removed. The ditch will be excavated inside the hedge on the northern boundary of the site and will link to the existing ditch along the western boundary.

Planning History

3. Planning permission was granted for a two-storey chalet style replacement dwelling and triple garage (ref. S/0963/01/F) on the adjacent site (Sunnyside) in August 2001.
4. A further planning application for a replacement dwelling, annexe and double garage (ref. S/1165/02/F) on the adjacent site in September 2002. This permission increased the eaves height of the house by one metre, converted the triple garage to an annexe with the addition of a single storey extension to the rear and gave consent for a double garage to the front of the house.
5. An application for a replacement dwelling (revised design) and triple garage (ref. S/0054/03/F) on the adjacent site was refused planning permission in March 2003. The application sought to increase the height of the dwelling and the size of the garage. It was subsequently dismissed at appeal in October 2003.

Planning Policy

Development Plan

6. **Policy P1/2** of the **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003** seeks to restrict development in the countryside to that which can be demonstrated to be essential in a particular location. The aim of this policy is to ensure that any new development is appropriate in nature to the open and rural character of the countryside.
7. **Policy P1/3** of the **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003** seeks to ensure that all new developments have a high standard of design that is integrated with adjoining landscapes.
8. **Policy EN1** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004** identifies the local landscape character areas of the district and seeks to ensure that the local character and distinctiveness of these areas is respected, retained, and wherever possible enhanced.
9. **Policy SE9** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004** states that development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped in order to minimise the impact of the development on the countryside.
10. **Policy EN5** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004** requires trees, hedges and woodland and other natural features to be retained wherever possible in proposals for new development.

National Planning Guidance

11. Planning Policy Statement 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) seeks to restrict development in the countryside in order to safeguard its open and rural character. Paragraph 17 is particularly relevant to this application as it states that support will be given to countryside based enterprises and activities that contribute to rural economies and/or promote recreation in and the enjoyment of the countryside.

Consultation

12. **Castle Camps Parish Council** objects strongly to this application and recommends refusal on the following grounds: -
 - "I object to change of use of land north of Sunnyside as I feel that it is just another way of pushing out the village boundary, which would be used for future development;
 - Is the change of use to paddock instead of garden significant? For example, does it leave open the case for more buildings like a stable block? What prevents the garden from extending into the paddock? Already a driveway is proposed extending into the paddock;
 - If planning permission is granted it should be on the firm basis that no further buildings of any sort will be allowed in the site in the future;
 - Trees on the highway verge are marked as though on the boundary of the land, which is incorrect."

Following the receipt of further information in relation to the application, the Parish Council wishes to maintain its objection. Further comments from individual councillors are outlined below: -

- “The present hedge on the northern boundary should be maintained. The horseshoe driveway appears to be serving the two residences on this site. Villagers have commented that they dislike the village being extended at this point. Also this is a best landscape point often used by local artists. A Committee should visit the site;
- It is important that countryside landscape on parish boundaries should be retained. I would not wish the present northbound hedge to disappear. I fully support the CPRE campaign in their continuity landscape character statement. I feel this planning application is detrimental to our village;
- Do not object to paddock use but think Council must keep a much closer eye on things on this site. Work is still being done without permission;
- I feel this paddock application is just the beginning of more building work on this site so I strongly disagree to giving planning permission for this proposal;

Summary: The Parish Council has strong feelings in respect to this application due to the planning history of the site.”

13. The **Landscape Design Officer** states that if this land is to become garden/paddock, amended landscaping details are required in the form of greater tree planting with different varieties. Further details have been requested and are awaited.
14. The **Environment Agency** has no objections in principle to the application but makes comments in relation to surface water drainage and culverting that will be passed on to the applicant.

Representations

15. None received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

16. The main issue to consider in the determination of this application is the impact of the development upon the countryside.

Impact upon the Countryside

17. The proposed change of use of the site from agricultural land to paddock together with the erection of fencing, excavation of a ditch and landscaping is considered an appropriate use in the countryside that would maintain the open and rural character of the landscape.
18. The existing dwelling on the adjacent site (Sunnyside) is highly visible across open fields when entering the village from the north. The only current form of landscaping on the village framework boundary is a mature hawthorn hedge. The proposed paddock and associated landscaping would create a softer edge to the village that would minimise the impact of the adjacent property on the open countryside.
19. The site lies within the South Suffolk and North Clayland Landscape Character Area as defined by Countryside Agency under their Countryside Character Initiative. The key characteristics of this area are isolated hamlets that are accessed via sunken winding lanes that run alongside predominantly arable fields with small wooded areas. The proposed paddock and associated works are not considered to adversely affect the character of the local landscape.

Other Matters

20. The village framework boundary would remain in its present position along the northern boundary of the residential curtilage of Sunnyside and along the southern boundary of the proposed paddock site. The paddock land would remain designated as countryside. Any alteration to the village framework boundary would have to be submitted as a representation to the new Local Development Framework and be considered by a Planning Inspector at a Public Inquiry. Applications for residential development would not be supported in the countryside unless there is an agricultural justification for such development.
21. If consent were granted for change of use of the land to paddock, planning permission would be required to erect any buildings on the site. The Council would therefore be able to control the size and use of any proposed buildings. A planning application would also be required to change the use of the land to garden.

Recommendation

22. Delegated approval subject to conditions, upon the receipt of an acceptable landscaping scheme.
 1. Standard Condition A - Time limited permission (*Rc A*)
 2. Sc52 - Implementation of landscaping (*Rc52*)
 3. Sc5f - Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site (*Reason - To safeguard the character of the area.*)
 4. Save for the post and rail fencing shown upon the approved drawing, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), the following classes of development more particularly described in the Order are expressly prohibited in respect of the land unless expressly authorised by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf: -

Part 2 (Minor Operations) - Class A (Erection of Gates, Walls or Fences)
(*Reason - To safeguard the character of the area.*)

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:** Policy P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions); Policy P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** Policy EN1 (Landscape Character Areas); Policy SE9 (Village Edges); Policy EN5 (Landscaping of New 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 Countryside/ Landscape
 - Planning History

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
- Planning File Refs. S/0483/05/F, S/0054/03/F, S/1165/02/F & S/0963/01/F

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