

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4 February 2015

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number:	S/1691/14/F
Parish(es):	Papworth Everard
Proposal:	Full planning permission for change of Use and refurbishment of redundant farm buildings to office/light industrial use and the erection of a workshop.
Site address:	Crow's Nest Farm, Ermine Street, Papworth Everard
Applicant(s):	Mr. F Stannard
Recommendation:	Approval
Key material considerations:	Principle of development Visual impact Impact on amenity Ecology Parking and highway safety
Committee Site Visit:	3 February 2015
Departure Application:	No
Presenting Officer:	John Koch
Application brought to Committee because:	The officer recommendation is contrary to the views of the Parish Council.
Date by which decision due:	29 September 2014

Planning History

1. S/1807/88/F – Change of use to light industrial workshop - Approved

Planning Policies

2. **National Planning Policy Framework**
3. **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (Adopted July 2007);**
DP/1 Sustainable development
DP/2 Design of new development

DP/3 Development criteria
 DP/6 Construction methods
 ET/7 Conversion of rural buildings for employment
 ET/8 Replacement buildings in the countryside
 NE/2 Renewable energy
 NE/4 Landscape character area
 NE/6 Biodiversity
 NE/15 Noise pollution
 TR/2 Car and cycle parking standards
 TR/1 Planning for more Sustainable Travel

4. **Local Plan (Proposed Submission Version (July 2013))**

S/3 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 CC/3 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments
 CC/6 Construction Methods
 HQ/1 Design principles
 NH/2 Protecting and enhancing Landscape Character
 NH/4 Biodiversity
 E/13 New Employment Development on the Edges of Villages
 E/17 Conversion or Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment
 SC/11 Noise Pollution
 TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel
 TI/3 Parking Provision

5. **Supplementary Planning Documents**

District Design Guide SPD (adopted March 2010)

Consultations

6. **Papworth Everard Parish Council** recommend refusal. The lengthy consultation response is included in full as appendix 1. The points raised can be summarised as:

- (i) Undue noise and disturbance for nearby residents given the operations involved on the site.
- (ii) Poor access leading off a very busy road. The access from the farm to the A1198 needs to be formalised and improved and the warning signage is very considerably upgraded. Consideration should be given to imposing a lower speed limit. There are no safe routes for pedestrians or cyclists to the site.
- (iii) The applicant has not demonstrated that this will not decrease the air quality of the immediate surrounds of the development and the village beyond.
- (iv) The proposed manufacturing unit is outside the development envelope of Papworth Everard. The Papworth Business Park is a more suitable location.
- (v) The 1988 planning approval envisaged a limited development with tight planning conditions limiting operation. The working times proposed (i.e. 8 am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) must be enforced through a planning condition, in order to protect the environment of neighbouring properties. If the LPA is minded to approve this development, planning restrictions, as in 1998, should be imposed.

7. The **Local Highways Authority** initially recommended refusal as the application was not supported by sufficient transport information. On receipt of further information it has removed its objection and confirmed that it believes that it is unlikely that the 1m offset from the kerb edge would obscure visibility so that it would not be possible to see a motor or pedal cyclist when exiting the site. The visibility splays that have been

shown on submitted drawing are acceptable. Conditions are recommended with regard to the width of the access, surface drainage, and driveway construction.

8. The **Environmental Health Officer** has no adverse comments in relation to this application.
9. The **Contaminated Land Officer** has confirmed that they have considered the implications of the proposal and is satisfied that a condition relating to contaminated land investigation is not required.
10. The **Asset Information Definitive Map Officer** notes that site access enters the site to the south of the site and the footpath is not used for site access. This means there are few impacts to this footpath so we have no objections. I would be grateful if the following informatives are included in the decision conditions:
 - 1.) Public Byway No.2 Papworth must remain open and unobstructed at all times (it is an offence under s 137 of the Highways Act 1980 to obstruct a public Highway).
 - 2.) No alteration to the footpath surface is permitted without our consent (it is an offence to damage the surface of a public footpath under s 1 of the Criminal Damage Act 1971).
 - 3.) Landowners are reminded that it is their responsibility to maintain hedges and fences adjacent to public rights of way, and that any transfer of land should account for any such boundaries (s154 Highways Act 1980).
 - 4.) The granting of planning permission does not entitle a developer to obstruct a public right of way (Circular 1/09 para 7.1).
11. The **Ecology Consultancy Officer**. Only a low level of bat activity was observed. No bat roost was identified at the site but the extent of crevices and low value roost sites meant that the possibility of a low number of bats could not be ruled out (a bat was seen to enter the barn during the survey but its roost position could not be confirmed). A precautionary approach to roof stripping is advised.

The ecology report states that the trees at the rear of this site can be retained and some may have medium to high bat potential – is their retention realistic?
Condition required securing recommendation in the report “Protected Species Survey at Crow’s Nest Farm” by Mr A P Chick May 2014. The recommendations relate to sensitive working procedures, tree bat roost units, bat roost unit, lighting and birds. The provision of the detailed enhancement measures shall be in place prior to the occupation and/or use of the buildings. Any variation to the proposed working procedures shall be first agreed in writing with the LPA. No impact is expected upon great crested newts or badgers.

Representations

12. One representation has been received from the owner/occupiers of the neighboring property raising concerns that the proposal would set a precedent for further industrial developments to be located beyond the existing industrial boundary and the Papworth Business Park. Concern was raised in respect of noise and lack of proposed working hours in the application, and the current access to the A1198. It is also pointed out that the agricultural buildings remained in use up to 2012.

Planning Comments

13. The application site lies to the west of Ermine Street and comprises a 0.4 Ha broadly rectangular parcel of land. The site is located just beyond the settlement boundary to the south of Papworth Everard.
14. The site comprises the currently redundant Crow's Nest Farm barns which form part of a small residential farm development. The group of traditional farm buildings was constructed as a courtyard complex. In the middle of the courtyard there is a relatively modern concrete portal frame building, to the south of the site is a modern grain store, to the north-west a Nissan hut and a dilapidated storage shed. Vehicular access to the site is served via Ermine Street (A1198).
15. The application site is situated nearby to two residential properties, one of which is currently vacant. These lie to the south-east of the site. A public footpath runs along the site's north eastern border. The farmyard is generally flat and level. Surrounding land use largely comprises arable farmland and woodland.
16. The boundary between the A1198 and the north eastern boundary is defined by a brook. Areas of established vegetation and a collection of large trees offer a buffer between the site and the main road. The remaining three boundary edges are generally open with some informal hedging.
17. The proposed scheme comprises the change of use and refurbishment of redundant farm buildings to office/light industrial use and the erection of a workshop. The workshop will be located in the north-west part of the site (and therefore screened and away from the two residential properties. An application to change the use of the barns on the site to light industrial was approved in 1988 but never implemented.
18. The English Listed Building Company and its subsidiary company Frazer Stannard Carpentry and Joinery were set up 18 years ago and specialize in the repair and restoration of historic properties. Between them the company employs 18 people and another 22 on rolling contracts. Designing and producing joinery for period properties they would like to relocate their expanding business from a farm unit in Hilton to the Crow's Nest Farm site.
19. The group of historic farm buildings which are mostly in poor condition would be retained and converted to provide a kitchen, offices and WC's. A report submitted with the application demonstrates that these structures are capable of conversion. A lean-to section of the modern agricultural building would be removed to allow access into the site and a purpose built workshop building would be erected to the north of the site where the existing dilapidated Nissan hut and store (constructed of block with asbestos cement / corrugated sheet roofs) currently exist. The modern concrete portal frame building located in the middle of the traditional farm buildings would remain.
20. The application proposes a vehicular parking for 13 cars including one disabled parking bay. Vehicular access would remain via Ermine Street the A1198.

Principle of Development

21. The NPPF encourages the reuse of existing resources including the conversion of existing buildings and supports the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings. The Development Plan (Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted January 2007 and Development Control Policies Development Plan adopted January 2007) supports proposals for the

conversion of rural buildings for employment and for replacement buildings in the countryside for employment use.

22. Policy ET/7 supports change of use or adaptation of buildings in the countryside for employment provided that the buildings are structurally sound, of permanent construction, capable of re-use without materially changing their existing character and are in keeping with their surroundings. The report submitted with the application demonstrates that the buildings proposed to be converted are structurally sound. It is considered the buildings are worthy of retention and capable of conversion without changing their existing character and that of their surroundings.
23. Policy ST/7 designates Papworth Everard as a "Minor Rural Centre". As such, it performs well in terms of providing services and facilities for its rural hinterland. The scale of employment generated as a result of the proposal is considered in accordance with the location and the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of this policy.
24. Proposals for replacement buildings are generally supported by Policy ET/8 provided that any increase in floor area is strictly controlled. Government Planning Practice Guidance also supports the sustainable growth and expansion of business development in rural areas, both through the conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings.
25. The proposed new workshop building would be located on the footprint of the dilapidated store and Nissan hut buildings (137.5 sqm) which would be demolished. The lean-to section of the modern concrete portal framed grain store (126 sqm) to the south of the barns is also proposed to be removed to allow vehicular access. Albeit the lean-to section is not in the same location as the proposed workshop building, the total removed footprint would be approximately 263.5 sqm of floor space. The footprint of the new workshop would be 396 sqm representing an overall increase of 133 sqm.
26. The new workshop building has been designed to be in keeping with the traditional farm buildings by way of materials and character and would compliment the existing group of barns. Visually it would be an improvement especially when considering the removal of part of the concrete grain store. Black weatherboarding is proposed for the walls with corrugated metal sheeting for the roof. The new building would be of various heights from 5.5 m to a maximum height of approximately 7.5 m with a pitch roof. The maximum height of the proposed workshop would not exceed the height of the existing barns proposed for conversion.
27. The proposed replacement building is required for the successful running of the expanding business and would be beneficial to the scheme in terms of design. The application must be looked at as a whole and whilst the replacement footprint is larger than the existing footprint, the building is nonetheless well designed and results in an overall sustainable scheme meeting the requirements of Policies ET/7 and ET/8.
28. It is acknowledged that the Papworth Business Park may provide an alternative, or even a more appropriate location. However, the principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable and to fall in accordance with national and local planning policy.

Visual Impact

29. Crow's Nest Farm barns although not listed form a group of historic farm buildings currently not in use. The surrounding landscape is generally flat and level and the proposed development would have a positive impact on the landscape bringing redundant farm buildings into use. The proposed conversion scheme and new workshop building viewed from beyond the application site would enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the area. Whilst established planting including some mature trees would provide some screening from the Ermine Street. The proposal is considered to respond well to its surroundings and meet the requirements of Policy DP/2 comprising a high quality design that enhances the character of the local area whilst conserving important environmental assets.

Impact on amenity

30. The nearest residential dwelling falls beyond the south eastern boundary of the site and is located approximately 25m from the application site. Concern has been raised by the neighbour and the Parish Council in respect of noise and air quality.
31. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has been consulted on the application and notwithstanding the detailed points raised by the parish council, has raised no objection. The existing buildings will essentially be used for office/light industrial use. By definition, these are uses that can be carried out in nay residential area without given rise to various adverse effects including noise, fumes and smells. The new workshop is a purpose built structure and the proposed office/light industrial use will separate the office/light industrial use. The previous agricultural use would also presumably have led to some degree of noise and disturbance for neighbours.
32. To ensure no adverse impact in term of noise disturbance a condition would be attached to the planning permission restricting the use of power operated machinery in the workshop to normal working hours only.
33. An issue raised by the parish council was the potential emissions from the biomass boiler. A document from the manufacturers explains that the boiler burns wood pellets in the combustion chamber; what is called smoke is a volatile gas which is burnt again to get the maximum energy from the pellets, so there is no smoke from the flue. It is therefore not considered the proposal would lead to any harm to amenity in terms of air quality.
34. The proposal is considered an acceptable form of development in this location and with a condition in place restricting working hours there would be no harm caused in terms of amenity. The requirements of policies DP/3 and DP/2 would therefore be satisfied.

Ecology

35. The application is supported by a protected species assessment which has considered breeding birds including barn owls and bats. The ecology report states that the trees at the rear of the site can be retained and some may have medium to high bat potential. The Ecology Consulting Officer has requested a condition is attached to the planning permission to ensure that the recommendations and enhancement measures as detailed within the report are carried out. It is considered that with the condition in place there would be no adverse harm caused to any protected species as a result of the proposal and policy NE/6 would therefore be satisfied.

Parking and highway safety

36. An updated (December 2014) Transport Statement has been submitted as part of the planning application and further an Addendum to provide additional information to enable Cambridgeshire County Council to fully assess the application in terms of highways and transportation. A revised plan has also been submitted to illustrate the proposed car parking area to the rear of the barns for 13 vehicles including one disabled bay.
37. The Local Highway Authority has confirmed it now has no objection to the proposed development and that in terms of highway safety and parking the proposal represents a satisfactory form of development. It has not raised any concerns over the safety of routes for pedestrians or cyclists to the site. It is therefore acceptable in highway terms subject to conditions relating to the means of access and the provision of on-site parking and turning.

Other Matters

38. The Parish Council has referred to the 1988 planning permission and suggests this should act as a precedent in terms of any conditions imposed. That permission (for a light industrial use) was conditioned to a named user; to prevent outside storage; a restriction on the use of machinery outside normal working hours; no power driven machinery to be used without prior approval; and on-site parking and turning to be provided.
39. Conditions re limitation on outside storage and on-site parking and turning can be imposed as they are considered to meet the statutory tests. Notwithstanding the lack of objection from the EHO a restriction on the use of machinery outside normal working hours is also considered appropriate given the nature of the proposed workshop use. The workshop use will involve the use of power-driven machinery during the day and given the location of the workshop in relation to the residential properties, a condition preventing all power operated machinery would be prohibitive to the effective operation of the business. Current government advice is that a restriction to a particular applicant is unwarranted.

Conclusion

40. Any adverse impacts of the development are not considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the material considerations set out in this report, and the proposed development remains acceptable. As such it is recommended that permission be granted for officers to approve the scheme subject to the conditions outlined below.

Recommendation

41. Approval subject to:

Conditions

- (a) Approved Plans
- (b) Standard Time Limit
- (c) Materials
- (d) Ecology
- (e) Landscape Implementation
- (f) Tree protection
- (g) Access

- (h) On-site parking and turning
- (h) No power operated machinery outside normal working hours

Informatives

As suggested by the Definitive Map Officer

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- Nation Planning Policy Framework
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policyframework--2>
- Local Development Framework, Development Control Policies, Adopted July 2007
<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/local-development-framework>
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Proposed Submission July 2013
<http://www.scambs.gov.uk/localplan>

Report Author: Jemima Dean – Planning Officer