

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 6th July 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/2481/04/O - Longstanton Erection of Bungalow and Garage. Barns at Woodside

**Recommendation: Refusal
Date for Determination: 1st February 2005**

Cllr Riley has requested that this application be the subject of a Member site visit. This will take place on Monday 4th July 2005.

Adjoining Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. This is an outline application, with all matters apart from siting reserved for subsequent approval, relating to the erection of a bungalow and garage following the demolition of barns at Woodside, Longstanton. The density equates to 14dph.
2. The site is roughly rectangular in shape, with a highway frontage of approximately 27.7 metres and a maximum depth of approximately 27.8 metres, amounting to approximately 0.07 hectares. It forms part of a larger parcel of land, indicated as being in the same ownership, roughly rectangular in shape and with a highway frontage of approximately 58 metres and a maximum depth of 160 metres.
3. The site lies on the south eastern side of Woodside, between a group of buildings around All Saints Church and the northernmost of the former MOD dwellings on Thatchers Wood. To the opposite side of Woodside, lie the extensive landscaped grounds of Longstanton House, or the Manor, which is a Listed Building. The boundary of a conservation area run along the frontage of the site.
4. The site is roughly level. Alongside the south eastern edge of the site and within its boundaries are two groups of trees which have been the subject of a draft Tree Preservation Order served in accordance with the decision of Committee at its meeting of 2 February 2005. Along the highway frontage of the site is a mature hedgerow with an existing agricultural access, located roughly centrally within the combined highway frontage of the application site and the adjoining land in the applicants' ownership. The existing structures on the site which are to be demolished include a timber pole barn and associated timber structures.
5. The submitted plans indicate that the proposed new dwelling would be served by the existing agricultural access, such that it would be located at the northern corner of the application site itself. The submitted plans also include an indicative layout relating to a possible bungalow with attached garage. These latter details do not, however, form part of the current application.
6. In support of the application the agents state that the development will make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, visibility at the access will be

improved and that the present use is incompatible with the adjoining residential and Conservation Area and will make a positive contribution to the local environment. It is also stated that the applicants currently live in a bungalow at Few's Lane which will ultimately be surrounded by the Longstanton village expansion and impair the rural character that property currently enjoys.

Planning History

7. No relevant history has been identified relating to the site.

Planning Policy

8. **Policy SE4** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") identifies Longstanton as a Group Village, within which residential development and redevelopment up to a maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village frameworks of Group Villages, subject to various detailed criteria. (The application site lies outside the Village framework boundary).
9. **Policy SE8** of the Local Plan indicates that residential development will not be permitted outside village frameworks.
10. **Policy SE11** of the Local Plan relates to Important Countryside Frontages, which are defined within village framework boundaries in order to identify and which serve various roles including providing an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of a village framework. (The site is so designated).
11. **Policy EN30** of the Local Plan states that the Council will require that applications for planning permission for development in Conservation Areas or affecting their setting, be accompanied by sufficient details to allow the impact of the proposals to be assessed. This must include drawings or other pictorial material which illustrates the proposed buildings in their context, and in most cases outline applications will not be acceptable. Proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials. The District Council will refuse permission for schemes which do not specify traditional local materials and details and which do not fit comfortably into their context.
12. **Policy EN31** of the Local Plan states that the Council will expect to agree and approve a high standard of design, planting and materials for the hard and soft landscaping of the open public or private spaces connected with developments in Conservation Areas.
13. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") places "Environmental Restrictions on Development" including restrictions in the countryside.
14. **Policy P7/6** of the County Structure Plan states that Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

Consultations

15. **Longstanton Parish Council:** The following extract from the Parish Council minutes was conveyed to the Local Planning Authority:

“The feeling of council was that there was ample space for such a dwelling and garage and that the site entrance would benefit greatly from being presented as a dwelling entrance as opposed to that of a farmyard. Due to its frontage on Woodside it was necessary for vehicular ingress/exit to be achieved in forward gear. It was also felt that the SCDC should be requested to conduct a site visit to examine this application. Subject to these recommendations being made to SCDC the application was proposed for approval by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Yarrow and approved by council.”

16. **Trees and Landscape Officer:** The proposed footprint impinges into an area of recent tree planting. The tree planting, I understand, was undertaken as part of a felling licence agreement with the Forestry Commission. The applicant is willing to relocate the footprint.
17. **Chief Environmental Health Officer:** Conditions recommended relating to noise and other nuisances during the construction period.

Representations

18. Six letters and e-mails have been submitted variously supporting the proposed development or otherwise offering favourable comments as follows:
 - The existing building is a blot on the landscape
 - The barn is likely to suffer from neglect
 - It would result in the demolition of the existing barns which are an eyesore
 - They are a magnet for undesirables such as petty thieves and burglars
 - The property is constantly suffering from theft
 - Challenging undesirables is a nightmare
 - The proposal would improve security
 - It would improve the streetscene and enhance the Conservation Area
 - The proposal would improve visual amenity
 - By permitting the owner to live at the site this will improve maintenance of this green space. Without any management it is just a nuisance
 - The site would benefit from a dwelling
 - A building close to the existing houses in Thatchers Wood represents a logical development
 - The proposals are not intrusive and would represent rounding off
 - It will enhance the neighbourhood
 - The proposal to build a bungalow would improve the frontage profile and hence enhance the Conservation Area

- The application is on behalf of a family who has lived and worked in the village for many years, have raised their family here and have also run a business in the village
- In turn they have contributed to the village in many ways and still continue to do so
- The applicants have always been generous contributors to village life
- It would be a great pleasure to have them as near neighbours
- It seems logical move for the applicants to be on site to look after their animals

Planning Comments - Key Issues

19. The application falls to be determined by reference to the policies of the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
20. The application site lies outside the village framework for Longstanton. It would therefore be outside the provisions of Local Plan Policies SE4 and SE8 and contrary to Policy P1/2 of the Structure Plan.
21. The site includes a mature hedgerow along its frontage which is designated as an Important Countryside Frontage in accordance with Policy SE11 of the Local Plan. It is noted that the above policy identifies one of the roles of such frontages as providing an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of a village framework. In the present context the highway frontage of the application site, and the mature landscape grounds of Longstanton House opposite, provide an important break between the historic group of buildings around All Saints Church and the former MOD housing to the south east.
22. Policy EN31 of the Local Plan requires a high standard of hard and soft landscaping of the open public or private spaces connected with developments in Conservation Areas. Whilst the application site abounds a conservation area, rather than being located entirely within it, there are many appeal cases that indicate that views into and out of conservation areas should be treated in a similar manner as those that are located entirely within. It is thus noted that the application as submitted, with no definitive indication of the form of development proposed and no landscaping details, offers little to suggest that the above policy would be complied with. Moreover, it is possible that the proposed development could lead to the loss of a mature hedgerow and/or of trees that are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Even if the hedgerow and trees were not lost, the built development would be likely to significantly affect their appearance and the landscape buffer that they provide between very different parts of the village.
23. Policy EN30 of the Local Plan requires that applications for planning permission for development in Conservation Areas, or affecting their setting, should be accompanied by sufficient details to allow the impact of the proposals to be assessed adding that, in most cases, outline applications will not be acceptable.
24. The current application is submitted in outline form with all details except the proposed access reserved for subsequent approval. Whilst the point of access is illustrated on the plans, little information is provided of the details thereof including possible visibility splays and their potential impact upon the mature hedgerow. The indicative details are limited to a 1:200 scale plan indicating the roof plan of a

bungalow with attached garage measuring 24 metres by 6 metres with two projecting wings to the rear. These details do not constitute part of the application however.

25. The limited details available offer little or no indication of the scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials of the proposed development. In that context it is noted that Policy EN30 also states that the District Council will refuse permission for schemes which do not specify traditional local materials and details and which do not fit comfortably into their context.
26. Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty upon Local Planning Authorities, when considering development proposals in conservation areas, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that conservation area. Whilst only the site frontage is included within the conservation area, rather than the body of the site itself, the absence of details prevent the Local Planning Authority from making any proper assessment of the extent to which the proposals address this requirement.
27. Draft supplementary planning guidance for the Longstanton Conservation Area (the subject of consultation) refers to the application site as follows. "The west side of Woodside is outside the Conservation Area and includes some hay barns and storage with an ugly gate at the entrance. Any development on this site could have a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area." Whilst little weight can be given to this draft document in terms of policy guidance at the current stage it does, nevertheless, provide useful a useful assessment of the application site and its context.
28. Amongst the comments made by local residents many offer contrary interpretations to those offered by the above analysis. The personal circumstances of the applicants are not material considerations. Concerns regarding the appearance of the site could potentially be dealt with through other procedures rather than the grant of consent for a bungalow. Whilst animal welfare concerns can be material it is noted that neither the applicants nor the agents have submitted any information to suggest that the proposal is based upon agricultural need.
29. Having regard to the policies of the Development Plan, the above comments and all other material considerations it is recommended that the application be refused for the reasons indicated below.

Recommendation

30. REFUSAL

Reasons

1. The application site lies outside the village framework for Longstanton. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the provisions of Policies SE4 and SE8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, relating to new housing development in Longstanton and in village frameworks, generally, and contrary to Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 which seeks to avoid development in the countryside unless essential to a particular location.
2. The proposed development would be likely to have an adverse impact upon a mature hedgerow along its highway frontage which provides an important

break between two nearby but detached parts of the village of Longstanton. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy SE11 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which seeks to protect Important Countryside Frontages.

3. The application is submitted in outline form with no definitive indication of the form of development proposed and no landscaping details. In the absence of any such details it is considered likely that the proposed development could lead to the loss of a mature hedgerow and/or of trees that are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy EN31 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which states that the Council will expect to agree and approve a high standard of design, planting and materials for the hard and soft landscaping of the open public or private spaces connected with developments in Conservation Areas.
4. The application is submitted in outline form with no definitive indication of the form of development proposed. In the absence of any details of the scale, massing, roof materials and wall materials of the proposed development the Local Planning Authority is unable to make a proper assessment of the proposed development including, in particular, its relationship to the Conservation Area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which states that the Council will require that applications for planning permission for development in Conservation Areas or affecting their setting, be accompanied by sufficient details to allow the impact of the proposals to be assessed. In most cases outline applications will not be acceptable.

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/2481/04/O

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