SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee   3rd August 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0568/05/F - Cottenham

Conversion of Workshop into Bungalow, Engineering Workshop, r/o Clements Hardware Store, 136 High Street for J Clements

Recommendation: Refusal
Date for determination: 18th May 2005

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1.   136 High Street consists of a single storey hardware shop set back behind a shallow forecourt, behind which is a single storey brick/tile engineering workshop. Access to the side leads to a small parking/turning area. To the rear, side/north-east and opposite are houses, to the side/south-west is the former Labour Hall, used as a child nursery.

2.   The full application, received 23rd March, proposes the change of use of the workshop to a 3-bed bungalow. The building has a floor area of $129.35m^2$. A single car-parking space would be provided, together with turning space, and a small courtyard garden.

History

3.   In 1988 consent was granted for the current workshop building which replaced some old sheds on site used for the same use.

4.   At the June 2002 committee, item 12, consent was granted for a detached house and garage to replace the shop; the consent has not yet been implemented.

Planning Policy

5.   Structure Plan: **P7/6** Historic Built Environment seeks to protect the character of Conservation Areas.

6.   Local Plan: **EM8 -** Loss of employment sites in the villages. Unless the commercial premises are generating environmental problems, ie noise, pollution or traffic, consent for change of use and/or redevelopment will resisted. Consent will only be granted where such problems exist or market demand, through 12 months advertising, has shown that there is no demand for such a use/building.

7.   **EN30** requires new development to preserve and/or enhance the Conservation Area.

Consultations

8. **Cottenham Parish Council** "approves the application in principle with the proviso that it is regrettable to see the loss of a local business."

9. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no objections subject to a condition restricting machinery hours during construction/alterations.

    Representations

10. The Cottenham Village Design Group does not support the proposal, referring to "the importance of retaining and developing Cottenham's character as a working village offering a variety of employment."

    Planning Comments

11. There are two issues to be considered, both relating to Policy EM8 of the Local Plan, and are "is the use causing environmental problems" and "has the property been marketed?"

12. The answer to both is "No".

13. Whilst not disputing the fact that the workshop would conveniently convert into a bungalow, the present use, light engineering, does not cause any problems to near neighbours. No marketing has been carried out to sell the premises.

14. Although Cottenham Parish Council "approves" the application, it is clear from its comments that it regrets the loss of an employment site, a view also supported by the Cottenham Village Design Group.

    Recommendation

15. Refusal for the following reasons:

    1. The proposed change of use is contrary to Policy EM8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which only supports the redevelopment or reuse of existing employment sites if they are generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution or traffic or, alternatively, if it has been demonstrated via a 12 month marketing campaign that there is a lack of demand for such a site.

        There is no evidence the use causes no environmental problems; nor has it been marketed.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:
- County Structure Plan 2003
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Planning files Ref. S/0568/05/F and S/2157/01/F

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