

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 3rd August 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/1249/05/F - Melbourn
Wall (Retrospective Application), White House Farm, Cambridge Road for Mr Rai

Recommendation: Refusal
Determination date: 19th August 2005

Site and Proposal

1. The site at White House Farm constitutes a modest farmhouse surrounded by numerous dilapidated agricultural buildings, some of which, until recently, bordered Fowlmere Road. The dwellinghouse itself sits at the forward most part of the site close to the junction with Cambridge Road and Fowlmere Road, two highways that define the northeast and northwest boundaries of the site. The entire site falls outside of the Melbourn village framework.
2. The full application, received on the 24th June 2005 proposes to regularise the erection of a two metre high wall adjacent to Fowlmere Road. The application also shows the intention of the applicant to continue this two metre high wall around the entire site except for the frontage that bounds Cambridge Road, which will be one metre in height. The wall at the front of the site, and those parts of the two metre high wall that do not sit adjacent to a highway, would not require the specific consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Planning History

3. In 2001 planning consent was refused at Planning Committee for the extension of the dwellinghouse and a detached garage, as the increase in scale and volume proposed would have materially changed and had an adverse impact on the surrounding countryside, being out of scale and character with the existing dwelling (**S/1618/01/F**).
4. Later that year planning consent was granted for an extension of the dwellinghouse. This application was considered acceptable once the floor area of the previous application had been halved (**S/2261/01/F**).
5. **S/2262/01/F** was submitted in parallel with the previous application and sought the replacement of the existing dwellinghouse. Although recommended for refusal by officers Members approved the application at a Committee Meeting of the 6th March 2002. This replacement dwelling constitutes a 38% increase in the footprint of the existing and was approved with a Section 106 legal agreement requiring that the existing dwelling be removed prior to the occupation or completion of the replacement dwelling.

Planning Policy

6. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 which seeks to limit development in the countryside to that which is essential in a particular rural location.

7. **Policy EN5** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 seeks to retain hedges and other natural features wherever possible in proposals for new development.

Consultation

8. **Melbourn Parish Council** has recommended that the application be approved though states that the wall in red brick is overbearing colourwise and would be better rendered and painted. They also state that it is too high, although it may comply with the 2m stipulation.

Representations

9. One letter of objection from the occupants of 'Rosslyn', Cambridge Road, This is the closest residential property. The objectors state that the two metre high wall will be two metres from their ground floor bathroom and toilet and will block light to this room.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

10. Work originally started on the wall adjacent to Fowlmere Road in breach of planning control earlier this year. After discussions with Mr Rai's agent it was agreed that a retrospective application would be submitted for the area of wall adjacent to the highway that exceeds one metre in height. Although not requiring the specific consent of the Local Planning Authority there are issues of change of use as a result of the rest of the wall that will be discussed as part of the following application **(S/1250/05/F)**.
11. Before the wall was erected the agricultural buildings were set back approximately 5m from Fowlmere Road. Although dilapidated these buildings appeared in keeping with the rural surroundings. The new wall that has been built sits approximately 3m back from the highway and not 10m as shown in the submitted plans. The development replaces the informal boundary treatment with one that would be more in keeping with an urban residential estate. White House Farm represents a focal point in this flat landscape and the redbrick wall is overbearing in terms of its height, colour and proximity to the highway, all of which materially change the impact of the site on the countryside.
12. Aside from the impact upon the countryside the erection of a two metre high wall to the rear of the neighbouring properties on Cambridge Road will impact upon the amenity of the residents of both these properties. However this section does not require planning permission. The one metre high section will also impact upon the vegetation that presently bounds the site. It appears that columns have also been constructed on top of the one metre high section. These would therefore require the specific consent of the LPA.

Recommendation

- A. Refusal of the application.

Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposed wall adjoining Fowlmere Road would materially change the impact of the site on the countryside, thus being contrary to Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy EN5 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004. Such an expanse of wall would be

overbearing in terms of its mass, colour and proximity to the highway and would not be in keeping with the informal, rural nature of the site and surrounding landscape.

- B. In addition to the refusal it is also requested that enforcement action be taken to secure the removal of the two metre high section of wall that has been constructed adjacent to Fowlmere Road and the parts of the wall adjacent to Cambridge Road that exceed one metre in height. A three month period for compliance is recommended.

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/1249/05/F; and related history files S/1618/01/F, S/2261/01/F and S/2262/01/F

Contact Officer: Edward Durrant – Planning Assistant
Telephone: (01954) 713082