

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

S/1250/05/F - Melbourn
Replacement Dwelling, 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 replace the existing dwellinghouse with another larger property. The application also indicates a larger site edged red (1.34 hectares) than the already accepted residential curtilage (0.4 hectares); therefore it would also constitute a change of use in respect of the extended curtilage.

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 HG15** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 seeks to reduce the impact of replacement dwellings in the countryside by only permitting dwellings that are in scale and character with the dwelling they are intended to replace.

Consultation

8. **Melbourn Parish Council** has recommended that the application be approved. The Parish Council would like clarification of the status of the rear of the plot, which only has agricultural use permission. Also the orientation of the proposed house should have the white rendered face towards Cambridge Road.
9. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** has considered the implications of the proposal in terms of noise and environmental pollution and has concluded that there are no significant impacts from the Environmental Health standpoint.

Representations

10. One letter of representation from the occupants of 'Rossllyn' Cambridge Road, who notice that the new dwelling is not to be built on the footprint of the existing dwellinghouse and that the existing dwellinghouse is being repaired.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

Increase in gross floor area and visual impact on the countryside

11. Planning officers originally saw this proposal at an informal stage at which time it was stated that it would not receive their support. The existing dwelling has a gross floor area of 141 square metres and the already approved replacement dwelling would have a gross floor area of 236 square metres. In comparison the proposed dwelling would have a gross floor area of 409 square metres, an increase of 290% over the existing.
12. Aside from the percentage increase the first floor frontage of the dwelling will increase in length from 9.8m to 18.3m. However it should be noted that the proposed dwelling is no taller than the existing. Apart from materially increasing the impact of the site on the surrounding countryside this increase in length will make the dwellinghouse a more prominent feature in the rural landscape. Together with the proposed wall and associated development the site would take on a distinctively urban character that would not sit well within the context of the surrounding properties and countryside location.
13. It has been brought to the attention of planning officers that the existing dwelling is presently being repaired. As noted by the neighbouring residents the proposed dwelling will not sit on the same footprint as the existing. Therefore there is some concern about why the existing dwelling is being repaired and why the new dwelling would not be located on its footprint.

Change of Use of land to the rear and side of the site

14. The area of land associated with the dwellinghouse was previously part of an agricultural holding that is no longer operational. When planning consent was granted for the replacement dwelling in 2001 a smaller site edged red was submitted and accepted as the residential curtilage of the dwelling. The remaining parcel of land, although under the same ownership was never considered acceptable for residential purposes. The site edged red for both the replacement dwelling and the associated

wall (**S/1249/05/F**) would also result in the change of the additional area of the site. Were this application to be approved then the change of use of this once agricultural land would also be considered acceptable.

15. It is this area of land that lies to the rear of the two neighbouring properties, where the new two metre high wall would be used to define the boundary of the newly approved residential curtilage. As mentioned in the previous report the occupiers of Rosslyn have some concerns about such a high wall being built in close proximity to their property. Although the removal of the dilapidated outbuildings would be beneficial it is not considered appropriate for such a large area of agricultural land to become residential curtilage. It would further harm the rural character of the area.

Recommendation

16. Refusal

Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposed replacement dwelling would not be in scale and character with the dwelling it is intended to replace and would materially increase the impact of the site on the surrounding countryside by virtue of its increase in gross floor area (290% of the original) and mass, thus contrary to Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and Policy HG15 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which seek to protect the countryside from inappropriate development in order to maintain its rural character.
2. Moreover the change of use of adjacent agricultural land and its over-urban boundary treatment would further harm the rural character of the site and result in a loss of amenity to the occupiers of the neighbouring property (Rosslyn).

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/1250/05/F; and related history files S/1618/01/F, S/2261/01/F and S/2262/01/F

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