

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 7th September 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/2249/04/F - Over
Erection of 7 Houses and Garages; 23 Fen End for Cambridge Joinery Ltd

Recommendation: Approval
Date for determination: 29th September 2005

Site and Proposal

1. The site is located at the north of the village on a minor road serving predominantly residential development. The site, which has an area of 0.28ha, is at present occupied by a two-storey frontage building with a variety of single-storey outbuildings behind that are in use by the applicant company's joinery workshop and store. The site is adjoined to the north and south by residential development, and to the west by agricultural land.
2. This full application, received 3rd November 2004, proposes the demolition of all buildings on the site and the erection of 7 dwellings with four additional garages. Amended drawings date-stamped 26th April show a terrace of three affordable 2-bed units fronting onto Fen End. To the rear of these, plot 4 has 2-bed detached house, and at the rear of these, plots 5,6 and 7 show larger detached 4-bed houses whose gardens extend to the agricultural land to the west. Drawings received 20th July show further amendments and exclude a shared driveway with No. 21 to an existing garage from the application. Drawings received 16th August include vehicular visibility splays that affect adjoining land - the existing fence at 29 Fen End is to be lowered to 600mm on the application side of its access.
3. The materials for construction will be red facing bricks, red/brown plain roof tiles, and timber casement windows that echo the materials used within the village. Parking spaces are to be in block paving.
4. The development represents a density of 25 dwellings per hectare.

Planning History

5. **S/1456/02/F** Erection of paint spraying building (retrospective) A/C
S/99/0630/F Erection of office/store (retrospective) A/C
S/1383/95/O Erection of 8 dwellings - withdrawn
S/0409/95/O Erection of 7 dwellings - withdrawn
Land to rear of 49 Fen End
S/0869/88/O Residential development - refused; appeal dismissed.

Planning Policy

6. **Policy P1/1** (Approach to Development) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") - development sites involving the use of previously developed land and buildings within existing settlements should be afforded the highest priority;

7. **Policy P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development) requires compact forms of development through the promotion of higher densities that respond to the local character of the built environment.
- i. A high standard of design and sustainability for all new development will be required which:
 - a) Minimises the need to travel and reduces car dependency by providing
 - b) An appropriate mix of land uses and accessible services and facilities
 - c) Compact forms of development through the promotion of higher densities
 - d) A safe and people-friendly environment
 - e) Direct walking and cycle routes
 - f) Good access by public transport
 - g) Managed access for the private car and other motor vehicles
 - ii. Provides a sense of place which:
 - a) Responds to the local character of the built environment
 - b) Is integrated with adjoining landscapes
 - c) Pays attention to the detail of forms, massing, textures, colours and landscaping
 - iii. Makes efficient use of energy and resources by:
 - a) Including energy conservation measures and energy efficient siting of buildings
 - b) Incorporating sustainable drainage systems
 - iv. Takes account of community requirements by:
 - a) Including a mix of housing opportunities in residential developments
 - b) Designing to minimise opportunities for crime

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:

8. **Policy SE3** (Limited Rural Growth Settlements) of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 - development up to a maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework provided that:
- i) The retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village
 - ii) The development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours;
 - iii) The village has the necessary infrastructure capacity; and
 - iv) Residential development would not conflict with another policy of the plan, particularly policy EM8.

Development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dph unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.

9. **Policy SE9** (Village Edges)- development on the edge of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the countryside.

10. **Policy HG7** (Affordable Housing on Sites within Village Frameworks) - In settlements with a population of up to 3,000, affordable housing should represent up to 50% of the total number of dwellings for which planning permission may be given, dependant upon the level of clearly identified local need, although higher or lower percentages may be agreed in the light of such factors such as proximity to local services, access to public transport, the particular costs associated with the development, and whether provision of affordable housing would prejudice other planning objectives warranting greater priority in the particular case.
11. **Policy HG10** (Housing Mix and Design) requires residential developments to have a mix of units making the best use of the site. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape.
12. **Policy HG11** (Backland Development) - Development to the rear of existing properties will not be permitted where development would: 1) be overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of an existing residential property, 2) be noisy or disturbing to an existing residential property through use of its access, 3) give rise to highway dangers through use of its access, 4) be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
13. **Policy EM8** (Loss of Employment Sites in Villages) - the redevelopment of employment sites to non-employment uses will be resisted unless the existing site is generating environmental problems or where market demand make it inappropriate for any employment use to continue.

Consultations

14. **Over Parish Council** - to the application as originally submitted the Parish Council has recommended refusal as it has concerns over the increase in traffic on a non-paved road; increase in run-off water in an area which already suffers some flooding; inadequate visibility splays, and the development is to be sited very close to a sharp corner.
15. **Environment Agency** - advises that the site is within an area of no or low flood risk (zone 1). The Agency recommends that a condition requiring details of surface water disposal to be submitted for agreement should be attached to any planning permission issued.
16. **County Council Highway Authority**- The HA is satisfied that the traffic to be generated by the residential development will be less than the existing use. The HA recommends that additional footway provision is made to facilitate a safe pedestrian route between the site and the village amenities, such as the school, or at least across the frontage of the site (Plots 1-3).
17. **County Council's Chief Financial Officer**- requests that the developer make a financial contribution of £17,000 towards the cost of additional facilities at the primary school and at Swavesey Village College.
18. **County Archaeological Office** - advises that the site has some archaeological potential. A condition should be attached to any planning permission issued to allow for the site to be investigated.
19. **Cambridgeshire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer** - The ALO has requested minor modifications to Plot 3 otherwise he is generally satisfied. These modifications have been incorporated in the amended plans dated 20th July.

20. **Council's Environmental Health Department** - concerned about possible noise disturbance to nearby residents during the construction period, which should be controlled by conditions as recommended if pp is granted.
21. **Council's Conservation Manager** - concerned about the original proposal, which in his opinion represented a suburban form of development that did not take account of the existing informal street scene. The amended layout is generally welcomed but he remains concerned at the termination of the view along the driveway with an undistinguished dwelling. He would prefer the view through to the countryside beyond to be maintained, or at least the access road to contain planting to bring some greenery to the street.
22. **Council's Recycling and Waste Minimisation Officer** - no objection subject to a small adjustment to the design of the access onto Fen End.
23. **Council's Landscape Design Officer** - has requested modifications to the siting of dwellings on the frontage and on Plot 5, so as to achieve a better context for landscaping.

Representations

24. Representations have been received from five nearby residents:
 - a) Extra traffic on a lane with no pavements resulting in danger to pedestrians. The pavement should be extended for the whole of the length of the road.
 - b) Design is suburban 'anywhere' houses.
 - c) Backland development out of keeping with the frontage character of Fen End.
 - d) When viewed from the farm land, the houses on plots 5,6,and 7 will be a dominant intrusion into the countryside.
 - e) Dwellings forming plots 1-4 have been squeezed in and are out of scale with adjoining development. The garden areas are pinched and the access road arrangement is tight. This is overdevelopment.
 - f) Allowing garden areas beyond the village framework sets a precedent for further development within Fen End.
 - g) Existing adjacent properties are predominantly 1½ storeys in height. The proposed 2-storey housing will appear dominant and overbearing particularly onto the street frontage of Fen End.
 - h) Boundaries are inadequately landscaped.
 - i) Cars will be parked on Fen End, adding to congestion and blocking visibility from the access.
 - j) No play space for children.
 - k) Loss of local jobs.
 - l) Existing flooding in the area will be worsened.

- m) Character of Fen End and wildlife habitat would be harmed by the remorseless spread of suburbia.
- n) An Inspector on appeal in 1989 rejected another development in depth in Fen End.
- o) Similar proposals in 1995 failed to gain planning permission.
- p) Concern at the loss of fencing and planting to provide the visibility splays.

Agent's Representations

- 25. In the event of the application being successful, Cambridge Joinery Ltd would vacate the site and move to a new location at Willingham. Analysis shows that only two staff live in Over at present, and that overall less mileage would be incurred by staff travelling to work at Willingham than at present. All staff will be redeployed, so there will be no overall job losses.
- 26. Details of existing and expected traffic flows have been produced, that show a net reduction of traffic onto Fen End after development, together with cessation of trips by heavy vehicles. Noise from the use of machinery to cut, plane, saw and mould timbers will cease. Fumes from the priming paint shop on site will also be removed.
- 27. The Inspector's Report on Objections to the Deposit Draft First Review of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (dated 21st January 2002) refers to the site. It states that it would be possible to bring forward an appropriate form of redevelopment, sensitive to local conditions, at some point in the future.
- 28. The village framework boundary passes through the rear of the site in a seemingly arbitrary position. However, the layout has been carefully designed to ensure that new development falls within the framework boundary.
- 29. The dwelling on Plot 5 has been reduced from a 4-bedroom house to a 3-bedroom house, and the roofline lowered, and planting introduced between parking bays on the access road, in response to the concerns of the Conservation Manager.
- 30. The applicants' request to meet with the Parish Council to discuss the proposal was declined.

Planning Comments

Loss of Employment

- 31. The development of the site will result in the relocation of the current business to adjoining village, Willingham. The applicant has indicated that there will be no loss of employment. There will be a benefit to the village from the removal of a source of noise from machinery and vehicles, and of paint fumes, close to the boundaries of adjoining dwellings. I consider that the requirements of Policy EM8 have been satisfied in this case.

Residential Development

- 32. The development includes land at the rear of the site, adjoining the village framework. For the most part, dwellings in this part of the village front directly onto Fen End. However, there is a precedent for development of back land at the rear of 15 Fen End,

adjoining the south western boundary of the site. In addition, some encouragement for this approach was given by the Inspector in 2002 when reviewing objections to the emerging Local Plan. I consider that the proposal conforms with Policy HG11 as it would not be overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of an existing residential property, nor would it be unduly noisy or disturbing to an existing residential property through use of its access. Subject to provision of a footway along the frontage, the Local Highway Authority is generally satisfied that the development would not give rise to highway dangers through use of its access. The proposal would not be out of character with the pattern of development in the immediate vicinity of the site.

33. The density of development, at 25dph, is lower than required by Policy SE3. In this case, the inclusion of land beyond the village framework as garden area, and the lowering of density on plots on the fringe of the village, are appropriate considerations to justify the lower density figure, so as to conform with Policy SE9.

Objections

34. The Parish Council's concerns have not been supported by statutory consultees - Local Highway Authority and Environment Agency, subject to provision of a footway and the imposition of conditions to confirm details of drainage proposals.
35. The design of dwellings is adequate for this part of the village, which is not conservation area and does not affect the setting of any listed building.
36. The arrangement of dwellings, gardens, garaging and car parking spaces on Plots 1-4 represent a compact form of development that is appropriate in order to provide an affordable element within the scheme.
37. The appeal decision of 1989 (S/0869/88/O) does not provide a strong precedent to assess the current proposal. The site in that case was further to the north east, where there is no other backland development, and a large part of the site was outside the village framework boundary. Even so the Inspector considered that the site would be adequately screened by planting on external boundaries.
38. This size of development is not required to provide any dedicated area for children's play, as indicated in Local Plan Policy RT2. However, the main recreation area of the village is located approximately 3 minutes walk to the south.
39. I have considered all objections to the application carefully. I do not believe that any amounts to a substantial reason for refusal of planning permission.

Other Matters

40. The proposal includes provision of three units of affordable dwellings. I recommend that a condition be attached in the event of approval being granted to secure a Section 106 legal agreement to cover this aspect. Similarly, the education contribution identified should be included in a Section 106 Agreement.

Recommendation

41. Subject to receipt of amended plans and to the further comments of the Local Highways Authority and the Council's Landscape Design Officer and Recycling and Waste Minimisation Officer, delegated powers are sought to approve the application, as amended by plans date stamped 26th April, 20th July 2005, and by ownership

certificate and plans date stamped 16th August 2005, subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard Condition B - Time limited permission (Reason B);
2. Sc5a - Details of materials for external walls and roofs (Rc5aii);
3. Sc51 - Landscaping (Rc51);
4. Sc52 - Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
5. Sc60 - Details of boundary treatment (Rc60);
6. SC66 - Archaeological investigation (RC66);
7. Sc22 - No windows at first floor level in the southern elevation of the development on Plot 4 (Rc22);
8. Surface water drainage details;
9. SC11 - Removal of demolished buildings (RC11);
10. Restriction of hours of use of power operated machinery;
11. Removal of permitted development rights for extensions (all plots) and garden buildings (Plots 5-7)
+ any conditions required by the Local Highways Authority

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - a) **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**
 - P1/1** (Approach to Development)
 - P1/3** (Sustainable Design in Built Development)
 - SE3** (Limited Rural Growth Settlements)
 - b) **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
 - SE3** (Limited Rural Growth Settlements)
 - SE9** (Village Edges)
 - HG7** (Affordable Housing on Sites within Village Frameworks)
 - HG10** (Housing Mix and Design)
 - HG11** (Backland Development)
 - EM8** (Loss of Employment Sites in Villages)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Siting; appearance and design
 - Impact on the appearance of the street scene
 - Housing mix; landscaping
 - Highway safety;
 - Impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties
 - Provision for children's play
 - Impact on local employment provision
 - Flood risk

Informatives

As recommended by Council's Chief Environmental Health Officer and Environment Agency.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Inquiry - Inspector's Report on Objections (2002)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning file Ref. S/2249/04/F, S/0869/88/O

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