

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 5th October 2005
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/2283/04/F - Great Shelford
Erection of 4 Houses Following Demolition of Existing Dwelling at 137 Cambridge Road for Camstead Ltd

Recommendation: Approval
Date for determination: 5th January 2005

Site and Proposal

1. The application site measures 55m x 20m approximately (0.1 hectares/0.27 acres) and is occupied by a hipped roof brick bungalow with accommodation in the roof, rooflights in the front roofslope and a flat roof dormer to the rear. No.135 to the southeast is a two-storey roughcast render at first floor, red brick at ground floor hipped plain tile roof dwelling with a rear conservatory and a blank side elevation facing the application site. No.139 to the northwest is a roughcast render bungalow with accommodation in the roof and a dormer in the front roofslope. There is a window at first floor level in the side elevation of No.139 facing the site and a glazed element used as a greenhouse to the side of No.139 at ground floor level. No.5 Westfield Road to the rear/southwest is a two-storey house with a flat roof garage to the side and one obscure glazed window and one narrow, clear glazed window in its side elevation. There is a silver birch tree in the highway verge to the front of the site.
2. This full application, registered on the 10th November 2004 and amended by plans date stamped the 19th September 2005, proposes the demolition of the existing dwelling and its replacement with 2 pairs of staggered 2½ storey dwellings, 2no. dwellings with 2-bedrooms and 2no. dwellings with 4-bedrooms, measuring 5.2 metres to eaves and 9 metres to ridge. 6 parking spaces would be provided. The density equates to 40 dwellings to the hectare.

Planning History

137 Cambridge Road

3. Planning permission for alterations and an extension to the dwelling was granted in 1991 (**S/0422/91/F**).
4. An application for the erection of 2no. pairs (4no. dwellings) of 9.6m high, 2½ storey semi-detached dwellings, 2no. with 4-bedrooms/2no. with 3-bedroom and a study, following the demolition of the existing dwelling was refused in September 2004 under reference **S/1492/04/F** for the following reasons:
 1. *“Development along Cambridge Road is varied in terms of the design of dwellings and in the materials used, and this contributes to its character and appearance. However, by virtue of their height, depth and the position of dwellings 3b and 4a, the proposed dwellings would appear as incongruous features in the street scene and would thereby detract from the character and appearance of development along Cambridge Road.*

The proposal is therefore contrary to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 Policy P1/3 which requires a high standard of design which responds to the local character of the built environment for all new development; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy SE2 which requires residential development in Great Shelford to be sensitive to the character of the village; and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy HG10 which requires the design of residential development to be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape.

2. *Furthermore, by virtue of their height and position, the proposed dwellings on plots 1a and 4a would seriously harm the amenity of the occupiers of Nos. 135 and 139 respectively by being unduly overbearing and resulting in undue overshadowing. The proposal is therefore contrary to South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy SE2 which requires residential development in Great Shelford to be sensitive to the amenities of neighbours.”*
5. An appeal was made in May 2005 against non-determination of an application for the erection of 7 flats and cycle/bin stores on the site following the demolition of the existing dwelling (**S/1640/04/F**). This is to be considered at an Informal Hearing.
6. An earlier application for the erection of 7 flats following the demolition of the existing dwelling was withdrawn (**S/0550/04/F**).

139 Cambridge Road

7. An application for the erection of 8 dwellings following the demolition of the existing dwelling on the adjacent site at 139 Cambridge Road (4 dwellings in a 2½-storey block fronting Cambridge Road and the other 4 dwellings in a 2-storey block fronting Westfield Road) was refused in January 2005 under reference **S/1851/04/F** for the following reasons:
 1. *“The proposed development would be unduly dominant in the street scenes and would seriously detract from the suburban character of this section of Cambridge Road by virtue of the size, depth and height of the building fronting Cambridge Road, the length of the terrace fronting Westfield Road and the close proximity of the buildings to Westfield Road. The proposal is therefore contrary to: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 Policy P1/3 which requires all new development to respond to the local character of the built environment; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy SE2 which requires residential development in Great Shelford to be sensitive to the character of the village; South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy HG10 which states that the design and layout of residential schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape; and the Great Shelford Village Design Statement, adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance in February 2004, which describes the scale and feel of development along Cambridge Road as suburban.*
 2. *The proposal would seriously harm the amenity of the occupiers of No.137 Cambridge Road as a result of the noise and disturbance generated by the use of the amenity area to the rear of units 5-8 and the parking area. The proposal is therefore contrary to South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 Policy SE2 which requires residential development in Great Shelford to be sensitive to the amenities of neighbours.*

3. *The development would also provide for an unsatisfactory standard of amenity for the occupiers of the proposed dwellings due to the fixed, obscure glazed 'bedroom 2' windows proposed for units 5-8 that are necessary in order to avoid serious overlooking of the garden area of No.137 Cambridge Road and the very limited amount of amenity space proposed."*
8. A subsequent appeal was dismissed in August 2005 but only on the grounds that the part of the proposed building fronting Westfield Road would harm the character and appearance of the area and the use of the amenity area to the rear of proposed units 5 to 8 would harm the living conditions for occupiers of No.137. The Inspector concluded that the proposed 2½-storey building fronting Cambridge Road (which had a frontage of 12.8 metres, a depth of 9.4 metres, an eaves height of 6 metres, a ridge height of 8.9 metres and was set back 9-10 metres from the site frontage) would not harm the character and appearance of the area.

Planning Policy

9. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P1/3** requires a high standard of design for all new development which responds to the local character of the built environment.
10. Structure Plan 2003 **Policy P5/3** states that Local Planning Authorities should seek to maximise the use of land by applying the highest density possible which is compatible with maintaining local character. It also states that, in setting density standards appropriate to their area, Local Planning Authorities should take into account the following guidelines: densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare should be sought in locations close to a good range of existing and potential services and facilities and where there is, or there is the potential for, good public transport accessibility; and densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare will not be acceptable.
11. Local Plan 2004 **Policy SE2** states that residential development will be permitted on unallocated land within the village framework of Great Shelford provided that (a) the retention of the site in its present form is not essential to the character of the village; (b) the development would be sensitive to the character of the village, local features of landscape or ecological importance, and the amenities of neighbours; (c) the village has the necessary infrastructure capacity; and (d) residential development would not conflict with another policy of the Plan, particularly policy EM8 which relates to the loss of employment sites. It also states that development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings in terms of size, type and affordability and should achieve a minimum density of 30 dwellings to the hectare unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.
12. Local Plan 2004 **Policy HG10** states that residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs. It also states that the design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency.
13. Local Plan 2004 **Policy TP1** states that the Council will seek, through its decisions on planning applications, to promote more sustainable transport choices and to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, by amongst other things restricting car parking to a maximum of an average of 1½ spaces plus ¼ space for visitors per dwelling.

14. Local Plan 2004 **Policy CS10** states that, where permission is granted for residential development of 4 or more dwellings, financial contributions will be sought towards the provision of additional permanent or temporary education accommodation in those cases where the new development would cause the planning capacity of permanent buildings at the local primary or secondary schools to be exceeded during the 5 years following the date of the application.
15. The **Great Shelford Village Design Statement** describes the scale and feel of development along Cambridge Road as suburban.

Consultation

16. **Great Shelford Parish Council** recommends refusal stating “These amended plans were fully discussed at the planning committee who looked in detail at all the previous plans for the site. As a result the planning committee do not feel they can approve the amended design. In comparing the amended design with the application which was refused, the footprint remains the same although it has been moved forward, the height has been reduced by only 0.5 metres and there is still considerable bulk at 2nd floor level in terms of the front and rear facing gables which we feel should be removed or reduced. An acceptable infill building was obtained at 143 Cambridge Road – this building is only 8 metres high but sits relatively comfortably with this part of Cambridge Road. We would prefer a scheme that respects the character and appearance of this part of Cambridge Road.”
17. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** raises no objections but recommends that conditions relating to the times when power operated machinery shall not be operated during the demolition and construction periods except in accordance with agreed noise restrictions and driven pile foundations are attached to any approval. He also recommends that informatives are attached to any approval stating that there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site during demolition and construction except with his Department’s prior permission and, before the existing property is demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required.
18. **Local Highway Authority** does not recommend refusal of the application but is concerned that less than two parking spaces per dwelling are to be provided and states that any additional vehicles associated with the dwellings are likely to park within the turning area or on-street. It therefore states that, when determining the proposal, it trusts that the District Council will take into consideration the effect of vehicles reversing onto Cambridge Road due to parking within the turning area and the effect of vehicles parked within Cambridge Road close to the Westfield Road junction. It recommends conditions to be attached to any approval.
19. **County Council Chief Financial Planning Officer** is concerned that adequate primary school capacity is not available in Great Shelford to meet the additional demand from this proposal and therefore asks that a contribution from the developer to cover the cost of 1 place in the sum of £7000 is sought.
20. **Environment Agency** raises no objections but makes advisory comments.

Representations

21. Occupiers of 135 Cambridge Road have no objections to the scheme as amended. They feel that the latest amendments are a significant improvement in that the height of the buildings has been reduced and, as a result of this and the roof modification, the impact on both their property and the street scene is reduced.

They state that their major concern with any development on this site has always been the potential overshadowing of their conservatory and rear garden and reiterate that the current proposal is a great improvement on the previously refused scheme.

22. Occupier of 5 Westfield Road states that she is not opposed to redevelopment of this site and the concept of four houses is acceptable. However, she states that the latest amendments are very minor and objects to the scheme on the grounds of overlooking and height problems.
23. Occupier of 154 Cambridge Road objects on the grounds of overdevelopment of the site/character of the village and the development would only add to the immense volume of traffic on Cambridge Road.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

24. The main issues in relation to this application are: the impact on the streetscene and the character and appearance of Cambridge Road; impact on neighbours; and parking provision.
25. Whilst dismissing the appeal for the erection of 8 dwellings on the adjacent site (139 Cambridge Road – S/1851/04/F) on the grounds that the part of the proposed building fronting Westfield Road would harm the character and appearance of the area and the use of the amenity area to the rear of proposed units 5 to 8 would harm the living conditions for occupiers of No.137, the Inspector concluded that the proposed 2½-storey building fronting Cambridge Road (which had a frontage of 12.8 metres, a depth of 9.4 metres, an eaves height of 6 metres, a ridge height of 8.9 metres and was set back 9-10 metres from the site frontage) would not harm the character and appearance of the area.
26. There is a mix of dwellings sizes and designs, including recently approved and built 2½-storey flats at Nos. 216-220 even Cambridge Road. The proposed dwellings as amended, whilst higher than many dwellings along Cambridge Road, are considered to be acceptable in terms of their impact in the street scene. No.135 stands forward of 137 and 139 and the proposed stagger is therefore considered to be appropriate.
27. Whilst there are first and second floor windows in the rear elevations of the dwellings, any overlooking of Nos.135 and 139's rear gardens would be at an oblique angle. Whilst the rear elevations face the rear garden of No.5 Westfield Road, they are over 30 metres from this boundary. The development is not considered to result in serious harm to the amenity of neighbours.
28. Six parking spaces are proposed for the four dwellings. The Local Plan requires a maximum of seven spaces to be provided. Notwithstanding the Local Highway Authority's concerns, and given the site's location, I consider that it would be very difficult to substantiate a refusal based on the inadequacy of the proposed parking provision.
29. The proposed housing mix is acceptable.
30. Mindful of the Inspector's comments in relation to the appeal at No.139, and by reducing the height and size of the dwellings and revising their position, this scheme is considered to overcome the first reason for refusal of the previous application for 2no. pairs of dwellings on the site (S/1492/04/F). By reducing the height and mass of the dwellings and easing them forward, this scheme is also considered to overcome the second reason of refusal of that application without harming the street scene.

31. Local Plan Policy CS10 only requires a financial contribution towards the provision of school accommodation for developments of 4 or more dwellings. As this proposal only involves a net increase of 3 dwellings, a contribution is not appropriate in this instance.
32. The latest side elevation plans still show the now omitted front dormer windows. Further amended elevation plans showing these dormers omitted are required before the application can be determined.

Recommendation

33. Approval (as amended by drawing nos. 4.563F and 4.564D date stamped 19.9.05 and further amended drawing nos. 4.576 and 4.578 showing dormer windows deleted)
 1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A)
 2. SC5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (RC To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development)
 3. SC5e – Details of finished floor levels (RC To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development)
 4. SC51 – Landscaping (RC51)
 5. SC52 – Implementation of landscaping (RC52)
 6. SC60 – Details of boundary treatments (RC60)
 7. SC5f – Details of materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas (RC To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development)
 8. Highway condition B9 (5.0 m) (delete 'for distance of ...') – Access width (RC In the interests of highway safety)
 9. Highway condition B10 – Access construction (RC In the interests of highway safety)
 10. Highway condition C3 a and b – Parking and turning (RC In the interests of highway safety)
 11. During the periods of demolition and construction ... SC26 (0800, 0800, 1800, 1300) – Restriction on hours of use of power operated machinery during demolition and construction periods (RC26)

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:** P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development) and P5/3 (Density)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** SE2 (Development in Rural Growth Settlements), HG10 (Housing Mix and Design) and TP1 (Planning for More Sustainable Travel)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise: residential amenity; impact on character and appearance of this part of Cambridge Road; traffic on Cambridge Road; and parking provision.

Informatives

Should driven pile foundations be proposed, before development commences, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations should be submitted to and agreed by the District Council's Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.

During demolition and construction, there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the District Council's Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

Before the existing property is demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from the District Council's Environmental Health Department establishing the way in which the property will be dismantled, including any asbestos present, the removal of waste, minimisation of dust, capping of drains and establishing hours of working operation.

The applicant's attention is drawn to the contents of the Environment Agency's 16th November 2004 letter.

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/0422/91/F, S/0550/04/F, S/1492/04/F, S/1640/04/F, S/1851/04/F and S/2283/04/F.

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