

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

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**S/1630/05/F - Litlington**  
**Erection of 3 Dwellings Including 1 Affordable Dwelling Following Demolition of Existing Factory Building, South View, Church Street - For R K Print - Coat Instruments Ltd**

**Recommendation: Approval**  
**Date of Determination - 18<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

### **Conservation Area**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The 0.03 ha site lies on the south-western edge of the main part of the village overlooking a small village green, and comprises the 2-storey factory building element of the former industrial premises. There are frontages to Church Street to the south-west and a narrow, unmade road to the south-east, to the north-east is Manor View, a modern dwelling, and to the north-west a traditional dwelling linked to the factory buildings and forming part of the former factory complex. The full application as amended by plans franked 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005 received on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2005 proposes the demolition of the factory buildings and their replacement by 3 two storey terraced dwellings with an "L" shaped footprint giving frontages to Church Street and the village green. Each unit has two bedrooms with 1 parking space per unit. One unit is "affordable". The design, scale and materials take their cue from the Victorian dwelling (South View) adjacent to the site.
2. The density equates to 100 dwellings per ha. A supporting statement accompanies the application. The former business moved to the site in 1966 and extended its buildings with first floor extensions, employing 30 staff. The firm relocated in 1991 to a purpose built site elsewhere in the village. Another company took over the premises and moved out in 2003. The premises has been marketed since without success.
3. The provision of a single affordable dwelling is justified because of the high cost of redeveloping the site and the need for a high quality development in the Conservation Area. The advantages of replacing the existing unattractive factory buildings with a more appropriate development in the Conservation Area are underlined.

#### **Planning History**

4. Planning permissions were granted in 1971 and 1980 to extend buildings on the site in connection with use of the site for laboratories. An application for 3 houses was withdrawn earlier this year (ref. S/0951/05/F).

## Planning Policy

5. The site is within the village framework and the Conservation Area. The following policies apply:
  - a) Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:  
**Policy P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development), Policy P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development), Policy P2/6 (Rural Economy), Policy P5/3 (Density), Policy P5/4 (Locally Identified Housing Needs, Policy P5/5 (Homes in Rural Areas) and Policy P7/6 (Historic Built Environment).**
  - b) South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:  
**Policy SE5 (Infill Only Villages), Policy SE8 (Village Frameworks), Policy SE9 Village Edges), Policy HG7 Affordable Housing on Sites Within Frameworks), Policy HG10 (Housing Mix and Design), Policy ES1 (Potentially Contaminated Sites), Policy EM8 (Loss of Employment Sites in Villages), Policy EN15 (Sites of Archaeological Importance), Policy EN30 (Development in Conservation Areas), Policy EN32 (Demolition in Conservation Areas) and Policy EN35 (Restrictions on Permitted Development).**

## Consultation

6. **Litlington Parish Council** welcomes improvements to the east elevation but recommends refusal on the following grounds:
  - a. “We believe 3 dwellings to be too many for this size of site. The target density expressed in the Local Plan and the Structure Plan (P5/3) is 30 to 40+ dwellings per hectare with the higher end of this range restricted to areas with good infrastructure. This development works out at about 100 per hectare, which we believe to be excessive in view of the sensitive nature of the location (see below) and the poor infrastructure.
  - b) Local Plan policy SE5 limits the number of new houses on any site in an infill village to 2 (or possibly **slightly** more for brown field sites). We believe this application should be considered in combination with application S/0950/05/F, which is contiguous with the current one. In which case the total number of dwellings would be 4, which is not slightly more but twice as many as 2.
  - c) The car parking provision is inadequate and does not conform to the standards set out in Appendix 7/1 of the Local Plan. This is especially important in Litlington, where there is no viable public transport infrastructure, which makes travel by car the only viable alternative for most people. The lack of adequate parking will force the residents to park between the green and the houses, to the detriment of the village green setting.
  - d) The parking provision does not meet generally accepted road safety standards, in that residents cannot enter and leave in forward gear and, because there are inadequate vision splays. We recall that the previous planning permission for the site prevented access onto Church Street on road safety grounds.

- e) The windows on the west side of the new houses look directly into the window on the side elevation of the neighbouring property (Manor View).

We accept that the existing building is far from pretty, and we are happy in principle for it to be replaced by housing. However, the strength of feeling associated with this site is greater than usual, because of its location, which lies:

- i. At the heart of the conservation area;
- ii. Directly opposite the village green;
- iii. On the Countryside Frontage overlooking the village manor house;
- iv. In an elevated position;
- v. In full view of all travellers approaching from the South (which is most travellers given that we have a one-way system). The village opens out as the road reaches the green and the site forms the backdrop to this open area.

Given the nature of the location, we want to see a development that is very sympathetic - one that enhances the area and accords with a traditional village setting. In particular, we suggest the following enhancements:

1. Reduce the density of housing to no more than 40 per hectare.
  2. Ensure that the car parking and access provision is not between the green and the houses, so as to maintain the village green setting.
  3. Ensure that the path between the houses and the green remains a path, not an access road or car park - again to protect the village green setting.
  4. Ensure that the design detailing (including fenestration, window materials, roof covering, roof pitch, bricks, wall colour, eaves and verge details etc.) conform to traditional local practice.)”
7. **The Local Highway Authority** has asked for more information concerning previous vehicle movements’ from the former factory site. This has been provided and a verbal report will be made.
  8. **The Environment Agency’s** comments will be reported verbally.
  9. **The County Archaeologist comments:**  
  
“The plot lies in the core of the medieval settlement and appears to have been established as a result of encroachment onto a village green or area of common, post AD 1400. Accordingly, the plot has the potential to shed light upon the development, contraction and subsequent expansion of Medieval Litlington, particularly in the period following the population collapse of the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the Litlington area is known to be particularly rich in sites of Roman date, including a large villa complex and an important cemetery (sadly lost to gravel extraction in the 19<sup>th</sup> C) and the potential exists for the discovery of further Roman remains in the development area”.
  10. A condition is therefore recommended requiring a programme of archaeological investigation.

### **The Conservation Manager comments:**

11. *“Demolition:*  
The section of building scheduled for demolition is of no particular architectural merit, through it does provide a degree of enclosure to the north-west side of the village green.
12. *3 New Dwellings:*  
On the previous application my biggest regret was the lost opportunity for a piece of positive architecture to enclose the green. The current application attempts to address this and is much more acceptable than the previous proposal.
13. I have a concern about the awkward relationship between the parking space for Unit 3 and the potential of disturbance for Unit 4, but can see no easy solution. Also, the west gable window to bedroom 1 in Unit 4 could be omitted, thereby avoiding any potential overlooking of the neighbouring dwelling or garden.
14. There are a number of aspects that will need to be clarified in order to ensure a quality development, but I would be happy for these to be controlled via conditions. They include:
  - a) Detailing and finish to the roofs to the bay windows. Given the shallow pitch they will probably need to be in lead, complete with lead rolls etc.
  - b) Detailing of windows - These should be timber, sash windows with margin lights.
  - c) Detailing of French doors - The elevations suggest sliding patio doors which would look totally out of place, and these doors should be side hung, glazed timber doors.
  - d) Boundary treatment.
  - e) Finish to parking areas.
15. *Recommendation*  
No objection, subject to adequate conditions to cover the above points”.
16. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no objections subject to standard conditions concerning hours of work and site contamination.

### **Representations**

17. No representations have been received.

### **Planning Comments - Key Issues**

18. The key issues are the loss of an employment site in the village, the density of the proposed housing and its impact on the Conservation Area.
19. The premises were occupied for many years by a local firm who have relocated elsewhere in the village in 1991. Another company subsequently occupied in buildings until 2003. The property has since been advertised for rent without success. The applicants point to the remote village location, small site size, restricted access and parking and proximity to residential curtilage as negative factors. I am satisfied that the documentation provided with the application demonstrates the site has been adequately advertised, and its position close to residential properties could generate undesirable noise problems. Therefore, the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes does not conflict with Local Plan Policy EN8 which seeks to retain employment sites within villages.

20. As a proposed density of 100 dwellings per ha the site would at first glance appear to be overdeveloped, but the existing industrial buildings have a large footprint and the remainder of the site is concrete hardstandings. In order to achieve a road frontage on two sides an "L" shaped footprint is proposed. The scheme includes on-site parking and gardens for each property, and I consider the density appropriate for this site given the scheme proposed. A density of 40 dph, as suggested by the Parish Council, would equate to one dwelling. No affordable housing would be provided.
21. The redevelopment of the site gives the opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area; this is a visually important site facing onto a small village green and adjoining an attractive Victorian Cottage. An application for 3 dwellings submitted earlier this year was withdrawn to enable more thought to be given to the elevational treatment. Following further discussions with the Conservation Manager the scheme now submitted is acceptable subject to conditions and including more information on window and door design.
22. The previous scheme did not include any provision for affordable housing; one of the three units is now proposed to be affordable and this is acceptable both in terms of the accommodation proposed and the percentage of the whole development.
23. The Local Highway Authority's final comments are awaited, but the replacements of an industrial site employing 30 people in its heyday with 3 dwellings should not create any highway difficulties.

### **Recommendation**

24. Approval, as amended by plans franked 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005 subject to the following conditions.
  1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A);
  2. No development shall commence until details of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
    - c) The materials to be used for the external walls and roofs, including the bay windows.
    - d) Precise details of the windows and doors.
    - e) Boundary Treatment.
    - f) Finish to parking areas.
 (Reason - To ensure development enhances the character of the Conservation Areas.)
  3. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
  4. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
  5. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 and Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order), the following Classes of development more particularly described in the Order are expressly prohibited in respect of the property and each unit thereon unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf:
    - 1) Part 1, (Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse) All Classes.
    - 2) Part 2, (Minor operations) Class A (erection of gates, walls and fences).
 (Reason - To safeguard the character of the Conservation Area.)

6. During the period of demolition and construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08:00 hours on weekdays and 08:00 hours on Saturdays nor after 18:00 hours on weekdays and 13:00 hours on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays), unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions.  
(Reason - To protect the amenities of neighbouring residential property.)
7. Prior to the development commencing an investigation of the site shall be undertaken to establish the nature and extent of any contamination of the site and any remedial works to deal with contamination. This shall initially consist of a desktop study, which will include details of the site history, development of a site conceptual model, and a preliminary qualitative risk assessment. If any likelihood of contamination is indicated by the initial study than a further detailed site assessment shall be carried out which shall include intrusive investigations and which shall fully characterise the nature, extent and severity of contamination. Recommendations for a remediation strategy and post-remediation validation testing should be included. Remedial work should be carried out before development commences. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Copies of all reports shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To ensure the developed site is free from contamination.)
8. The development permitted shall not commence until a binding undertaking prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 shall have been entered into with the Local Planning Authority, requiring the transfer of the proposed house on plot 4 to a Registered Social Landlord approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To ensure the development makes provision for Affordable Housing in accordance with Policies in accordance with Policy P5/4 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy HG7 of the South Cambs Local Plan 2004.)
9. No development shall take place on the application site until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
(Reason - To secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of the remains.)
10. The bathroom window in the western elevation shall be permanently glazed with obscured glass.  
(Reason - To protect the amenities of the neighbouring residential property.)
11. Any conditions required by the Local Highway Authority and the Environment Agency.

## **Informatives**

### **(1) The Council's Conservation Manager advises:**

1. The bay windows roofs have a shallow pitch and should be in lead, complete with lead rolls.

2. The windows should be timber, sash windows with margin lights.
3. The French doors should not be sliding patio doors which would be out of keeping, but side hung glazed timber doors.
4. Conservations Area Consent is required for the demolition of the existing factory buildings.

**(2) The Council's Chief Environment Health Officer comments:**

1. Should driven pile foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.
2. A guidance document on the procedures for dealing with potential land contamination will be available from the Environmental Health Officer.
3. Before the existing property is demolished, a Demolition Notice will be required from the 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. This should be brought to the attention of the applicant to ensure the protection of the residential environment of the area.

**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: **P1/2 (Environmental Restrictions on Development), Policy P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development), Policy P2/6 (Rural Economy), Policy P5/3 (Density), Policy P5/4 (Locally Identified Housing Needs, Policy P5/5 (Homes in Rural Areas) and Policy P7/6 (Historic Built Environment).**
  - South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: **Policy SE5 (Infill Only Villages), Policy SE8 (Village Frameworks), Policy SE9 Village Edges), Policy HG7 Affordable Housing on Sites Within Frameworks), Policy HG10 (Housing Mix and Design), Policy ES1 (Potentially Contaminated Sites), Policy EM8 (Loss of Employment Sites in Villages), Policy EN15 (Sites of Archaeological Importance), Policy EN30 (Development in to Conservation Areas), Policy EN32 (Demolition in Conservation Areas) and Policy EN35 (Restrictions on Permitted Development).**
2. The proposal is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
  - Density
  - Impact upon setting of adjacent Conservation Area;
  - Highway safety
  - Car parking
  - Impact on amenity of adjoining properties

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Planning Files ref: S/0951/05/F and S/1630/05/F.  
South Cambs Local Plan 2003.  
Cambridge and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003.

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