

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

S/1612/05/F - Cottenham
Extension and Conversion of Barn into Dwelling and Erection of Garage at Land R/O
15 Telegraph Street, for Mr and Mrs Ware

Recommendation: Refusal
Date for determination: 13th October 2005

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. No.15 Telegraph Street, Cottenham forms a detached Victorian dwelling with a 60m deep rear garden that tapers inwards to the rear boundary. The application site faces onto Telegraph Street with a 10 metre wide frontage comprising a double timber gate and the back of a brick cart shed. The garden abuts the backs of dwellings in Corbett Street and the adjacent dwelling No.19 Telegraph Street, to the south east.
2. Approximately halfway down the garden there is a two-storey timber barn with brick plinth and pantile roof. The site includes a number of fruit trees to the rear and other medium sized conifer trees along the shared boundary with No.19. This boundary is marked by the garage and rear extensions of No.19 which enclose their immediate patio area from the proposed site.
3. This application received on 18th August 2005 seeks full planning permission for the conversion and extension of the barn to a 4 bed dwelling. The converted barn would benefit from its own curtilage, the land currently beyond the barn with a new single storey rear extension projecting into this newly defined garden space. The site would be accessed using a proposed shared driveway that would necessitate the removal of an existing cart shed that fronts Telegraph Street. A double length, single width garage would provide parking for No.15 the garden of which would be enclosed with a new brick wall. A shared turning area would be sited to the south west of the newly converted barn.

Planning History

4. **S/0160/85/F** – Extensions and alterations to provide a granny annexe was given planning permission on 13th March 1985

Planning Policy

5. **Policy P1/3 ‘Sustainable Design in Built Development’** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development
6. **Policy P7/6 ‘Historic Built Environment’** of the Structure Plan 2003 states Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

7. **Policy P8/1 'Land Use and Transport'** of the Structure Plan 2003 sets out requirements for new development and transport needs.
8. **Policy SE2 - 'List of Rural Growth Settlements'** of the Local Plan 2004 permits residential development within village frameworks subject to a number of criteria
9. **Policy HG10 'Housing Mix and Design'** of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for design of new developments to consider the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape.
10. **Policy EN30 'Development in Conservation Areas'** of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for development within Conservation Areas
11. **Policy HG11 'Backland Development'** of the Local Plan 2004 sets out key considerations for backland development.

Consultation

12. **Cottenham Parish Council** – “Approves this application but does have some concerns regarding the visibility splays onto the road and the width of the entrance to both properties. Concerns also include possible noise nuisance by vehicles accessing the proposed conversion to the occupiers of 15 Telegraph Street.”
13. **Conservation Manager**
Comments will be reported to Members verbally
14. **Ecology Officer**
“Following a brief inspection of the sheds I could not identify any positive signs of roosting bats. A low number of bird nests were present, no further detailed bat surveys are considered necessary” - He recommends approval subject to conditions. He would also wish to see fruit trees to the rear retained.
15. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer**
No objections, subject to condition restricting use of power operated machinery during the period of construction.
16. **Old West Internal Drainage Board**
No comment from a drainage point of view
17. **Trees and Woodlands Officer**
Comments will be reported to Members verbally

Representations

18. One letter received from No.19 Telegraph Street, (neighbouring dwelling to the southeast) noting the following points:
 - a) No objection in principle
 - b) Any boundary trees removed should be replaced with fencing to a suitable height in order to ensure privacy of the garden to No.19 Telegraph Street
 - c) New trees should be put in place

Planning Comments – Key Issues

19. The key issues to consider are the impact to neighbour amenity, specifically the impact from the use of the access and neighbour privacy. In addition Members should consider the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
20. Regarding the merits of the Conservation Area, Policy EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 seeks to ensure development either preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Managers view will be reported verbally to Members and an Officer view conveyed before discussion.
21. Turning to the issue of neighbour amenity the key Policy consideration is Policy HG11. Point 1 of HG11 refers to overbearing, overlooking and overshadowing. Little weight can be given to overbearing and overshadowing given the Barn already exists and the massing will remain predominantly unchanged except for a modest single storey rear projection that would be sited behind a boundary fence and set away from those dwellings in Corbett Street. On this basis there is limited grounds to substantiate an objection on overbearing and overshadowing.
22. Members should however give due consideration to the issue of overlooking. As is typical of Barn conversions the scheme proposes a large element of timber framed glazing in place of the existing barn doors on the south west elevation. This glazing would serve the ground floor entrance and the first floor landing and stairs of the conversion. It is considered that this level of glazing would result in both direct and a perceived threat of overlooking to the garden area of No.15, the boundary of which would be sited approximately 5 metres away to the south west.
23. In addition two smaller bedroom windows are proposed at first floor to the southeast gable elevation facing across to the garden of No.19. The boundary between the application site and No.19 is currently screened by tall conifers amongst other medium sized trees. Irrespective of these trees, the new windows serving bedroom 4 would result in overlooking to the rear garden of No.19 and consequent loss to privacy to those residents.
24. Turning to Point 2 of Policy HG11 consideration should be given to the potential noise and disturbance through the use of the access. It is considered that residents of the barn conversion would suffer from noise disturbance caused by No.15 (the existing dwelling) using the shared turning head located adjacent to and beneath the living room and bedroom window of the barn.
25. Point 3 of the same seeks safe highway access. The proposed scheme can achieve pedestrian visibility splays. A condition can be imposed on any planning consent.
26. Advice from the Conservation Manager and Trees and Woodlands Officer has been sought and shall be conveyed to Members.
27. Notwithstanding these expected comments it is recommended that the scheme be refused planning permission on the grounds of loss of privacy to surrounding dwellings and disturbance to the new dwelling.

Recommendation

28. Refuse on the following grounds:

- 1) The proposed barn conversion, by reason of the expanse of glazing to the southwest elevation and the proposed bedroom windows at first floor to the southeast elevation would result in direct overlooking from the new dwelling onto the rear garden area of the existing property, No.15 Telegraph Street and across to the rear garden of the neighbouring property No.19 Telegraph Street. The resultant overlooking is considered to be unacceptable and contrary to Policy HG11 of South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 which states that development to the rear of existing properties will only be permitted where the development would not, amongst others, result in overlooking of existing residential properties.
- 2) The proposed barn conversion would create new parking for the proposed and existing units. Turning has been provided in close proximity to the new living room and 1st floor bedroom window of the conversion allowing vehicles to exit in a forward gear. It is considered that given this turning area is shared by both the existing and new property there is likely to be unreasonable levels of noise created to the detriment of those future residents of the proposed barn conversion. As such it is considered that the proposal is contrary to Policy HG11 of South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004, which aims to ensure that development to the rear of existing properties does not result in noise and disturbance through the use of its access.

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

Application file Ref S/0160/85/F and S/1612/05/F
South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

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