

## **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/1622/05/F - Wimpole**

**Two Houses, The Woodyard, Cambridge Road, For Mr and Mrs R J Foster**

**Recommendation: Refusal**

**Date for Determination: 13<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

### **Departure Application**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The Woodyard, Cambridge Road, Wimpole comprises a 1.8ha of land on the north west side of the A603 (Cambridge Road), to the south west of the built-up area of the village. The site is accessed direct from the A603. The site has been used for the sale of salvaged and reclaimed items such as timber and widows, which have been stored across various parts of the site. There is a storage/workshop building on the site, which also contains areas of water.  
  
To the south west and north west of the site is agricultural land. To the south east of the site, on the opposite side of Cambridge Road, is a line of residential properties.
2. This full application, registered on 18 August 2005 proposes the redevelopment of the site by two dwellings. The scheme includes an area of public open space (approx 0.05ha) in the north east corner of the site, which it is proposed to transfer to Wimpole Parish Council.
3. The two dwellings proposed are located in the north east and south west sections of the site to take advantage of the existing water features. Both dwellings are accessed via the existing entrance, which is shown to be widened to 5.0m in the existing bellmouth.
4. House 1 is located in the south west section of the site and comprises four linked blocks, only one of which is two-storey. It is a five-bedroom dwelling with a maximum ridge height of 8.3m. The floor level is set 1m above existing ground level on raised pile foundations as a precaution against flooding and to preserve wildlife access to the water. It has a floor area of approximately 350m<sup>2</sup>, excluding garaging and decking. Materials proposed are cedar/larch boarding for the walls and cedar/larch shingle for the roof.
5. House 2 is located at the north east end of the site and comprises two linked blocks. It is to be constructed in a similar manner to House 1. It is of a similar height but has a floor area of 390m<sup>2</sup>, excluding garaging and balcony.
6. The density of the development is 0.9 dwellings per hectare
7. A letter submitted in support of the application is attached as Appendix 1. The application is also accompanied by a Wildlife Report, an Archaeological Desk-Based

Assessment and, a draft Section 106 Agreement in respect of the proposed public open space. These documents can be viewed as part of the background papers

### **Planning History**

8. In November 2004 a Certificate of Lawful Existing Use or Development (CLEUD) was issued on part (approx. 0.8ha) of the current application site for the use as a yard for commercial storage and retail sale of salvaged/reclaimed items, namely, timber, windows, window frames and doors (**Ref: S/2615/03/LDC**).
9. Evidence was submitted with the above application demonstrating that the site had been used as described since the 1960's.

### **Planning Policy**

10. **Policy P1/2** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure") restricts development in the countryside to that which is essential in a particular rural location.
11. **Policy SE5** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") identifies Wimpole as an Infill village, where development is restricted to not more than two dwellings within the village framework.
12. **Policy SE8** of The Local Plan states that residential development outside village frameworks will not be permitted.
13. **Policy SE9** of the Local Plan states that development on the edges of villages should be sympathetically designed and landscaped to minimise the impact of development on the countryside.

### **Consultation**

14. **Wimpole Parish Council** recommends approval. "The Parish Council wishes you to know that it supports this application very strongly, despite the fact that it is outside the village envelope. A site of this sort, which has been part of village life for so long, seems an integral part of Wimpole, and the Council would be reluctant to see it become anything other than a residential site.
15. There were houses on it in the distant past, so there is a precedent for residential use of the land. The Council is very keen to safeguard this area of the village from any development which would be detrimental to the rural aspect of the area. There is also a worry that if it is not developed sympathetically, it will become an attractive area for casual use by itinerant people."
16. The **Local Highway Authority** comments that it is unable to object to the application given the previous use of the site and the associated traffic generated by such a use. The access should be improved by increasing the width to a minimum of 5.0m for a minimum distance of 10.0m measured from the channel line of Cambridge Road.
17. The **Environment Agency** requests conditions in respect of foul and surface water drainage, and highlights various informatives to be attached to any approval notice.
18. The **Chief Environmental Health Officer** requests conditions restricting the hours of operation of power driven machinery during the period of construction and requiring an investigation of the site to be undertaken prior to the commencement of any

development to establish the nature and extent of any contamination of the site. An informative should be attached to any consent restricting bonfires or the burning of waste on site during the period of construction.

19. The comments of the **Ecology Officer** and **The National Trust** will be reported at the meeting.

### **Representations**

20. None received.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

21. The site is outside the village framework so the key issue to be considered with this application is whether there is sufficient reason to allow two houses on this site as a departure from the presumption against residential development in the countryside. It is also necessary to consider the design and impact of the proposed dwellings.
22. By definition the site is in the countryside, although it adjoins the village framework to the north east and the framework extends beyond the site to the south west, on the opposite side of the A603. Part of the site benefits from a lawful use as a yard for commercial storage and retail sale of salvaged/reclaimed items, namely, timber, windows, window frames and doors. This use has operated since the 1960's and I am not aware of any concerns that have been received by this Council in respect of that ongoing use. I have sought confirmation on this point from the Chief Environmental Health Officer. The site is well screened from the road, although previously there has been a degree of timber stored in front of the site around the area of the entrance. The lawful use of part of the site is restricted to that described above and although there would be some visual and ecological benefit in principle if the site was redeveloped for residential use, I do not consider any such advantages in this case to be sufficient to outweigh the policy objection to residential development outside the village framework.
23. I note the concern of the Parish Council about possible future use of the site but am of the view that, given the restricted nature of the CLEUD, the Local Planning Authority retains sufficient control over alternative uses.
24. No more than 50% of the site may be considered as brownfield by definition and the applicants' agent points to guidance that supports the re-use of brownfield land. This of itself however does not outweigh the policy objection to residential development in the countryside.
25. The application proposes the transfer of a small area of the site to the Parish Council as public open space. Whilst this is to be welcomed it cannot outweigh the above policy objection.
26. Notwithstanding the objection to the principle of development I consider that if this site were to be developed for residential development it is appropriate to have a low density with dwellings sited to make use of the existing water features. This position is enforced by the fact that Wimpole is identified as an infill village.
27. The two dwellings proposed are large in scale. House 1 is set into the site and the majority of the footprint is single storey. I am of the view that in terms of its design and visual impact that this house is acceptable. I am however concerned about the

scale and location of House 2, which is two-storey throughout and within 7m of the north east boundary of the site. In my view the visual impact of this dwelling on the surrounding countryside would be unacceptable, as it would threaten the retention of existing boundary planting. Any dwelling in this position should be much lower in form.

28. I cannot however support this application in principle.

### **Recommendation**

29. That the application be refused for the following reasons.

1. The proposal is for the erection of two dwellings outside the village framework of Wimpole contrary to the aims of Policy P1/2 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy SE8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which restrict development in the countryside to, that which is essential in a particular rural location. Although the site can be considered as brownfield land there is insufficient justification in this case for a departure from the above policies.
2. Notwithstanding the above reason, the proposed scale and siting of House 2, close to the north east boundary of the site, is unacceptable as it is out of scale and character with houses in the vicinity and will threaten the retention of existing boundary planting. As a result the proposed dwelling is likely to have an adverse visual impact on the adjoining countryside, contrary to the aims of Policy SE9 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.
3. It is not considered that the existence of a Lawful Use on part of the site warrants allowing the scale of the proposed development contrary to the above-mentioned Development Plan policies.

**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 Refs: S/1622/05/F & S/2615/03/LDC

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