

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

6 April 2016

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number: S/2512/15/FL

Parish(es): Eversdens

Proposal: Erection of live work unit with associated parking and landscaping following demolition of 7 silos.

Site address: Land east of 12 Church Lane, Little Eversden

Applicant(s): Mr T Banks

Recommendation: Approval

Key material considerations: Principle of development
Residential amenity
Setting of adjacent listed building
Character of the surrounding area and setting of Green Belt
Highway Safety and parking
Trees/landscaping

Committee Site Visit: 5 April 2016

Departure Application: No

Presenting Officer: David Thompson, Principal Planning Officer

Application brought to Committee because: The officer recommendation of approval conflicts with the recommendation of Eversdens Parish Council

Date by which decision due: 08 April 2016 (extension of time agreed)

Executive Summary

1. The proposal, as amended, is considered to be acceptable in principle. Whilst the proposal does include residential accommodation, this would be tied to the employment space to ensure that a dwelling would not become the sole use of the site. The amended siting and design of the scheme is considered to represent an improvement to the setting of the adjacent grade II* listed St. Helens Church located to the north as it would replace the existing group of silos and open up the majority of the site. The revised scheme is considered to preserve the amenity of neighbouring properties, maintain highway safety, represent an improvement on the existing nature of the site which is immediately adjacent to the Green Belt and provide adequate on site parking.

Planning History

2. S/2147/03/F – conversion of silos to dwellings - refused
S/2117/98/F – roofing over existing grain silos – refused
S/1674/95/F – erection of 2 dwellings following demolition of silos withdrawn

National Guidance

3. National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance

Development Plan Policies

4. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Core Strategy DPD, 2007**
ST/7 Infill Villages
5. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD, 2007:**
DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
DP/7 Development Frameworks
GB/3 Mitigating the Impact of Development Adjoining the Green Belt
CH/2 Archaeological Sites
CH/4 Development Within the Setting of a Listed Building
ET/8 Replacement Buildings in the Countryside
NE/1 Energy Efficiency
NE/2 Renewable Energy
NE/6 Biodiversity
NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure
TR/1 Planning For More Sustainable Travel
TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards
6. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):**
Trees & Development Sites SPD - Adopted January 2009
Listed Buildings SPD - Adopted July 2009
District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010
7. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission - March 2014**
S/1 Vision
S/2 Objectives of the Local Plan
S/3 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
S/7 Development Frameworks
HQ/1 Design Principles
NH/4 Biodiversity
NH/8 Mitigating the Impact of Development in and adjoining the Green Belt
NH/14 Heritage Assets
CC/2 Renewable and Low Cost Carbon Energy Generation
E/13 New Employment Development on the Edges of Villages
E/17 Conversion of Replacement of Rural Buildings for Employment
TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel
TI/3 Parking Provision

Consultation

8. **Eversdens Parish Council** - Recommends refusal (to original and amended schemes) for the following reasons:
 - The site appears to be outside of the permitted development line for the village as outlined in the SCDC Development Plan
 - The garden areas is large but the proposed development in along the western edge of the site only, which raises a number of concerns;
 - The build position is too close to no.s 10 and 12 opposite, this could be rectified by putting the house to the east of the site and the garden to the west. The wall can be left in tact and the turning/parking space altered
 - Shared turning and parking areas will be insufficient for traffic to the Church and to the existing properties. This is important as the proposal for work and offices assumes increased traffic
 - The proposed two storey dwelling will overlook no.s 10 and 12 opposite
 - Church Lane is narrow and yet more traffic is undesirable for present occupiers including worshippers and visitors to St. Helens Church
 - The proposed developments will enclose St. Helens Church by housing on 3 sides
 - The wall on the western boundary of the site should be retained
 - It is believed that there may be a right of way/ownership track, to a third party property through the north of the site close to the southern church wall
 - English Heritage (Historic England) we assume will be consulted
9. **Historic England** – the revised scheme preserves the setting of the adjacent grade II* listed church
10. **Local Highway Authority** – no significant adverse impact on the public highway should result form this proposal should planning permission be granted.
11. **District Council Landscape Design Officer** – raised concerns relating to the siting of the building in its original proposal and first amended scheme. The northern gable would sit forward of the silos and the existing western boundary wall to an extent that would block views of the countryside looking southwards and the western and southern facades of the listed church. The western boundary treatments should align through with the wall on the western boundary of the church. The garage and driveway associated with the living accommodation would be within the root protection areas of the trees on the southern boundary and the ‘no dig’ method should be employed. The car parking associated with the business use should be located to the rear of the building.
12. **District Council Conservation Officer** – objected to the original design due to a projecting gable element to the rear of the building, which would have obscured views of the adjacent listed church. The revisions to the proposals have overcome these concerns.
13. **District Council Ecology Officer** – no objections as limited planting on the site and the silos and hardstanding ensure that the site is currently of low biodiversity value. There are records of bat activity at the adjacent church but it is considered that there would be no impact on that site or the nearby pond resulting from the proposals.
14. **District Council Environmental Health Officer (EHO)** – no objections subject to the imposition of conditions relating to the hours during which power operated machinery should be used during the construction process and no burning of waste or other materials on the site.

15. **County Council Archaeology** – no objection to the development but a condition should be added to any planning permission requiring a programme of investigation being submitted to and approved in writing prior to the commencement of development. The site is adjacent to the 14th century St. Helen's Church, which is an entry on the Historic Environment Record.

Representations

16. 10 letters of objection have been received from local residents (total received in relation to the original submission and the amended plans). The issues raised are summarised as follows:
- The proposal does not adequately cater for the potential impact of traffic volumes and congestion along Church Lane associated with the employment element of the scheme
 - Access to public transport in Little Eversden is limited. This ensures that there will be reliance on travelling to the site by car, increasing levels of congestion in the locality
 - Visibility from the site access is restricted by the bend in Church Lane adjacent to the church, this is a road safety hazard which will be made worse by the additional traffic on the road resulting from the proposed use
 - 4 of the 8 spaces would appear to be allocated to the residential element of the use, leaving just 4 to serve the business use and this would appear insufficient
 - The building would be located close to the existing properties at 10 and 12 Church Lane and this would restrict the turning space which currently exists at the northern end of the site – servicing and delivery vehicles currently use this area to turn
 - The site is outside the village envelope and residential development on the site has previously been rejected
 - If the silos are no longer in use they should be demolished and the land returned to agricultural use
 - The development would have an adverse impact on the setting of the grade II* listed church
 - Church Lane is restrictive in terms of its width, with few passing places, there is limited access for emergency vehicles
 - The site is located in a historic part of the village, which borders the conservation area and is adjacent to a number of historic buildings (Members should be aware that the site is not within or adjacent to a conservation area)
 - The proposal will result in a cramped form of development when viewed alongside the existing modern dwellings on the western side of Church Lane
 - There is a risk that the residential accommodation could be split off from the business use, resulting in the creation of an independent dwelling
 - The building should be moved eastwards further into the site to allow retention of the existing wall on the western boundary of the site
 - The previous planning application for residential development on the site was refused partly due to the lack of access for emergency vehicles
 - The position of the development on the plot will result in difficulties for vehicles accessing the garage of the residential element of the proposals and conflict with the accesses to 10 and 12 Church Lane
 - A live/work unit in this location will disrupt the tranquillity of this part of the village
 - The adjacent church hold a number of events which attract large number vehicles which currently park along the right of way which runs along the northern boundary of the site, immediately adjacent to the southern boundary wall of the church

Site and Surroundings

17. The application site is located immediately east of the village framework of Little Eversden in the north eastern corner of the village and is located in the open countryside. The site is currently occupied by 7 silo units which have previously been used as part of a wider farm business and are now redundant. The site is bordered by the Green Belt to the south and east but is not within the Green Belt itself. There is a right of way in the northern part of the site which leads to a field to the east of the site but it is not a Public Right of Way (PRoW). St. Helens Church, a grade II* listed building, is located to the north of the site.

Proposal

18. The applicant seeks full planning permission for the erection of a live/work unit following the demolition of the existing silo structures on the site. The scheme has been amended to remove the rear 'wing' element which extended eastwards from the rear of the office space in the original submission, following concerns relating to the impact of the development on the setting of the grade II* listed church.
19. In the revised scheme, the office space would be 90.5 square metres, the residential space would be 138 square metres. The main building would have a span of 22.3 metres. The recessed garage attached to the southern elevation of the building would be 5.5 metres wide. The building would be 7.75 metres to the ridge at the highest point, with the office element to the north and the garage to the south set below this height, with the eaves lowered by the commensurate amount. The building has been extended closer to the northern boundary of the site in the revised scheme, with the 4 parking spaces associated with the business use relocated to the grass verge to the south of the boundary wall of the church.

Planning Assessment

20. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are the principle of development, the impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, the setting of the adjacent grade II* listed building, the character of the surrounding area and setting of the adjacent Green Belt, highway safety and trees/landscaping.

Principle of Development

Residential Amenity

21. The principal elevation of the building would be approximately 13 metres east of the corresponding elevation of 12 Church Lane. All of the residential element of the scheme lies south of the eastern elevation of the property on the opposite side of the road and faces a canopy which provides vehicular access to the two properties on that plot. The proposed residential accommodation would not result in unreasonable overlooking or overshadowing of the habitable room windows in the northern element of that range of buildings, given the oblique relationship between the corresponding elevations. The separation distance to be retained (across the highway) would offset the modest height of the proposed development, particularly when taking into account the fact that the office element would sit below the height of the main section of the building.
21. There would be windows in the western elevation of the proposed office accommodation (including 2 dormer windows within the roof space). These would

overlook the northern end of the garage link area associated with the adjacent properties and would not allow unreasonable overlooking into or overshadowing of any habitable room windows of the neighbouring properties. Given that the work element is to be an office use (to be restricted by condition) and that the habitable accommodation of the properties on the opposite side of the road are set back by the depth of the link garage element, it is considered that any noise generated by the proposed use would not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of those properties. This also applies to noise from vehicles as the parking area for the business use would be contained to an area adjacent to the church wall.

22. The proposal will therefore accord with adopted policy DP/3.

Setting of the adjacent grade II* listed building

23. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to pay “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. The amended proposal is considered to represent an enhancement to the setting of the listed church in comparison to the existing silo structure which would be removed. The new building would be aligned down the western boundary of the site, allowing open views of the listed building from the south. This is considered to be a significant benefit of the scheme as the existing arrangement of the silos fully obscures direct views of the southern elevation of the building from the Green Belt to the south of the site. Historic England is supportive of the amended scheme, as is the District Council conservation officer. This aspect carries significant weight in the determination of the proposal.
24. Comments from the Parish Council and neighbouring residents have raised the prospect of pulling the building further off the western boundary and into the site. Whilst officers have considered this option, moving the building eastwards would start to restrict views of the church and not result in the conservation gain of the current proposals. Given that the location of the building is considered not to result in a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of the neighbouring properties, the proposed location is considered to achieve a more beneficial scheme than the alternative suggestion.
25. The proposal therefore accords with adopted policy CH/4 and the Listed Buildings SPD 2009.

Character of the surrounding area and setting of the Green Belt

26. The amended scheme is considered to be of a scale, siting and detailed design that would result in an enhancement of the appearance of the site given that the existing silos are to be removed. The building would take a long narrow form, with the massing of the development reduced by the lowering of the ridge height of the office accommodation in the northern section and the single storey garage at the southern end of the building.
27. The amended design includes pitched roof dormer windows which are considered to be proportionate to the scale of the host building and are not an alien feature, with other examples of similar dormers evident on properties on Church Lane. The fenestration would be regular in form and would emphasise the relatively plain character of the building.
28. It is considered necessary to condition the submission of the details of solar panels to

be installed on the building, to ensure that these installations do not have an adverse impact on the setting of the adjacent listed building. Subject to this being the case, the renewable energy generated by the proposed panels would contribute to the environmental sustainability of the scheme in accordance with policy NE/1.

29. The front building line of the proposal would sit behind the line of the western boundary wall of St. Helen's Church, in accordance with the comments from the Landscape Design Officer's comments. The position of the building would sit forward of the western elevation of the church but given that space would be retained between the front of the building and the western boundary of the application site, this relationship would not be detrimental to the character of the streetscene and views of the setting of the Church on the approach to the site along Church Lane.
30. The objections received from neighbours and the Parish Council suggest that the existing wall on the western boundary of the site should be retained, with the building recessed behind it. It is considered that the conservation benefit of opening up the setting the church from views to the south, whilst also preserving views of the listed building from the north is of greater value than retention of the boundary wall. The existing wall is a modern structure which is incongruous with the stone boundary wall of the church and therefore it is considered not to be of merit that is worthy of retention with the streetscene.
31. In relation to the impact on openness and rural character of the adjacent Green Belt, it is considered that the proposed development would result in an enhancement through the opening up of the majority of the site and concentrating development on the western edge.
32. The proposal therefore complies with adopted policies DP/2, DP/3 and GB/3. Nonetheless, details of both hard and soft landscaping shall be conditioned to ensure that the treatment in the eastern portion of the site is appropriate, in line with the Landscape Design Officer's comments.

Highway safety and parking

33. The Parish Council and neighbours have raised concerns regarding the congestion on Church Lane and the issue of turning space which is currently provided due to the open nature of the site. It is acknowledged that the existing highway is narrow and that space along the northern boundary of the site is likely to be used for parking and turning by people attending church services/events. However, this is an unregulated situation which could be prevented by the applicant installing a means of enclosure across the access, which could be achieved without requiring planning permission. There is currently insufficient space to turn within the confines of the highway in the existing situation, this would not be made any worse by the proposed development.
34. The proposal would include a driveway to serve the garage associated with the residential space and cars parking in association with the business space would be able to turn within the confines of the site entrance, before entering Church Lane. As such, it is considered that the proposal makes adequate provision for the traffic generated by the proposed use to access and egress the site without relying on turning within the highway. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not result in a detrimental impact on highway safety. The Local Highway Authority has not objected to the application although it is important to note that Church Lane is not part of the adopted highway network.
35. The proposal would provide 4 parking spaces for the office use. The LDF parking

standards indicate that for an office use, 1 space per 25 square meters should be provided. Given that the office space would be just less than 100 square metres, the scheme would meet the required standard. The provision of 2 spaces for the residential element is also considered suitable given the size of the accommodation to be provided. As such, the proposal accords with adopted policies DP/3, TR/1 and TR2.

36. Trees/Landscaping

The proposal would involve the creation of new hard surfacing at the southern end of the site (to provide access to the proposed garage) and at the northern end where car parking is to be provided for the business use. Both of these areas are currently grassed verges and will be in close proximity to trees. The Landscape Design Officer has raised concerns with regard to the use of resin bound surfaces in such close proximity to the trees. The officer has recommended that a 'no dig' method of construction be used in those locations.

37. It is considered that a suitable surfacing material and details of the construction method can be secured by condition to overcome these concerns. Additional planting on the southern boundary shall also be secured to provide a biodiversity enhancement through the proposals, in accordance with policy NE/6 of the LDF and the NPPF.

Other Matters

38. The Council's Ecology Officer has raised no objections to the proposals, subject to the landscaping conditions to secure the biodiversity enhancements referred to above.
39. The EHO has raised no objections to the proposals, subject to the imposition of a condition relating to noise during construction which can be attached to the decision notice. The reference to no burning of waste shall be added as an informative as opposed to a condition as this is a matter which can be dealt with through Environmental Health legislation.
40. The applicant has indicated that foul sewage is to be disposed of via a package treatment plant. It is considered necessary to condition details of this means of drainage are submitted and agreed prior to installation and this can be dealt with by condition. The plans indicate the location of soakaways to deal with surface water drainage and subject to a condition requiring their installation prior to the occupation of the development, these measures are considered adequate to mitigate the impact of surface water run off.
41. Objection responses have referred to the refusal of planning permission for residential development in 2003. A decision notice was issued in January 2004 which refused planning permission for the conversion of the silos into dwellings. This current application proposes one unit in place of the silos and therefore, in terms of cumulative impact, this proposal would have less of an impact in terms of sustainability. In addition, this scheme would result in the conservation benefit of removal of the existing structures, resulting in an improvement in the setting of the grade II* listed building. The conversion scheme would not have resulted in this benefit. The Council's inability to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land is also a material change in circumstances and the live/work proposal in this case is considered to achieve the definition of sustainable development.
42. The suggested archaeology condition is considered necessary in light of the

comments received.

43. Any concern regarding rights of way through the site are not a planning matter.

Conclusion

44. The proposed live/work unit is considered to meet the definition of sustainable development in line with policy DP/1 due to the environmental and economic benefits that would be achieved by the proposal. There is policy support for the replacement of buildings in the countryside with new development for employment purposes and the proposal is considered to comply with this policy as the occupation of the residential accommodation will be tied to the office space.
45. The revised proposal would enhance the setting of the adjacent grade II* listed church and would respect the character of the surrounding area, in terms of its bulk, scale and mass. The proposal is considered to preserve the amenity of neighbouring residents, would not be detrimental to highway safety or environmental health. Landscaping enhancements are to be secured by condition and it is considered that any impact on existing trees can be mitigated through specific construction techniques.
46. It is therefore considered that the adverse impacts of any identified harm would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

Recommendation

47. Officers recommend that the Committee grants planning permission, subject to the following

Conditions

- 48.
- (a) 3 year time limit
 - (b) In accordance with the approved plans
 - (c) Details of materials
 - (d) Details of boundary treatments to be approved
 - (e) Details of tree protection, including 'no-dig' method
 - (f) Details of landscaping scheme
 - (g) Maintenance of landscaping scheme
 - (h) Car parking for employment use to be laid out prior to first occupation of any part of the building
 - (i) Details of cycle storage to be approved
 - (j) Details of refuse storage to be approved
 - (k) Foul water drainage details to be approved
 - (l) Surface water drainage to be installed as indicated on the approved plans
 - (m) Limit on use of power operated machinery during construction
 - (n) Management plan relating to construction materials and traffic
 - (o) Occupier of residential space to be restricted to occupier/relative of occupier of the office space
 - (p) Residential space to be occupied only once office space has been completed and made available for occupation
 - (q) Removal of permitted development rights for extensions
 - (r) Removal of permitted development rights for office use and change of use therefrom

49. **Informatives**

(a) Burning of waste

Background Papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission 2014
- Planning File Reference: S/2512/15/FL

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