

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

---

**REPORT TO:** Development and Conservation Control Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2005

**AUTHOR/S:** Director of Development Services

---

### **S/1447/05/F - Horningsea**

### **Extension and Conversion of Former Stables into Dwelling - Kings Farm Stables for J M Tollit**

**Date for determination: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005**

**Recommendation: Approval**

### **Conservation Area**

Members will visit the site on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2005

### **Site and Proposal**

1. Kings Farm is positioned to the east of High Street and, until recently, consisted of a 1960's County Council farmhouse and a collection of Victorian barns, - one 2½ storey, others single storey. Access is via a roadway which also serves the Millennium Green and the new Village Hall.
2. The full application, received 21<sup>st</sup> July, proposes the conversion of a range of single storey brick/slate stables to residential (4 bedroom dwelling), together with the construction of a two-storey wing comprising a simple glass and timber flat-roofed building. A carport is also included.

### **Planning History**

3. In respect of the land to the south of the site, consent was granted for the Millennium Green and Village Hall at the April 1999 Committee (item 29). The range of barns, of which the application site forms part, was approved for conversion to 2 houses and 1 annexe at the October 2002 Committee (item 13.)
4. At the April 2004 Committee (item 39) consent was granted for a replacement dwelling to Kings Farm House. Work on the new house has commenced and the conversion of the 2½ storey barn is nearly complete.

### **Planning Policy**

#### *i) Structure Plan:*

5. **P1/3** - Sustainable Design in Built Development seeks to achieve high standards of design which, inter alia, provide a sense of place and makes an efficient use of energy and resources.
6. **P7/6** - Historic Built Environment seeks to protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

#### *ii) Local Plan:*

7. **SE5** - Lists Horningsea as an “infill” village,
8. **EN30** - Development in Conservation Areas should aim to preserve or enhance their special character.
9. **EN31** expects a high standard of design, planting and materials in Conservation Areas

### **Consultations**

10. **Horningsea Parish Council** recommends refusal, stating:
11. “Whilst we applaud a number of internal changes from original “approved” design, we strongly oppose the “glass oxo cube” and flat roof design introduced by applicant into a barn conversion/agricultural environment. To say it will be screened/hidden is not really the point. Central area must be in keeping with Kings Farm development.”
12. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** asks for two conditions to be imposed, one restricting hours of power operator machinery during construction, the other requesting a contamination survey of the site.
13. **The Environment Agency** has no objections.
14. **The Conservation Manager** objected to the scheme when originally submitted, stating:  
  
“The Conservation Section do not have an issue with a contemporary design approach, but we are concerned that the flat roofed new build element of the current proposal will have a negative impact on the Conservation Area and the setting of the adjacent Listed Building. Our reasoning includes:  
  
a) The flat roof element will not sit comfortably alongside the current schemes that are under construction on the adjacent sites, though this is not to say that any solution must follow the lead already taken on these adjacent sites - an appropriate contemporary solution could be found that can also relate to the adjacent developments.  
  
b) The two-storey flat roof element will be very prominent in the Conservation Area - whilst the existing farm buildings fronting High Street will screen it from some aspects, it will be particularly visible from St John’s Lane (on the approach to the High Street). It will also be visible from the High Street when viewed through the existing farm access to the north of the range of buildings fronting the High Street.
15. Whilst the current proposals have some merit, it is the view of the Conservation Section that the proposals would be contrary to Policy EN30 in that they do not ‘preserve nor enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area especially in terms of their... massing, [and] roof materials.’ The current application should therefore be rejected and the applicant invited to bring forward a revised, less strident design that better considers the Conservation Area and the setting of the adjacent Listed Building.”
16. Following this objection the Conservation and Design Officer, together with the Case Officer, met the architect.  
Comments following that meeting are:

17. "Whilst I fully support the idea of a contemporary architectural solution on this site, my concern is over the impact that the proposals might have on the Conservation Area, and that the introduction of a flat roof two-storey element might attract undue attention to the new structure.
18. The applicant sets out the principles of the design that generated the flat roof. These include a desire to minimise the mass of the new intervention, and a wish to ensure it was not visible from outside the immediate courtyard of farm buildings. The introduction of a pitched or curved roof (as suggested by me previously) would raise the overall height of the building and make it more visible from the High Street and St John's Lane. In support of his design approach the applicant provided a number of photographs of similar approaches adopted for barn conversions, many in sensitive locations, though all were in isolated positions where they formed elements in a landscape rather than having to sit within an historic built environment.
19. The applicant has now had a scaffolding 'goalpost' erected to help gauge the impact of the new structure in the public realm. Having viewed the scaffolding I am satisfied that the structure will not be visible from the High Street and will only be marginally visible from St John's Lane (and even then not from the stretch of lane nearest the High Street). The impact on the Conservation Area will therefore not be excessive and will really only be visible from within the farm complex of Kings Farm. Furthermore, given that it is a quality piece of contemporary architecture I am now content to withdraw my opposition to the scheme.
20. In respect of the flat roof to the carport, I have less concerns over this aspect of the scheme, and especially if the applicant were to revise the roof to a grass roof and if the storage element were revised to take the form of a thick sidewall to the carport.
21. *Recommendation:*  
No objection. I would recommend that members of the DCC Committee visit the site and reach their own conclusions.

### **Representations - Applicant**

22. "The planning approval granted permission for the conversion of the single storey stables with the addition of a two storey block at right angles forming a 'T' shaped plan.
23. The original design has a combination of window types to the stable block with a section used as a carport. The main new two-storey block has a very conventional plan and resultant elevations. This is then expressed as a copy of the form of the adjacent barn inappropriate in both scale and as a composition the windows being weak and domestic in proportion.
24. It does not create spaces relevant to those types of building, has no relation to the external spaces and is overly dominant. The type and location of the balcony overlooking Kings Acre is inappropriate and un-neighbourly.
25. The approach to the new proposals was to emphasise the existing grain of the location in order to address the detrimental elements of the earlier design. The completed building will create a single, family house for the applicant's occupation with a young family for the long term.
26. This approach commenced not with the building but with a study beyond the immediate site to an understanding of the surrounding environs. The main features of the building group are Kings Acre, a house in its own garden surrounded to the

north by a series of single storey agricultural buildings which are dominated by the main barn structure, recently converted into a family dwelling.

27. The important feature of these buildings is the spaces they enclose forming a combination of yards with a variety of open-faced buildings orientated mainly to the south. The frontages onto the High Street are plain and unbroken yellow stock brick and slate roofs or corrugated sheet. The main barn rises above these roofs as the dominating structure in robust brickwork orientated north-south.
28. The T shaped form enables a new set of enclosed spaces to be created and the building's spaces to relate more directly to them. The open face to the south of the stables was reintroduced. The footprint of the new proposal remains the same as the approved scheme.
29. The internal layout has been re-planned to remove the balcony and to add a new freestanding carport as an independent structure utilizing the existing space in the stables for living accommodation. This space is given back by creating a new double height space at the front of the new two storey block fully glazed to create an open fronted structure also orientated to the south.
30. It was also crucial for the new extension to be subservient in form, scale and appearance to the main barn. There is no intention to create a statement in design terms.
31. The other main concern for the design was to reduce the overall bulk of the new extension, to reduce its height and therefore removing the potential impact on the approach from St Johns Street and approach to Kings Farm access road from the rear.
32. The new two-storey addition is seen as a contrast to the single storey linear block. Its interpretation conceptually is a contemporary refinement of an agricultural building. A lightweight steel frame sits lightly on the site with a glazed lower floor open to the front orientated to the south expressing the double height space. The internal floors are treated as a mezzanine contained to the north end.
33. Cladding is restricted to the upper floor with simple breaks as voids where openings are required from the internal planning. The cladding is proposed as horizontal timber boards in a regular modular grid to create an articulated 'industrial' look left natural to weather silver over a period of time. The cladding develops into horizontal louvers at the south elevation to increase the feeling of lightness and to provide sun shading to the glazing. It is proposed that the detailing will be simple, direct and rigorous.
34. The open plan design expresses the structural rhythm which is consistent with the farm buildings of the region. The elevations co-ordinate with the eaves of the stables but create a contrasting element to express the linearity of the stables and the superiority of the barn.
35. The solution creates a design sympathetic to its surroundings and with minimal impact on its neighbours or on the village as a whole.
36. The car enclosure is simple rectilinear form not extending above the eaves height of the existing stables. It would provide an open structure allowing views through whilst providing security and would include a seeded roof putting back the space from above. The screens connecting the car enclosure to the stables are lightweight steel

structures with translucent glass panels creating smaller enclosures to bedrooms and a route to the front door.

37. The new scheme is considered a positive improvement on the currently approved scheme in the ways described above and a contemporary design approach would in no way be detrimental to the environment having little or no impact on the immediate locality or the wider context of the village or conservation area.
38. The design has been discussed with the owner of Kings Acre, who supports the improvements brought by the new scheme as do the owners of the two other adjacent properties, the main barn and the new development.
39. A presentation was made to the Parish Council requesting comments prior to an application being made but none were received directly. The scheme has also been discussed with the officers at the District Council at various times over the past 12 months as the scheme has developed.
40. The concerns subsequently expressed by the Parish Council regarding the roof form of the proposed extension are worth discussing. It is considered by the applicant that the priorities in design terms as discussed above are crucial to the success of the scheme and to provide an arbitrarily formed profile actually negates the main aim of reducing the bulk, the potential appearance from St Johns Street and its subjugation to the main barn. A number of roof forms have been investigated and discussed with your officers. There appears to be no logic in requiring a roof form purely to provide a level of comfort which may in itself contradict the other more important issues and yet this seems to be the only potentially contentious item considered within the scheme. The profile of a roof would not be seen and only the vertical face of a roofing material.
41. To assist with the assessment of the potential impact of the extension in relation to this issue, a frame has been erected on the site to indicate the profile of the southern most face of the new extension and its potential visibility from key vantage points.
42. The new section is essentially small and delicate, domestic in scale. There seems to be no need to make it more important and dominant than it needs to be.
43. To assess the scale, comparisons have been made with other structures. The marketing suite in Cambourne is similar in approach but has a bigger footprint and with an additional half storey added above.
44. It is also similar in footprint and scale to the adjoining swimming pool structure of the new house but again with an additional half storey.
45. A marketing suite in Paddington Basin in London is almost exactly similar in size and plan and to some extent appearance as the proposed scheme.”

### **Representations - Neighbours**

None received

### **Planning Comments**

46. The single issue here is the suitability of the design and its effect on the Conservation Area, consent having already been granted for a dwelling on the application site.

47. The approved scheme proposed a 2-storey wing in the same position as that now proposed; it was a “scaled-down” version of the large, 2½ storey, barn adjacent measuring 7.5m wide and 12.5m deep and with a ridge height of 7.2m. That now proposed has a slightly larger footprint of 7.9m x 13.0m, but with a height of only 6.0m.
48. With the applicant having erected a scaffold “goal-post” on site to show the top of the building, it is possible to accurately judge its impact on the Conservation Area from the High Street. From here, it will not be visible, being only marginally visible from St John’s Lane, and even then not from the stretch nearest High Street.
49. The effect on the Conservation Area will therefore only be from within the farm complex of King’s Farm. Here it will be a neighbour to the village hall, the new house replacing King’s Farm and the large barn conversion. However with the 2-storey element set back 14.5m from the entrance drive which serves all the above-mentioned properties, together with a generous tree cover, it will be difficult to see the proposed building at the same time as its neighbours. Even when seen, such glimpses will be fairly limited. Its effect on the Conservation Area here will also be minimal and, given that it is a quality piece of contemporary architecture, I am happy to recommend approval. Materials and detailing will be important.

### **Recommendation**

#### **Approval**

1. SC “A” - RC “A” - 5 years
2. SC5a) Materials “Walls and roofs”. RC 5a)ii)
3. During the periods 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. RC25.
4. 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 then 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. Any variation to the above shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority before work being undertaken. Copies of all reports should be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. RC - To minimise risk to residents of possible contamination of the soil.
5. SC5 - details of:
  - Doors, windows and all glazing
  - All external joinery

- External louvres and shading screens
- Means of screening to play court
- Hard landscaping
- Any external flue/chimney
- Hard landscaping
- Boundary treatment
- Balcony details
- Roof lights and other roof glazing
- Car-port construction, detailing and roofing

RC (for all of the above) To ensure that the detailing of the property is of a high enough standard for a Conservation 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:** P1/3 -Sustainable Design in Built Development, P7/6 - Historic Built Environment

**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:** SE5 - Infill village, EN30 and EN31 - Development in Conservation Areas

2. The proposal is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise: Design and impact upon the Conservation Area.

### **Informatives**

1. During conversion works there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.
2. 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.
3. Environment Agency comments are attached to its letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> August 2005.

**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/1447/05/F and S/1059/02/F

**Contact Officer:** Jem Belcham – Area Planning Officer  
Telephone: (01954 713252)