

OTHER APPLICATIONS
(Reports by Development Control Manager)

Case No: 0803455FUL (FULL PLANNING APPLICATION)
Proposal: CONVERSION OF FORMER STABLES TO HOLIDAY HOMES
Location: CRYSTAL LAKE TOURING PARK LOW ROAD
Applicant: MR J SMITH (JNR)
Grid Ref: 531434 269320
Date of Registration: 02.01.2009
Parish: FENSTANTON

RECOMMENDATION - REFUSAL

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 The Crystal Lakes complex is located approximately 0.5km north of Fenstanton on Low Road. It consists of a series of buildings, used primarily in connection with the touring caravan park, or for recreational purposes, including a crèche. There are large areas of open land associated with the property, some of which is used for regular car boot sales. The boundaries are mainly defined by hedges. Land around the complex is largely undeveloped.
- 1.2 The stables to which this application relates are sited on the eastern boundary of the property and are single storey with a "U" shaped layout. They date from 1994 and were used as stables until 2006 when the use ceased. Part of the block has suffered storm damage which has not been repaired. They have been used for occasional storage purposes since 2006.
- 1.3 The proposal is to renovate the buildings and convert them to holiday accommodation. Six units would be created and whilst much of the work will be internal, the buildings will be re-clad in timber and the damaged areas restored. There will be no overall increase in the size of the structures. The intention is that they be used in association with the adjoining fishing lake, although they would be available for all visitors. Car parking will be provided adjacent to the buildings.
- 1.4 The site is in the open countryside and the land is liable to flood. The road is classified.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 **PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)** contains advice on the operation of the plan-led system.

- 2.2 **PPS7 – Sustainable development in rural areas (2004)**. Sets out the Government’s planning policies for rural areas, including country towns and villages and the wider, largely undeveloped countryside up to the fringes of larger urban areas.
- 2.3 Good Practice guide on Planning and Tourism (2006).
- 2.4 **PPS25 – Development and Flood Risk (2006)** sets out Government policy on development and flood risk. Its aims are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk. Where new development is, exceptionally, necessary in such areas, policy aims to make it safe, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, reducing flood risk overall.

For full details visit the government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk> and follow the links to planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Policy.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

Further information on the role of planning policies in deciding planning applications can also be found at the following website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk> then follow links Planning, Building and Environment, Planning, Planning Information and Guidance, Planning Guidance and Advice and then Creating and Better Place to Live

3.1 East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008) Policies viewable at <http://www.go-east.gov.uk> then follow links to Planning, Regional Planning then Related Documents

- **WAT4**: “Flood Risk Management” – River flooding is a significant risk in parts. The priorities are to defend existing properties from flooding and locate new development where there is little or no flooding.
- **E6** – Tourism. Proposals for tourist development should be fully sustainable in terms of their impact on host communities, local distinctiveness and natural and built environments.

3.2 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) Saved policies from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> follow the links to environment, planning, planning policy and Structure Plan 2003.

- None relevant

3.3 Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995) Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan95

- **En17** “Development in the countryside” – development in the countryside will be restricted to that which is essential to the efficient operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry,

permitted mineral extraction, outdoor recreation or public utility services.

- **To1** – the Council will normally support the development of tourism opportunities.
- **To2** – new or improved tourist facilities will normally be encouraged.
- **To3** – the re-use of buildings in rural areas for tourism (including accommodation) will normally be allowed subject to:-
 - The building being of a form, bulk and general design in keeping with its surrounding, and requiring no major adaptation for the proposed use.
 - The proposal complying with other local plan policies and there being no overriding objections on traffic or environmental grounds.
- **To6** – the Council will seek to extend the amount and variety of tourist accommodation.
- **CS9**: Flooding. The Council will normally refuse development proposals that prejudice schemes for flood water management.
- **En25**: “General Design Criteria” – indicates that the District Council will expect new development to respect the scale, form, materials and design of established buildings in the locality and make provision for landscaping and amenity areas.

3.4 Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002) Saved policies from the Huntingdon Local Plan Alterations 2002 are relevant and viewable at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/localplan - Then click on "Local Plan Alteration (2002)

- None relevant.

3.5 Policies from the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning, then Planning then Planning+Policy then Informal policy statements where there is a link to Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007

- **P8** – development in the countryside. Outside the defined limits of Market Towns and Key Centres and outside the built up framework of the smaller settlements development will be limited to certain categories. Tourist development is one of the specified exceptions.
- **P10** – Flood Risk. Development should not take place in areas of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. Flood risk assessments are required where appropriate. Sustainable drainage systems should be used where appropriate.
- **G2** – Landscape Character – development proposals should respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.

- **B1** – Design Quality – development should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of layout, form and contribution to the character of the area.
- **B6** – re-use and redevelopment of buildings in the countryside. A proposal to re-use or redevelop an existing building in the countryside for economic development (including tourism) would be preferable to a residential use. Any development should conserve the character of any building of historic or visual interest, be limited to situations where the building is substantially intact, not involve a significant increase in the scale of the built development, and not entail the loss of a building of historic or visual interest.
- **E4** – Location of tourist facilities. A proposal for a smaller tourist facility should be within the existing built up framework of smaller settlements, be part of a farm diversification scheme, be in association with a green space enhancement project, or be in association with a navigable waterway (being adjoining or well related to an existing settlement).
- **T1** – Transport Impacts – development proposals should be capable of being served by safe convenient access to the transport network and should not give rise to traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the local transport network.
- **T2** – Car and Cycle Parking – development proposals should limit car parking and provide cycle parking facilities to the levels set out in the Council's parking standards.

3.6 Policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008 are relevant and viewable at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk> click on Environment and Planning then click on Planning and then click on Planning Policy where there is a link to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

- **CS1**: “Sustainable development in Huntingdonshire” – all development will contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development, having regard to social, environmental and economic issues. All aspects will be considered, including design, implementation and function of development.

4. **PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 There is a long history of applications relating to the development of this site as a caravan park and for other leisure activities.

5. **CONSULTATIONS**

5.1 **Fenstanton Parish Council – NO OBJECTION** (copy attached)

5.2 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** – additional hydrants will be required by way of a condition or a section 106 agreement.

5.3 **Environment Agency – OBJECTION** in principle. The site is in a functional flood plain and the proposal will introduce holiday accommodation into an area considered to be at serious risk from

flooding. The existing buildings have been known to flood, and the proposal will result in them changing from a less vulnerable category to a more vulnerable one. There is no safe refuge on the site in extreme circumstances and the closure of Low Road due to flooding will prevent access/egress.

5.4 **Local Highway Authority – NO OBJECTION**

5.5 **Environmental Health Officer – NO OBJECTION**

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 None received.

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

7.1 The issues in this case relate to the principle of the development, flooding, the impact on the character of the area and access.

The principle of the development

7.2 The provision of additional tourist accommodation is generally supported by the policies of the Development Plan, and tourist development is one of the permitted exceptions in respect of policies En17 and P8. The use of the entire site for recreational and tourist uses is well established, and this proposal would be consistent with the present land use. The development involves the conversion of existing buildings in compliance with policies To3 and B6. The principle of this development is acceptable in terms of these policies.

Flooding

7.3 This site is within the functional flood plain of the Great Ouse (zone 3b), and is within the 1 in 10 year flood zone identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The site and Low Road flood on a regular basis, and the depth of inundation can be considerable. The proposal to use the buildings for tourist accommodation places them in the “more vulnerable” category, and places the occupants in potential danger. Using the sequential approach in PPS25, it is clear that “more vulnerable” development should not be permitted in functional flood plains. The Environment Agency has raised an objection in principle to the development.

7.4 In the light of the guidance contained in PPS25, and the recommendation received from the Environment Agency, the proposal cannot be supported on the grounds of flooding. It thereby fails to meet the terms of policies P10 and CS8.

The impact of the development on the character of the area

7.5 The proposal does not involve significant changes to the scale and form of the building, and the most noticeable alteration will be the provision of the timber cladding. This approach is appropriate in a rural area and will enhance the appearance of the structure. The use of cladding will perpetuate the farm-like style of the building. There is a substantial hedge to the east of the site, screening views from this direction, and the building is a considerable distance from the road to

the west. The impact of the proposal on the character of the area will be negligible. The proposal complies with policies En25, G2 and B1.

Access

- 7.6 This proposal will not generate a significant amount of traffic, and there will be no effect on the safety and free flow of traffic using the C Class road. There is ample space on site to provide sufficient parking space for each unit. The proposal complies with policy T1.
- 7.7 Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that planning permission should not be granted in this instance.

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8. RECOMMENDATION – REFUSE, for the following reason:

- 8.1 The proposal would be contrary to the provisions of policy P10 of the Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007, policy CS8 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and the provisions of PPS25 in that the site is located in the functional flood plain of the River Great Ouse. The site would be in an area at serious risk of flooding, where “more vulnerable” development as proposed would be unacceptable due to the threat to the safety of the occupants and property.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

East of England Plan - Revision to the Regional Spatial Strategy (May 2008)
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, 2003
Huntingdonshire Local Plan, 1995
Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations (2002)
Huntingdonshire Interim Planning Policy Statement 2007
Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Submission Core Strategy 2008

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