

Item No. 14

SCHEDULE B

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/10/02726/FULL
LOCATION	The Village Hall, High Street, Ridgmont, Bedford, MK43 0TS
PROPOSAL	The Village Hall, High Street, Ridgmont, Bedford, MK43 0TS
PARISH	Ridgmont
WARD	Woburn & Harlington
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllr B Wells, Cllr F Chapman
CASE OFFICER	Mary Collins
DATE REGISTERED	16 July 2010
EXPIRY DATE	10 September 2010
APPLICANT	Trustees of the Ridgmont Charity
AGENT	Kirkby & Diamond
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Contrary to Policy CS3

RECOMMENDED DECISION **Full Application - Granted**

Site Location:

Ridgmont Village Hall is sited on the corner of the High Street and Station Road. It is attached to the residential property known as East House and the building forms a L shape plan with two wings.

The building is constructed in orange/red brick laid in a Flemish bond and has a slate roof with double gables to the front and rear elevation with barge boards.

The building was constructed in 1893 and has a Duke of Bedford plaque to the end gable. A single storey extension to the northern end elevation to create the stage area at the end of the hall appears to have been added in 1915 as a Bedford Estate Plaque to its parapet suggests. To the northern end facing Station Road is an external brick staircase providing a fire escape from the first floor of the single storey extension. To the rear is an area of flat roofed extension which forms the toilets and is constructed on the rear boundary of the site. Vehicular access to the site is off Station Road.

The building is situated with the Ridgmont Conservation Area and forms a part of an important group of buildings along with the attached properties at West House and East House on the corner of High Street and Station Road.

The Application:

Planning permission is sought for the change of use of the village hall from D1 (Non-Residential Institution) to C3 (Dwelling).

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Policies (PPG & PPS)

PPS3 Housing
PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, Central Bedfordshire (North), November 2009

DM3 - High Quality Development
CS15 - Heritage
DM13 - Heritage in Development
CS3 - Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development, Adopted January 2010
Design Supplement 4: Residential Alterations and Extensions
Design Supplement 5: The Historic Environment
Ridgmont Conservation Area Appraisal dated December 1992

Planning History

ARDC/3659 72/231 Car park Approved: 31/08/72 p5434
MB/82/00820 Full: Fire escape. Approved: 21/12/82

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Ridgmont P C Adj Occupiers	<p>No response received Four letters received. Two letters with comments</p> <p>Request that any Planning consent is restricted or covenanted as follows:-</p> <p>(a) Change of Use consent given on the basis that any development to this property once residential is limited to only one property; one occupier and not multiple dwellings within the one property i.e. flats. No consent for access will be granted to several occupiers of the Village Hall either now or in the future.</p> <p>(b) That the windows and floors and ceilings remain as they are and any such windows that directly overlook East House Garden are obscured or in the case of the top floor removed and replaced with brickwork.</p> <p>(c) The outside Staircase to the top floor is restricted in that no building i.e. conservatory or additional windows are erected on the site and that the site is not used for recreational facilities i.e. outside dining/BBQ's etc as this has a direct privacy invasion and enjoyment to East House's garden.</p> <p>(d) The top floor of the building has never been used for either recreational or residential purposes and only for storage since we have owned East House in 1996. Ask that the top floor is not used as residential accommodation ideally but mindful that in</p>
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order for the building to be repaired and sold, this is likely to detract a buyer for the property. However, have enjoyed 14 years of privacy from the top floor; that this remains to be the case and the windows are removed and solid brickwork replaces them in keeping with the building.

(e) That any residential development is in keeping with both East and West House.

(f) That a noise and light pollution restriction on occupancy is part of the Planning Approval so that the enjoyment of East House during evenings and weekends is not compromised and is as it has been for the last 14 years.

(g) That any residential occupancy/development is restricted to being within the existing square footage of the Village Hall i.e. that no further buildings will be erected alongside East House boundary.

Two letters of support:

The village hall has not been used for some 5 years. This has not caused a deterioration in the social fabric of Ridgmont as there are other venues within the village available for hire; the Stables at the Rose and Crown and the school.

The village hall has not been used for at least 4 years or more. There are alternative venues to meet our residents needs.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Highways	Recommend conditions are attached.
Preservation Society	No response received
Application advertised 13/08/10 and 01/01/10	Response received see above
Site Notice posted 04/08/10	Response received see above

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Background and Policy
2. Impact on the character and appearance of the Ridgmont Conservation Area
3. Impact on amenities of neighbours.

Considerations

1. Background and Policy

Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, Central Bedfordshire (North), November 2009: Healthy and Sustainable Communities states that the council will ensure that appropriate infrastructure is provided for existing and growing communities by safeguarding existing community, education, open space, recreation, sport, play and health facilities.

The proposal represents a loss of this village facility and is considered contrary to Policy CS3 and the application has been advertised accordingly.

In this instance the hall has not been used since it closed in 2006 and pre-application discussions have taken place regarding the potential sites for a new village hall but a formal application for a replacement village hall has not been made.

The sale of the existing village hall will provide funds for a replacement village hall. The current hall is owned by the trustees of The Ridgmont Charity. In order to sell the current hall the Charity under the Charities Act 1983 is obliged to seek to achieve best value for its assets and as such it is considered residential use will achieve this.

The application was accompanied by evidence from the local community that they are supportive of the change of use of the existing hall and the loss of the current facility. 26 responses were received in support of the change of use not be conditional upon development of a new hall and that proceeds of the sale of the hall to be ring-fenced for the purposes of a new hall, pending a survey.

The result of that consultation is that there is support for the grant of permission for the change of use unconditionally and for the proceeds from any disposal to be ring-fenced for the provision of a new facility. This is in accordance with a Trust Deed that has been prepared by the applicants and they hope that this will be sufficient to satisfy the Local Planning Authority.

It is considered that an exception in policy may be acceptable in this instance as there is community support for the change of use and because the terms of the Trust Deed means the funds from the sale of the existing hall will be applied for general charitable purposes for the benefit of the inhabitants of Ridgmont.

There are no objections in principle to the building's conversion into residential use in this village location.

2. Impact on the character and appearance of the Ridgmont Conservation Area

The existing village hall is attached to the residential property known as East House. and the village hall is aligned at 90 degrees to it. The Buildings are identified in the Ridgmont Conservation Area Appraisal dated December 1992 as being Buildings of Local Interest which are considered to make a positive contribution to the appearance of the conservation area.

The application is to convert the premises into a single residence. Floor plans showing the proposed ground and first floor internal layout have not been submitted and therefore it is not known how the internal space will be used in relation to the existing windows. However the applicant has confirmed that no external changes are proposed to the building to facilitate its change of use.

There are currently windows in the south eastern elevation of the building at first and ground floor level which face the garden of East House and the High Street. Windows in the rear elevation face the garden to West House. A first floor window in the end elevation is currently boarded up and this faces Station Road.

Although not a listed building, the building is considered to contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area and forms an important group of buildings

along with the attached properties at West House and East House on the corner of High Street and Station Road.

It is considered that the blocking up of any existing windows would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the building and that the existing openings should be utilised. However due to its close proximity with other residential properties it is considered that a condition should be imposed removing permitted development rights for extensions, alterations and outbuildings.

A plan showing a parking area for four cars has been submitted which is satisfactory in highway terms. The parking area is not considered to be detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area.

3. Impact on amenities of neighbours

Due to the relationship with the attached property at East House, windows in the side elevation of the village hall facing the High Street directly overlook the garden to East House.

The garden is enclosed by the L shape of the buildings front wall and by an approximate 1.8 metre high brick wall. Although to the front of the property, the wall provides privacy to the front garden and it cannot be overlooked from the pavement.

Windows in the first and ground floor of the hall are high level windows and it is considered that the windows will allow a view out of them for an average sized person standing up. However given that the windows also have a deep window cill it is considered that the potential for looking out of the windows is reduced. Windows on the first floor are narrower and are also at a high level. As discussed previously, a condition requiring internal floor plans of the final conversion will be attached to ensure that the Local Authority can assess the impact of the use of the rooms on neighbouring properties. To ensure that the floor levels are not raised internally which could also compromise privacy a condition will also be imposed.

Given that the building has been used a public building in the recent past and the use has not been abandoned the building could be reused for the public without planning permission, it is considered that the potential for overlooking into the adjoining gardens will be reduced by the proposal.

There will be potential for overlooking into neighbouring gardens from the landing to the first floor fire escape which could easily form a seating area. This vantage point would provide clear views across the whole of the garden to the front serving East House and with some views into the private amenity area of West House to the rear. As such it is considered that a condition is imposed to require the addition of a privacy screen to the parapet walls to each side of this area to an overall height of two metres measured from flat roof level. An obscurely glazed screen can be formed from a contemporary material which would be appropriate on this building and would prevent loss of privacy through overlooking.

4. Planning Obligation

The Planning Obligations Strategy, wherein the construction or creation of one dwelling or more is required to make a financial contribution towards the costs of local infrastructure and services, was adopted by Mid Bedfordshire District Council on 20th February 2008 and has been operative since 1st May 2008. The Draft Supplementary

Planning Document was subject to a six week public consultation period between 6th July and 17th August 2007.

In accordance with national planning policy contained in PPS1, Local Planning Authorities are required to ensure that new development is planned to be sustainable. Where communities continue to grow, many require additional infrastructure, in the form of services and health care, for example. This involves all new residential proposals having to enter into either a Section 106 Legal Agreement or a Unilateral Undertaking to provide contributions towards the impact of new developments within the former Mid Beds area. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and refusal of planning permission is likely when development proposals do not comply with its requirements.

This application entails the change of use of the building into a single property. The number of bedrooms is not known and therefore the calculation will be based on an Outline application for a single dwelling in Ridgmont.

A Unilateral Undertaking has not yet been completed but is hoped that this will be submitted and completed prior to the planning committee.

If members are minded to approve the application, Officers request that the decision is delegated to Officers pending the completion of an agreed Unilateral Undertaking.

Conclusion

In light of the above considerations it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 undertaking.

Reasons for Granting

The proposal is in conformity with Policies CS15 and DM13 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, Central Bedfordshire (North), November 2009 as it is not considered inappropriate development within a Conservation Area and Policy DM3 as the proposal respects the amenity of surrounding properties and respects and complements the context and setting of the designated Ridgmont Conservation Area. It is also in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance: PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, PPS3: Housing and PPS5: Planning for Historic Environment as the development does not unacceptably adversely impact upon the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission be Granted subject to the following:

- 1 The development hereby approved shall be commenced within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which is designed to ensure that a planning permission does not continue in existence indefinitely if the development to which it relates is not carried out.

- 2 **No development shall take place until internal floor plans to a scale of 1:50 or 1:100 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing the final first and ground floor layout of the dwelling.**

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of conservation area and to protect the amenities of adjoining properties.

- 3 **No development shall take place until details of a privacy screen to be installed to the parapet walls on each side of the flat roofed single storey extension to the northern end of the existing building and to achieve an overall height of 2m have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

The screens shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details and shall be retained in perpetuity.

Reason: To ensure that the privacy of adjoining residential properties is not detrimentally affected.

- 4 **No development shall commence until a scheme for the secure and covered parking of cycles on the site (including the internal dimensions of the cycle parking area, stands/brackets to be used and access thereto), calculated at one cycle parking space per bedroom and 2 short stay spaces, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be fully implemented before the development is first occupied or brought into use and thereafter retained for this purpose.**

Reason: To ensure the provision of adequate cycle parking to meet the needs of occupiers of the proposed development in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

- 5 **Notwithstanding Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (or any Order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification) no works shall be commenced for the external alteration or extension of the dwelling hereby permitted or for the erection of any building/ structure within its curtilage without the specific grant of planning permission.**

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of conservation area and to protect the amenities of adjoining properties.

- 6 **The internal ground and first floor levels of the building shall not be raised or lowered unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of conservation area and to protect the amenities of adjoining properties.

- 7 **Before the premises are occupied all on site vehicular areas shall be surfaced in a stable and durable manner in accordance with details to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Arrangements shall be made for surface water drainage from the site to soak away within the site so that it does not discharge into the highway or into the main drainage system.**

Reason: To avoid the carriage of mud or other extraneous material or surface water from the site so as to safeguard the interest of highway safety and reduce the risk of flooding and to minimise inconvenience to users of the premises and ensure satisfactory parking of vehicles outside highway limits.

- 8 Details of bin collection point shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of any dwelling.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and in order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and the premises.

- 9 This permission relates to the change of use of the building to a single dwelling only.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt.

Notes to Applicant

1. The applicant is advised that the requirements of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 will apply to any works undertaken within the limits of the existing public highway. Further details can be obtained from the Traffic Management Group Highways and Transport Division, Central Bedfordshire Council, Technology House, 239 Ampthill Road, Bedford MK42 9BD.
2. The applicant is advised that photographs of the existing highway that is to be used for access and delivery of materials will be required by the Local Highway Authority. Any subsequent damage to the public highway resulting from the works as shown by the photographs, including damage caused by delivery vehicles to the works, will be made good to the satisfaction of the Local Highway Authority and at the expense of the applicant. Attention is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 in this respect.
3. The applicant is advised that all cycle parking to be provided within the site shall be designed in accordance with the Bedfordshire County Council's "Cycle Parking Guidance - August 2006".
4. The privacy screen to be installed to the parapet walls on each side of the flat roofed single storey extension to the northern end of the existing building shall be to an overall height of two metres measured from flat roof level. An obscurely glazed screen is considered to be a contemporary material which would be appropriate on this building and would prevent loss of privacy through overlooking.