

Parish: GREAT CORNARD

Location: Queens Arms Public House, 28 Broom Street, Great Cornard, CO10 0JT

Proposal: Change of use and extension to form 4no residential units and 2no B1 offices

Applicant: Landfast Ltd

Case Officer: Graham Chamberlain

Date for Determination: 26/11/09

This application is reported to the Development Committee as representations have been received which are at variance with the recommendation of the Chief Planning Control Officer and the application is greater than the scale of a single dwelling.

THE SITE

1. The site is located towards the centre of Great Cornard in close proximity to the Stevenson Centre and recreation ground. The immediate area surrounding the site is residential in character with the properties tight to the edge of the road giving a sense of enclosure to this part of the street scene of Broom Street. Opposite the site is a retail unit with on street parking to the front.
2. The Queens Arms Public House (PH) is a period style building believed to date from the 19th Century. The principal element of the building is three stories in height and fronts Broom Street. There is a rear range, part of which has been converted to three dwellings. To the side (SE) of the property is a car park and amenity space, to the other side (NW) is a narrow access linking Broom Street with development to the west. The Public House is currently unused. The site is within the Built Up Area Boundary of Great Cornard.

THE PROPOSAL

3. The proposal can be split into a number of different elements,
 - The conversion of the remaining part of the rear range to two 1-bedroom dwellings – this would involve increasing the height of the ridge of the rear range, a single storey lean -to extension to the SE and the insertion of additional windows in the SE elevation. The NE elevation will obscure glass windows. Small garden spaces would be provided for each unit.
 - The conversion of the first and second floors of the Public House to one 1-bedroom flat and one 2-bedroom flat – this would involve the insertion of dormer windows to the front and rear with the repositioning of some of the windows to maintain the symmetry of the elevation. Amenity space would be shared.
 - A two storey side extension which will have employment floor space (B1) on the ground and first floors and residential floor space on the second floor.

4. A number of minor amendments have been made to the submitted scheme subsequent to the submission of the application but these do not alter the nature of the proposal.

RELEVANT HISTORY

5. B/08/01805 - Conversion of public house to form 2 no. dwellings, 2 no flats and 1 no. office unit - Refused by committee (11/03/09) due to the lack of a marketing campaign
6. The main difference between the above application and the application now submitted is that the proposal now includes a two storey side extension which includes additional employment floor space.
7. B/02/01188 – Outline – Residential development of the entire site.

This application was reported to the development control committee on the 30/10/02. Members resolved to refuse the application for two reasons,

- Lack of a robust marketing campaign demonstrating that alternatives uses had been fully explored.
 - Loss of a community facility without adequate justification
8. B/05/00543 – Conversion and extension of existing outbuildings to form 3 No. dwellings. Alterations to vehicular access.

This application followed the 2002 refusal. The application enabled the public house to remain as a self contained business premise. This permission has been implemented. (As the public house was not affected by this application, a marketing campaign was not required.)

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

9. **PPS1** (Delivering Sustainable Development)

PLANNING POLICIES

10. The Development Plan comprises the East of England Plan, adopted 2008, saved policies in the Suffolk Structure Plan, adopted 2001, and the Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) adopted 2006. The following policies are relevant to this proposal:

East of England Plan - 2008

- **E2** Provision of Employment Land
- **ENV7** Quality in the Built Environment
- **SS1** Achieving Sustainable Development

Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No.2) 2006

- **CN01** Maintaining Local Distinctiveness
- **EM01** General Employment
- **EM24** Loss of Employment
- **HS32** Open Space
- Safeguarding Employment Land Supplementary Planning Document (July 2008)

The relevant documents can be viewed via the internet. Please see Page 4 for details.

CONSULTATIONS

11. Two consultation exercises have been undertaken as the original drawings were inaccurate and amendments were sought. The following responses were received.
12. Great Cornard Parish Council – Approve.
13. Local Highway Authority – no objection (following an amendment - discussed in more detail below).
14. Babergh District Council's Economic Development Team – No comments received, although comments at a pre application stage supported the scheme as it would safeguard the employment floor space and deliver two smaller units.
15. Babergh District Council's Environmental Health Team – No objection subject to a condition.

REPRESENTATIONS

16. Two letters of objection were received raising the following concerns,
 - Inaccurate drawings (this was rectified)
 - Over looking of No 26 Broom Street
 - Concerns regarding the loss of the wall which forms the boundary treatment.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

17. The main considerations in the determination of this application are as follows,
 - Whether there is a material loss of employment land
 - Design and impact on character
 - Highways and parking
 - Impact on neighbour amenity
 - Legal Agreement – Open Space.

Loss of Employment Land

18. The site currently comprises of 298sqm of employment floor space. This is the Public House with residential accommodation on the first and second floors. The residential accommodation represents a floor area of approximately 159sqm. The public house being the remaining floor space of 139sqm.
19. The proposal would result in the loss of the public house use. Policy EM24 of the Local Plan relates to the retention of employment land. In the supporting text to this Policy (Paragraph 4.57) the rationale behind the retention of employment sites is set out. Employment sites are hard to find as development plots within towns and villages will often go over to residential instead of an employment use. Therefore once an employment site is lost, it is very difficult to replace without expanding into the countryside. The Policy does not distinguish between particular uses.
20. The proposed B1 use within the existing building, and the proposed extension, would be an employment use. The proposed floor area is 129sqm. The net loss of employment floor space would therefore be 10sqm (if one discounts the existing residential flat). Officers are of the opinion this is not a loss of floor space sufficient to trigger a marketing campaign under Policy EM24; such a requirement would be disproportionate and unreasonable. The Economic Development Team supported this stance at a pre application stage and was also of the opinion that there were benefits in providing two smaller 'starter' units.

21. Consequently Officers are of the opinion that a marketing campaign is not required in this instance due to the proposed extension adding employment floor space. A condition is recommended requiring the business units to be available for use prior to the first occupation of any of the residential units; this will ensure they are delivered.

Design and Impact on Character

22. There are two key issues involved in assessing the design and impact on character, firstly, the proposed intensification of the use, and secondly the physical alterations to the building.
23. The site area is 0.09ha. This would give a density of 44dph. This is above the national indicative minimum (30dph) and is appropriate for the Sudbury/Great Cornard urban area. There is open space (a large recreation ground by the Stevenson Centre) and basic facilities, such as a shop, nearby. Open space would be provided in the form of a small shared amenity area and private gardens for the two 1bedroom dwellings.
24. The proposal does not represent an over development of the site (a requirement of Policy HS28). The proposed two storey side extension complements the host building and would not be a bulky or contrived addition. It would be subservient to the host building and complements it due to the proposed materials and detailing. The visual scale of the building and extension would be acceptable. There are no contrived design details such as over sized dormers. The building, following the proposal, would not appear as if it has been squeezed onto the plot. Furthermore sufficient parking is provided within the site in the old pub car park (11 spaces - 2.75 per unit). The building will continue to sit comfortably on the plot adding to the street scene; therefore the scheme would not appear to be unduly cramped or contrived. The proposal would also have sufficient room for a cycle store and bin store.
25. The alterations to the building would reflect and complement the 19th Century period design of the building. The materials, design and scale are acceptable. The retention of the building is considered a real benefit of the proposal as it is a local landmark. The 'shop front' which would serve the B1 offices on the ground floor is well detailed complementing the host building. The retention of the chimney and the use of painted timber for the joinery, windows and doors add to the integrity of the design.
26. The proposal is therefore not considered to be an over development of the site or detrimental to the character of the area, host building or visual amenity of the street scene. The proposal therefore adheres to Policies CN01, EM01 and HS28 of the Local Plan

Impact on Highways and Parking

27. The level of parking is sufficient for the development proposed. However the required visibility splay had not been provided on the original plans being obscured by parking. The LHA requested that the parking be moved back into the site by a further 1m. The amended plans incorporate this requirement. The LHA now has no objection subject to conditions.

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

28. The occupants of No 26 Broom Hill were concerned by window to window over looking from the 1 bed houses. In response to this the applicants are proposing obscured glass to the windows in the kitchen and bathroom. Obscured glass windows to habitable rooms is not normally supported, however in this instance it is acceptable as the ground floor is open plan with a comparatively slight depth to the ground floors (6.5m). the obscured glazed windows will provide additional light as secondary windows and will safeguard neighbour amenity. This is a recommended condition.

29. The scheme would not result in an unreasonable loss of light. Although the main bulk of the building may result in some loss of light to the two dwellings, there are no structures to the south west. On balance, these dwellings will have satisfactory daylight and sunlight.
30. The access is positioned in a way that the intensification of the use of the site will not harm neighbour amenity by way of noise or disturbance. The environmental health team indicated under the 2008 application that a public house use is not the best use of the site due to the proximity of residential properties; therefore the residential/B1 use would be preferable. A B1 use is by definition acceptable in a residential area (ie. light industrial office or restaurant development).

Impact on Open Space

31. Policy HS32 requires that developments which will provide 1 unit or more should either provide a financial contribution towards the provision or upgrade of open space nearby (via a 106 Legal Agreement) or provide a public open space equal to 10% of the gross site area. The applicant is not proposing a public open space, therefore a contribution is necessary. At the time of writing the agreement has been finalised. The proposal complies with Policy HS32.

Other Issues

32. Concerns have been raised regarding the boundary wall of the site. A condition has been added requiring details to be submitted,. The wall is an important feature and should be retained.

REASONS FOR APPROVAL

33. Subject to the attached conditions, the development would have no adverse impact on the character of the area, highway safety or neighbour amenity. The proposal would not result in an over development of the site or loss of employment floor space. The proposal therefore adheres to saved Policies EM01, CN01 and HS28 of the Babergh District Local Plan Alteration No. 2 (2006).

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions
 - Standard time limit
 - Materials to match
 - Joinery, windows and doors to be painted softwood (other than in the rear elevation and 1 bed dwellings which are to be UPVC)
 - Require windows in NE elevation of Plots 1 and 2 to be obscured glass.
 - Residential units not to be occupied until the B1 Offices are ready
 - Boundary details to be submitted
 - As recommended by the LHA
 - As recommended by the Environmental Health (Land Contamination Team)