AGENDA ITEM NO. 3·4(9)

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL 20 AUGUST 2001

Case No: 01/00230/CAC (CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT)
01/00232/OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)

Proposal: DEMOLITION AND CONVERSION OF FARM BUILDINGS AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Location: LAND AT LION FARM, HIGH STREET, ABBOTSLEY

Applicant: MR AND MRS R REYNOLDS

Grid Ref: 00052305 00025649

Date of Registration: 06.02.2001

Parish: ABBOTSLEY

RECOMMENDATION – APPROVE BOTH APPLICATIONS

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

1.1 The site comprises rising agricultural land on the southern side of High Street. It is laid mainly to grass but contains some agricultural buildings. There is a hedge along the southern and western site boundaries.

1.2 High Street abuts the northern boundary, Top Lane lies to the west, and an agricultural building isolated to the south. The curtilage of a dwelling at 74 High Street (Ashwood) and agricultural land are located to the east. Land levels rise within the site making the site a prominent one in the street scene.

1.3 Outline planning permission with all matters reserved except siting, design and external appearance is sought for the conversion of the existing barn, along the High Street frontage, into two dwellings and the erection of four new dwellings to the rear. The application area has been reduced in size to that area of the existing buildings.

1.4 Conservation area consent is also sought for the demolition of four agricultural buildings on the site.

1.5 The access to the converted barn, new dwellings and the existing Lion Farm House would be via the existing access which currently services the farm yard and Lion Farm House.

1.6 Layout and elevation drawings for the dwellings were submitted with the application.

1.7 The proposed buildings and rear gardens lie within the environmental village limits. The site is within both the Abbotsley Conservation Area and an Area of Best Landscape.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 **PPG1 – 'General Policy and Principles (1997)'** contains advice on the operation of the plan led system.

2.2 **PPG3 – 'Housing (2000)'** gives advice on residential development.

2.3 **PPG15 – 'Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)'** indicates that there should be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings in Conservation Areas and consent for redevelopment should not be given unless there are acceptable plans for any redevelopment.

2.4 **PPG16 – 'Archaeology and Planning (1990)'** advises on the handling of archaeological matters in the planning process

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 The following policies within the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995 are applicable to this proposal:

- SP12/2 - seeks to restrict development in Areas of Best Landscape to that which safeguards the character of such areas.
- SP12/10 - requires new development to display high standards of layout and design and relate well to their surroundings.
- SP12/11 - seeks to safeguard the built environment by resisting inappropriate development in Conservation Areas.
- SP12/14 - aims to protect archaeology.

3.2 The following policies contained within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are applicable to this proposal.

- **H1** - infilling is defined as the filling of an undeveloped plot in an otherwise built-up frontage by no more than two dwellings
- **H20** - states that housing will normally be restricted to infilling on suitable sites within the village environmental limits
- **En5** - seeks to ensure that the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is preserved or enhanced
- **En6** - requires high standards of design in conservation areas
- **En8** - states that conservation area consent for the demolition of buildings may be withheld until acceptable plans for the new development have been approved.
- **En9** - seeks to resist development that would impair important views into and out of Conservation Areas.

- **En11** and **En12** seek to safeguard archaeology.

- **En21** - explains that planning permission will not normally be granted for development, which would adversely affect the character of the Area of Best Landscape.

- **En25** - requires new development to respect the character of the locality.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 Planning permission has been granted for agricultural and storage buildings in 1947, 1963 and 1980.

4.2 Outline planning permission and Conservation Area Consent was refused in February 2000, for residential development following demolition of agricultural buildings. The main reasons for refusal were the adverse impact on character and appearance of the Abbotsley Conservation Area due to the number, siting and scale of new dwellings, the restricted views into and out of the Conservation Area and the location of the garden areas and house having an adverse impact on the Area of Best Landscape.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Abbotsley Parish Council - OBJECTION (comments attached).**

5.2 **Local Highway Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) - NO OBJECTION**, subject to conditions.

5.3 **Anglian Water - NO OBJECTION**, subject to conditions.

5.4 **County Archaeologist - NO OBJECTION**, subject to condition.

5.5 **Environment Agency - NO OBJECTION**, subject to condition relating to surface water drainage.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 **FIVE** letters of **OBJECTION** received. Comments are summarised as follows:

- the proposal is not of an appropriate scale for an infill village;
- the impact of the loss of the farm building to the future requirements of the farm;
- a pavement should be provided to service the development;
- impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties;
- concern about the drainage provision;
- plots 5 & 6 should remain single storey and not two storey;
- the new wall to plot 6 would reduce the views which link the area of best landscape to the conservation area;
- application does not conform to the Local Plan Policies;
- inadequate parking provision;
- altering access changes character and setting of farm and views onto countryside to rear;
- open aspect to the fields should be retained;

- over-development; and
- no acceptable plans for new development.

7. SUMMARY OF ISSUES

7.1 The determining issues in this case are:

- the degree to which this site constitutes infill development;
- the effect on the Abbotsley Conservation Area;
- the impact on views into and out of the Conservation Area;
- the impact on the Area of Best Landscape;
- drainage;
- the highways implications;
- the archaeological implications; and,
- consideration to acceptability of demolition of agricultural buildings

7.2 Abbotsley is classified as an Infill Village in accordance with Policy H20 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995. Although the development of this site would normally be limited to two dwellings, the Local Plan does state that consideration may be given to making the best use of the land. On this basis, farmyards in several Infill Villages have been developed with more than two dwellings. The barns to the front would be converted with the erection of new dwellings to the rear on land currently occupied by agricultural buildings. The application site is restricted to the land, which is within the Village Limits.

7.3 In February 2000, outline planning permission was refused for residential development. This scheme is illustrated on the **attached plan 'A'**. The area of built development was much more extensive, expanding into open countryside. The scheme was very urban in form of five new dwellings in a cul-de-sac which, was not in keeping with the traditional scale and form of development found in Abbotsley Conservation Area. The refused scheme did not reflect the existing area of built development. The siting of the five new dwellings along the southern boundary would have unacceptably reduced the views to and from the Conservation Area. The new dwellings also represented a significant departure from the agricultural character of the site.

7.4 The proposed scheme of six dwellings is a more appropriate form and scale of development than that previously refused permission. The development consists of the conversion of an existing barn on the site frontage to form two residential units and the erection of four new dwellings sited around a central courtyard formation. The proposed dwellings would be of a traditional timber barn style rather than the brick dwellings proposed in the refused scheme. The application site rises to the south making the site particularly prominent. However, the style, design and form of the development is such that it would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

7.5 The application site is also significant in that it provides views to and from the Conservation Area. The siting of the new dwellings in a courtyard formation would retain these views which link the Area of Best Landscape with the Conservation Area.

7.6 The site is also located within an Area of Best Landscape, which is characterised by the rural village set in open countryside. The erection of the proposed dwellings and conversion of the barn to the front would be in keeping with the agricultural character of the site. The form of the dwellings and the courtyard formation of the development would not affect the rural character of the site or the character of the Area of Best Landscape.

7.7 Concerns have been raised about the impact of the development on surface water drainage. The applicant has stated that this will be drained into the High Street. The Environment Agency has not raised any objections subject to a condition being attached to agree the details of the surface water drainage.

7.8 The development is to be accessed via the existing access, which is to be altered with its proposed relocation to the east. The local highway authority has not raised any objections to the proposal.

7.9 The site lies in an area of high archaeological potential. The County Archaeologist recommends that a condition is attached to require a programme of investigation.

7.10 In order to retain control over the future appearance of the dwellings it would be necessary to restrict the permitted development rights for extensions, alterations to the roofs and material alterations. Permitted development rights for outbuildings should also be restricted in order to protect the character of the Conservation Area.

7.11 The agricultural buildings to be demolished are of no historic or architectural merit. Their removal would be a benefit to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

7.12 The Parish Council's comments that the site is 1.24 hectares. However, it has been reduced in area to 0.4 hectares. The site area has been reduced to relate to the area already covered by the existing buildings. The rear boundary of the application site follows the village development limits for Abbotsley. The site is rising to the south within the Conservation Area and Area of Best Landscape and would make more extensive development inappropriate in this rural agricultural area. The reduced site area falls below the threshold guidelines in Circular 06/98 'Planning and Affordable Housing' for the provision of affordable housing.

8. **RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE BOTH APPLICATIONS,** subject to conditions to include the following:

01/00230/CAC

02001 - time limit

Nonstand - demolition works

Nonstand -	details of access design etc.
01002	plans and particulars in writing
01003	reserved matters within three years
01004	dates for submission of details
Nonstand -	adequate parking and turning
04003	surface water only
11003	investigation archaeology programme
Nonstand -	permitted development rights removal

Background Papers:
Planning Application File Reference: 99/1182O; 99/1246/DCA;01/00230/CAC; 01/00232/OUT
Huntingdonshire Local Plan
Cambridgeshire Structure Plan

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this Report to Miss F Fry, Development Control Officer ☎ 01480 388460.