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**MAIN CASE**

**Reference No:** 16/00255/FUL

**Proposal:** Change of use of The Old Hall to provide bed and breakfast accommodation with 14 rooms and 2 staff bedrooms, change of use to provide kitchen, bar, WCs and storage space within The Old Hall to support the wedding and party business. The construction of an outbuilding for a biomass boiler, fuel store, laundry and storage all ancillary to the operation of The Old Hall, and the retention of the extended car park and the construction of additional car parking

**Site Address:** The Old Hall Soham Road Stuntney Cambridgeshire CB7 5TR

**Applicant:** The Old Hall Partnership

**Case Officer:** Barbara Greengrass, Senior Planning Officer

**Parish:** Ely

**Ward:** Ely East  
 Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Richard Hobbs  
 Councillor Lis Every

**Date Received:** 17 March 2016      **Expiry Date:** 31 January 2017

[R166]

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1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are requested to APPROVE subject to the recommended conditions below. The conditions can be read in full in the attached Appendix 1.

1. Approved plans
2. Time limit
3. Materials
4. Car parking provision
5. Soft landscaping

2.0 **SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

2.1 This full application proposes the change of use of the Old Hall to provide bed and breakfast accommodation with 14 rooms and 2 staff bedrooms, provision of a

kitchen and bar to support the wedding and party business. The proposal also includes the construction of an outbuilding for a biomass boiler, fuel store, laundry room and ancillary storage to the operation of the Old Hall wedding venue, the retention of the extended car park and the construction of additional car parking.

2.2 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>. **Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, in the application file.**

2.3 The application has been brought to Committee as the Constitution requires proposals for the installation of a biomass boiler to be determined by Planning Committee.

### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

02/00843/FUL	Part two storey part single storey extension to existing dwelling	Approved	04.11.2002
10/00217/FUL	Temporary permission for the erection and use of a marquee		
11/00748/FUL	Extension to existing dwelling comprising of two storey brick faced cross wing and one and half storey weatherboarded wing	Approved	04.05.2010
11/00823/FUL	Alterations to previously approved proposals to extend existing dwelling comprising a two storey cross wing and one and half storey weatherboarded wing.	Approved	15.11.2011
16/00358/VAR	Vary condition 1 to extend the Time period for the use of the site and Marquee.	Approved	12.05.2016

### 4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

The site is located in the countryside and comprises a very large detached dwelling with a series of extensions that are partially completed. The dwelling is located immediately to the east of the A142 and positioned on an elevated plot with the surrounding gardens and ponds. The site is accessed via a pair of gates that lead to a car park. The marquees are in situ to the rear of the building.

## 5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

**Parish** – no concerns

**Ward Councillors** - No Comments Received

**Cambridgeshire Fire And Rescue Service** - No Comments Received

**Local Highways Authority** – no objection following amendments

**Conservation Officer** – this property was delisted in the 1980s therefore the proposed changes will have no impact on a heritage asset.

**Environmental Health Commercial Team** – The layout design and construction must comply with relevant food and health and safety legislative requirements.

**Waste Strategy (ECDC)** – suggested informative

**Technical Officer Access** – The accessible parking for the ground floor accommodation is not shown marked out on the plan, it should be laid out to BS8300:2009.

### Accommodation

The opportunity exists for accessible accommodation on the ground floor. This would be particularly useful for wedding parties with elderly relatives as there is no lift shown. Two accessible bedrooms with ensuite facilities (laid out to BS8300:2009) would be ideal, with step free entrances, and access to communal facilities. Any external routes should be firm, level and slip-resistant with weather protection and step free.

Hand rails should be fitted to both sides of the staircases.

From the plans, we cannot locate the principal entrance. This should be step free.

The route from the marquee to the accessible toilet should be step free. The accessible toilets should be laid out to comply with BS8300:2009.

Decoration (colour contrast) should comply with British Standards.

### Emergency Egress

Audible and visual fire alarms required. Consult Fire Officer. Good signage required, including Braille signage on bedroom doors.

The plans are conflicting and show insufficient detail to make comprehensive comment.

### Service facilities

We understand from the Access Statement that the public will not be invited to these facilities, so we would not wish to comment.

### All car parking

Both existing and proposed, should include at least 6% accessible parking laid out to comply with BS8300:2009.

**Environmental Health** – No issues to raise.

5.2 A site notice was posted and eight neighbouring properties were notified. No responses were received.

## 6.0 The Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 4	Renewable energy development
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 9	Pollution
EMP 7	Tourist facilities and visitor attractions
EMP 8	Tourist accommodation
COM 1	Location of retail and town centre uses
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision

### 6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide  
Flood and Water

### 6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 1 Building a strong, competitive economy
- 3 Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- 7 Requiring good design
- 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

## 7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

The main issues to consider in determining this application are the principle of development, the impact on the character and appearance of the countryside, impact on residential amenity and highway safety.

### 7.1 **Principle of Development**

7.2 Previous permissions on the site for extension work have been substantially completed. A substantial wing to the north has yet to be completed. For some years the Old Hall has been the family home with ancillary bed and breakfast accommodation. In 2012 permission was granted for a group of marquees adjacent to the Old Hall to hold weddings and other functions. The marquee business has operated very successfully and 107 weddings and other events were held in 2014. It is usual for three or four weddings and parties to be held from Thursday to Sunday in most spring and summer weeks.

- 7.3 The business has proved to be very successful and has resulted in a significant amount of local employment. The business has 7 full time staff and provides regular part time employment to a further 16. Contractors and their staff are in addition. A lot of local businesses have benefitted with hotels, pubs and taxi firms, flower shops and other firms gaining a significant amount of business. Catering has also been outsourced but in 2015 this was brought in-house.
- 7.4 The business plan for the Old Hall is to provide 14 letting bedrooms, mostly ensuite with communal space for guests to sit and relax and to have breakfast. These will accommodate 32 guests at the most and these will usually be the party of family and close friends. The average attendance at functions in 2015 has been 73 in the daytime and 109 in the evenings. There will continue to be a significant demand for accommodation in and around Ely. It is also not envisaged that the guests will be offered evening meals so this should increase the turnover of local restaurants in Ely and the surrounding area.
- 7.5 This increased number of bedrooms will make the venue more attractive to wedding parties and help to sustain the current high level of business. The addition of 4 rooms in 2015 has increased interest in the venue, bringing in wedding parties from a wider area.
- 7.6 In considering this proposal Policies COM 1, EMP 7 and EMP 8 are relevant. Policy COM 1 states that proposals for town centre uses outside of town centres may be permitted if there are no suitable sequentially preferable sites elsewhere, the site is suitable and the building form and design is appropriate, the scale and type of development is directly related to the role and function of the centre, the development should enhance the attractiveness of the centre, not adversely affect residential amenity and be accessible by all means of transport. Based on the information provided by the applicant it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy COM 1 and will support and complement the function of Ely as a main service centre by providing for an attractive function venue in a rural setting but not far removed from the town itself. Policy COM 1 also makes reference to proposals for tourist facilities and attractions which actually require a rural location or are associated with the expansion of existing tourist facilities/attractions in the countryside. Policy COM 1 also refers to Policy EMP 7 which allows for new or extended tourist facilities or attractions where there is an identified need to expand, the proposal is of an appropriate scale and nature relative to its location and would not have a significant adverse impact in terms of the amount and nature of traffic generated. The character and appearance of the area must be maintained and enhanced and the proposal maximises opportunities for sustainable travel.
- 7.7 It is considered that there is an identified need for this expansion to support the existing wedding venue and functions business at the site, given the applicant's information in respect of the success of the current business and how the overnight accommodation supports the attractiveness of this as a venue. The applicant states that the bed and breakfast is aimed primarily at the wedding and party market and it is expected that the rooms will be booked by guests, and interest has already been expressed by wedding parties to book the exclusive use of the facilities. This will boost the local economy as use of the Old Hall will create demand for guests to use accommodation in Ely and will contribute to use of other local facilities such as florists and photography businesses.

- 7.8 As part of the expansion as a wedding venue the proposal incorporates the change of use of the downstairs to allow for a bar facility and function space for guests and the ground floor of the cross wing for dining and small functions. It has also proved impractical to run the business completely from the ancillary space included within and beside the marquees. A proper kitchen and serving area has been created and the quality of the cloakroom improved by locating this within the building. All these changes will not involve any alterations to the external appearance of the building.
- 7.9 The proposed use is considered compatible with the existing successful use on the site and will offer the opportunity to enhance its attractiveness as a venue. It is considered that the proposal is of a nature and scale appropriate to the location and would not harm the character and appearance of the existing house or the area, in accordance with Policies EMP 7 and ENV 2.
- 7.10 The application also seeks to extend the car park by 16 metres in an easterly direction and to erect a single storey outbuilding of 7 metres in height, to accommodate a biomass boiler, wood store, office space and ancillary storage space for furniture, china and linen. The building has been sympathetically designed to respect the character of the Old Hall, being of black stained weatherboarding and reclaimed pantiles construction, and has been sited some 47 metres away from the Old Hall to protect its setting. In addition the scale of the ancillary accommodation is considered reasonable to serve the needs of the business.
- 7.11 The principle of this development is therefore considered acceptable and compliant with the relevant policies in the Local Plan as set out above.

## **8.0 Residential Amenity**

- 8.1 As the work proposed is to complement and support the expansion of the existing wedding and functions business, it is considered that no loss of residential amenity will occur. Whilst the accommodation may result in more functions being held at the property, as it becomes more attractive as a venue, the level of increase is not considered to impact the nearest residents situated in Stuntney village. The existing business has not given rise to any noise complaints and the Noise Management Plan approved by the Council has been successfully operated at the site.

## **9.0 Visual Amenity**

- 9.1 As stated above there will be no external changes to the Old Hall. The new outbuilding will not be visually intrusive or unacceptable due to its siting to the south east of the Hall alongside and cut back into the hill and the sensitive choice of materials.
- 9.2 The extension to the car park will allow for provision of a total of 71 parking spaces. The surface will match the existing permeable granular topping over a hardcore base and soft landscaping is proposed around the boundary of the car parking area. It is not out of proportion with the venue and the size proposed is necessary to support the business. It is considered that although it may be visible

from the north west the nearest road is some distance away and any impact will not be to a significant degree, given the existence of the existing marquee and car parking area.

## **10.0 Biomass boiler**

10.1 The property is presently served by two oil boilers and there may be a need for another. This is expensive and would not be sensible given that substantial volumes of fossil fuel would be burnt. The applicant has therefore investigated the use of renewable energy options which is supported by Policy ENV 4 of the Local Plan. Biomass has been recommended, providing hot water to match the temperatures achieved with oil. The chips would be delivered by a supplier direct to the fuel hopper as is the case now with oil or to a farm building near the site and brought to the site by the applicant when needed.

## **11.0 Highways**

11.1 The extension to the car park will provide much needed space in accordance with Policy COM 8. The application was accompanied by a Transport Statement and Addendum submitted as the County Highway Authority requested amendments. The applicant states that the changes which would result from the approval of this application will have no impact on the volume of traffic currently accessing the site. The number of parties may increase but the level of traffic involved with any one event will be no greater than the level for the 2014 events. There have been no issues relating to the access from the A142. The times when people come to and from the site will remain the same but the people who are staying would arrive at different times from other guests. The majority of traffic will continue to arrive outside peak hours. The County Highway Authority is satisfied that there will be no material impact on the performance of the road access and the wider transport network. The proposal therefore complies with Policy COM 7 of the Local Plan.

## **12.0 Other material matters**

12.1 With regards to Access, the buildings are to a certain extent existing. Disabled access is provided to all ground floor rooms, and toilet provision is also provided at this level. The staircases are also installed to provide a safe passage for ambulant disabled and comply with the building regulations. Rooms on the ground floor are all accessible and have the appropriate fittings and furniture to permit access for wheelchairs where needed.

## **13.0 Planning balance**

13.1 It is considered that the proposal would provide for an identified need for the expansion of this wedding venue and functions business for overnight accommodation with associated facilities to allow its continued successful operation. The use of a biomass boiler is to be welcomed as a renewable energy source and the ancillary building to accommodate has been sensitively sited and designed to provide this much needed ancillary storage and office space. The extension of the car park is also a benefit to allow the expansion of the business. There is considered to be no demonstrable harm as a result of this development.

## 14.0 **APPENDICES**

### 14.1 APPENDIX 1 – Planning conditions

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<b><u>Background Documents</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Officer(s)</u></b>
16/00255/FUL	Barbara Greengrass Room No. 011	Barbara Greengrass Senior Planning Officer
02/00843/FUL	The Grange	01353 665555
02/00844/LBC	Ely	barbara.greengrass
10/00217/FUL		@eastcambs.gov.uk
16/00359/FUL		

National Planning Policy Framework -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>



## APPENDIX 1 - 16/00255/FUL Conditions

- 1 Development shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and documents listed below

Plan Reference	Version No	Date Received
01 14/PH3/20		17th March 2016
01 14/201D USAGE PLAN		16th December 2015
01 14/PH3/49 PROPOSED		25th February 2015
01 14/PH3/50 PROPOSED		25th February 2015
01 14/PH3/51 EXISTING		25th February 2015
01 14/PH3/52 PROPOSED		25th February 2015
01 14/PH3/52		25th February 2015
TRAFFIC SURVEY APPENDICES		16th November 2016

- 1 Reason: To define the scope and extent of this permission.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 3 years of the date of this permission.
- 2 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.
- 3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces, including walls and roofing shall be as specified on the approved plans. All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 3 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 4 The car parking area shall be laid out in accordance with the approved plan number 0114/PH3/52 before the first use of the bed and breakfast hereby approved.
- 4 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies COM7 and COM8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 5 Prior to first occupation or commencement of use a full schedule of all soft landscape works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The schedule shall include, planting plans, a written specification; schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes, proposed numbers/densities; and a detailed implementation programme. It shall also indicate all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the end of the first planting season following occupation of the development. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

- 5 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.