

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

11 January 2012

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager – Planning and Sustainable Communities

S/1725/11 - ICKLETON
Erection of Dwelling at Land to the West of 20 Church Street
for Heddon Management Ltd.

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 25th October 2011

A. Update to the report

Response to amended plans

Agenda report paragraph number 9 - Consultations

Ickleton Parish Council – The amendments to the planning application have been considered by the Parish Council. They are not felt to be of any material significance. The Council voted unanimously to REFUSE. There was a strong feeling that the Consulting Engineers Report emphasised the fragility of the historic flint walls that border the plot on two sides. We feel that a development of the size proposed so close to these walls will threaten the survival of these historic elements. We re-iterate the comments already made and submitted that constitute the grounds for refusing the application in our view:

- i) Gross over-development of the site;
- ii) It is in the conservation area and surrounded by 5 listed buildings;
- iii) Serious issues about the privacy and amenity in and around the dwelling;
- iv) In particular the amenity of No. 28 Church Street would be very badly affected;
- v) Car parking next to an electricity substation;
- vi) Access on to Church Street;
- vii) Massive excavation works would be involved which could have consequences to the surrounding flint walls;
- viii) Roof would be visible from Butchers Hill;
- ix) It would be overlooked and overheard; and,
- x) 'Bunkerish' impression.

To sum up: By virtue of the scale, design and form of the proposed dwelling the development would intrude upon the open and natural setting of the listed Gurner House, and it would therefore adversely affect the setting of this listed building. In addition it would adversely affect the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Agenda report paragraph number 10 - Consultations

Conservation Officer – Continues to recommend refusal and makes the following comments: -

"The structural report does not describe any trial holes adjacent the wall, so the depth of foundations is still unknown. As previously advised, the foundations are likely to

be shallow, and this the structural engineer also assumes. As anticipated, the proposed works would undermine the curtilage listed wall and cause harm to its structural integrity.

Listed building consent would be required to carry out the underpinning works described (and should have been a joint application with the related redevelopment proposal as the development is reliant on the LBC works). In principle, it is not normal to allow works to underpin a flint wall in this proposed manner due to its greater likelihood of collapse when disturbed in this way. A brick or block wall can readily with care be supported over 600mm, but a flint wall cannot, due to the reliance of the flints on the aggregate between them for stability and the lack of overlap of flints to support structure above unlike bricks or blocks. Should the wall be able to be supported continuously during underpinning to try to minimise collapse, the installation of piles would be disruptive due to vibration and/or access to install the piles, and the original foundation detail would be lost or damaged.

On that basis, the previously advised reason for refusal should be updated to include undermining, harm and loss to the wall.

The section drawings show that the indicative aerial view is misleading as it does not show an accurate relationship of development to boundaries adjacent Gurner House.”

Agenda report paragraph number 13 - Consultations

Trees and Landscapes Officer – Has no objections.

Agenda report paragraph number 14 - Consultations

Landscape Design Officer – Would prefer to see the retention of the existing Malus as it is important to the public realm and it may be difficult to establish a replacement so close to the Walnut. It is sad to see the space so consumed by development as because it leaves very little space for this plot to contribute vegetation to the general rear garden area that is enclosed by perimeter dwellings. Requests landscape and boundary conditions especially with regards to the design of the gate.

Agenda report paragraph number 17 - Representations

Four further letters have been received from neighbours and the Ickleton Society that previously commented on the application. They do not consider that the amended plans have addressed any of their previous objections. The occupiers of No. 20 Church Street have clarified that the photographs referred to in their original letter of objection and the agents letter dated 12th October 2011 were taken from the main historic part of the listed building.

The Local Member had made the following comments: -

“There are 2 issues from the report that I would like you to consider.

a) Loss of amenity. The question of loss of amenity is very subjective and therefore the conclusions regarding that topic are merely the planning officer’s opinion. Members must judge for themselves during the site visit.

b) Appropriateness of proposed development within the Conservation Area. I would merely suggest that if this is an appropriate development why is so much effort being made to hide it?

3. In my opinion there is a much more important issue with this application and whatever decision the Planning Committee reaches. We are now in the brave new world of “localism” and I make no apology for quoting Rt Hon Greg Clark MP’s introduction to the plain English guide to the Localism Act.

“They include: new freedoms and flexibilities for local government; new rights and powers for communities and individuals; reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective, and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally.” Further, from page 14 of this document: “There are, however, some significant flaws in the planning system that this Government inherited. Planning did not give members of the public enough influence over decisions that make a big difference to their lives. Too often, power was exercised by people who were not directly affected by the decisions they were taking. This meant, understandably, that people often resented what they saw as decisions and plans being foisted on them.”

Under the circumstances I consider that to go against the views of the immediate neighbours, Ickleton Parish Council, the Ickleton Society, the local representative (and indeed the SCDC conservation officer) would not be acceptable and I urge you to refuse this application.”

Agenda report paragraph number 19 – Planning Comments

The consultation responses and representations received to the amended plans have been addressed in the original report.

The recommendation for approval is a subjective but unbiased opinion on the acceptability of the proposal in relation to local development framework policies and all other material planning considerations including supplementary planning documents, consultation responses, local representations, and the planning history of the site.

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