

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

3 July 2013

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

S/0902/13/FL– GREAT EVERSDEN

Two dwellings following demolition of existing property, 42 Wimpole Road, Great Eversden for Camstead Homes

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 24 June 2013

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination as the officer recommendation of delegated approval is contrary to the recommendation of refusal from the Parish Council

To be presented to the Committee by Paul Sexton

Site and Proposal

1. This full application, registered on 29 April 2013, and amended by additional details received 10 June 2013, proposes the demolition of an existing detached house and the erection of two detached dwellings. The 0.127ha site comprises the existing dwelling and its residential curtilage and an area of paddock land to the south west.
2. No 42 Wimpole Road is a part single-storey, part two-storey late 1960's/early 1970's detached house with mono-pitched style main roof. There is an existing single garage in the north east corner of the site. The dwelling is in a poor state of repair.
3. The frontage of the site, where it comprises the residential curtilage of No 43 is formed by mature trees and shrubs, broken by an existing entrance in the north east corner. The frontage of the paddock land, which comprises the remainder of the site, is formed by a field gate and pedestrian gate. It is separated from the residential curtilage of No 42 by a post and wire fence.
4. To the south of the site is paddock land. To the north west is agricultural/paddock land beyond which is No 44 Wimpole Road, a Grade II listed building and its substantial former agricultural outbuildings, which are currently in a poor state of repair, but which benefit from an extant consent for refurbishment as a residential annexe
5. To the north east of the site is No 40 Wimpole Road, a detached house, which has a full length lounge window in the side elevation facing the appeal site. The boundary of this property with the application site comprises a post and wire fence.
6. Opposite the site is No 1 Wimpole Road and its associated residential curtilage and outbuildings. This building is Grade II listed.
7. Wimpole Road is a narrow rural lane with no footpaths.

8. The proposed dwelling on the north east plot (shown as 42A) is a 4-bedroom house with a maximum ridge height of 8.0m. The existing garage on the north east boundary is to be rebuilt and extended, with a pitched roof. The proposed dwelling will be located 3.1m from the boundary with No 40 Wimpole Road. The existing dwelling is a similar distance from the boundary. Access will be via the existing access in the north east corner of the site.
9. The proposed dwelling on the south west plot (shown as 42B) is a five-bedroom house sited end on to Wimpole Road. It has length of 20.5m, including a lean-to single garage on the Wimpole Road. The main ridge height is 7.6m. The proposed dwelling will be located partly within the existing residential curtilage of No 42 and part within the adjacent paddock land. Access will be at the south east end of the site and will require the removal of an existing section of frontage hedge. The existing field gate will be removed and that part of the frontage planted.
10. The amended details include a surface water drainage report which refers to the use of swales in the gardens of the new dwellings or adjacent paddock, owned by the applicant, to deal with this issue.
11. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement (incorporating a Heritage Statement), Ecological Appraisal, Bat Survey, Drainage Report, and draft Unilateral Undertaking.

History

12. S/0163/12/FL – Erection of 2 dwellings following demolition of existing property – Refused – Appeal Dismissed
13. The application was refused on five grounds. The Council did not consider that the proposal complied with the definitions of infill development in Policy ST/7, as although the site was within the village framework, it comprised part residential curtilage and part paddock land. The Council was of the view that by extending built development into the paddock land, and the removal of a section of hedgerow to provide access, would materially detract from the open and rural character of this part of Wimpole Road, compounded by the scale, bulk and form of the proposed dwelling on the south west plot (42B), and was therefore contrary to the aims of Policy DP/2 and DP/3. The Council was of the view that the proposed dwellings, by reason of location, bulk, form, depth and mass of the south west dwelling would detract from the setting of the Listed Buildings at Nos.1 and 44, and the visual relationship between them, contrary to Policy CH/4. The Council was also of the view that the bulk, mass, depth and form of the south-west dwelling would detract from the open and rural character of the adjacent Green Belt, contrary to Policy GB/3. Finally, the Council was of the view that the housing mix did not comply with Policy HG/2.
14. The Inspector, whilst accepting that the proposed development did not comply with the definitions of infill development in Policy ST/7, stated that it appeared that the aim of the policy was to limit the extent of development in the village. He stated that in this case the site largely comprised the existing curtilage of No.42 and development would be entirely within the village framework. The development would not be unsustainable to any material degree and given the unusual circumstances concluded that there would be no material harm to the objectives of Policy ST/7, and that the in-principle objection on these grounds was not an overriding one.
15. He concluded that while the circumstances of the site were such as to potentially outweigh the conflict with Policy ST/7, the particular proposals would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area, warranting that the appeal be dismissed.

Planning Policy

16. National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007:

DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments
DP/7 Development Frameworks
GB/3 Mitigating the Impact of Development Adjoining the Green Belt
HG/2 Housing Mix
NE/1 Energy Efficiency
NE/6 Biodiversity
NE/11 Flood Risk
CH/4 Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building
TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards

South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents
Biodiversity SPD – adopted July 2009
Listed Buildings SPD – adopted
District Design Guide SPD – adopted March 2010

Consultation by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Local Planning Authority

17. **Great Eversden Parish Council** recommends refusal. 'The dwellings are still far too large for the site and too close together, out of keeping with surrounding properties. The height at 8m is significantly higher than neighbouring houses. The latest plans do not address the concerns of the residents of the listed house (No1) opposite or No40 adjacent (overlooking, light, amenity). The site is poorly drained, there are already flooding issues in adjacent houses. Any extra building or hard standing is likely to increase problems for other householders. Wimpole Road is narrow, without passing places at the site. Adequate provision for service vehicles are essential otherwise obstruction will occur.'
18. The **Local Highway Authority** has no objection subject to conditions which include the submission and approval of a Traffic Management Plan for the period of demolition and construction works, and the provision of vehicle and pedestrian visibility splays
19. The **Environmental Health Officer** has no objection in principle, and is of the view that a condition relating to contamination is not required. Conditions should be included in any consent in respect of the hours of operation power operated machinery during the demolition and construction process, and the use of bonfires and burning of waste. Informatives should be attached to consent regarding the need for a Demolition Notice.
20. The comments of the **Conservation Manager** will be included in any update to the report, or reported at the meeting

Representations by Members of the Public

21. Letters of objection have been received from the occupiers of Nos.1, 40 and Ash Tree House Wimpole Road and 11 High Street. The grounds of objection are summarised below.

- a) Not in keeping with the character of the area – existing properties are set back from the road with spacious gardens to the front, reflecting a pleasant rural setting, with a balanced, well-proportioned streetscape. The development results in the serious overcrowding of a plot which is only suitable for a single dwelling.
- b) Proposed ridge height of 8.2m exceeds that of nearby properties. 42A will be a two-storey dwelling replacing what is currently a part one-storey and part two-storey dwelling, which emphasises the lack of surrounding space and detrimental impact on close neighbours. The site is 0.5 higher than that of No40, will increase this disparity in heights.
- c) The south west elevation of 42B is not in keeping with other properties in Wimpole Road, extending too close to the road and reducing the 'open' aspect of the road.
- d) Concern about reduction in daylight, sunlight and overshadowing to both No.40 and No.1 Wimpole Road. The pitched roof of the garage in addition to the increased and extended house elevation of 42A would constitute a large brick wall effect to the south west of, and overshadowing the house and garden at No.40. 42A is positioned directly southwest of No40 and will drastically reduce light levels into the living space of that property.
- e) There will be additional noise disturbance and emissions due to the close proximity of the new properties to the boundary, and the adverse impact of additional external lighting.
- f) Intrusion on setting of listed buildings at Nos.1 and 44 Wimpole Road.
- g) Drainage is currently a problem after heavy rain in the road and the development would exacerbate this and interfere with the two water courses which run each side of Wimpole Road. The proposed soakaway system will not be effective and may cause problems for No.40, which is on slightly lower ground, as is No.1.
- h) The application form is incorrect as it states that the proposal is not within 20 metres of a watercourse. It is within 8 metres of the ditch, or stream, which runs the length of Wimpole Road and acts as a drainage channel, carrying water from the higher ground to the south and east, which can become very full at times of high rainfall. This statement is therefore misleading. Impact on drainage as a result of the additional development remains a concern, and although the application states that adequate land drainage exist to meet the needs of the new development, however this is doubtful as the owners of a property 4 away from the site have recently had to raise the bank of the stream artificially raised where it passes their house because of flooding problems. The application refers to a drainage report being prepared and it is hoped that this will be made available for public comment.
- i) Traffic from an additional dwelling will considerably add to an inadequate 'no-through road' which is already busy with vehicles, and may prove dangerous for local pedestrians, car drivers, walkers, cyclists, and horse riders. Eight car parking spaces are provided, which seems disproportionately large and above the Councils maximum standards. Bus services to the village are extremely limited and there will be reliance on the use of the private car, contrary to the aims of Policy DP'1
- j) Construction vehicles will cause huge disruption and damage to the already poor state of the road.
- k) The Bat Survey indicates that there are no bats present at the site, however bats do occupy the site and have always been a regular sight within nearby gardens.
- l) There is no reference to the large fruit tree which is within 0.5m of the existing and proposed garage to plot 42A. This will be destroyed by damage to the roots.

m) Concerns about accuracy of the boundary with No.40 on the submitted drawings.

Material Planning Considerations

22. The main issues to consider with this application are the principle of development, housing mix, impact on the character of the area, impact on the setting of listed buildings, impact on the adjacent Green Belt neighbour amenity, drainage, highway safety and other matters.

Principle of development

23. The site is within the village framework of Great Eversden. Policy ST/7 of the Core Strategy identifies Great Eversden as an Infill-Only Village where residential development and redevelopment within the village framework is restricted to not more than 2 dwellings, and defines the type of development which would constitute infill development.
24. The proposed development comprises the residential curtilage of 42 Wimpole Road and a 15m wide section of paddock land to the south. As a result the proposal fails to meet any of the four definitions of infill development, however the Inspector, in dismissing the appeal, felt that although this was the case any in principle objection on these grounds was not an overriding one.

Housing Mix

25. Policy HG/2 seeks to ensure that all new developments provide a mix of housing units, in terms of types, sizes and affordability to meet local needs. For developments up to 10 dwellings the policy prescribes a mix, which includes a requirement for at least 40% of new dwellings to be homes with 1 or 2 bedrooms, to meet the needs for such housing types in South Cambridgeshire.
26. The application proposes a four-bedroom unit and six bedroom units, and the Council argued at the previous appeal that the proposed mix did not comply with the requirements of Policy HG/2. The Inspector however agreed with the applicants' contention that, as the proposal only resulted in a net gain of one unit, the provisions of this policy should not be applied.

Impact on the character of the area

27. The existing house is read as the last house in the line of frontage properties in Wimpole Road, with a visual transition at the end of its identified residential curtilage to the open countryside beyond. Any development beyond the identified residential curtilage of No 42 has the potential to have an adverse impact on the present open and rural character of this part of Wimpole Road.
28. In dismissing the appeal the Inspector accepted this point and stated that the two proposed houses, with fairly large footprints, would be sited close together and 42B would project near to the road, and the overall effect would be a large bulk of development on this edge of the village, eroding the semi-rural feel of the location and making it more suburban, notwithstanding the new landscaping proposed.
29. The amended application reduces the size of the dwelling on Plot 42B. The main ridge height is reduced from 8.4m to 7.6m, with a lowering of the eaves height and the introduction of dormer windows in the south west elevation. The overall depth of building is reduced from 22.5m to 20.5m, and the property has been set a further 2.5m back from the frontage to Wimpole Road. A hipped roof has been added to the south west elevation of Plot 42A thereby reducing the bulk when viewed from the road.

30. Officers are of the view that the reductions/alterations satisfactorily address the previous concerns relating the impact of the development on the character of the area.

Impact on the adjacent Cambridge Green Belt

31. The south west and north west boundaries of the site represent the boundary with the Cambridge Green Belt. Policy GB/3 states that where development proposals are in the vicinity of the Green Belt, account will be taken of any adverse impact on the Green Belt.
32. The boundary of the Green Belt and the south west boundary of the application site is currently undefined and the south western section of the application site forms part of the larger paddock, the remainder of which is Green Belt land. Although there are no public rights of way across the Green Belt land to the south of the site, there will be views of the site and the Green Belt from Wimpole Road. In dismissing the previous appeal the Inspector accepted that there would be a small element of adverse impact on the rural setting of the Green Belt. Officers are of the view that the revised scheme satisfactorily addresses these concerns given the reduced scale of the south west elevation of Plot 42B.

Impact on the setting of listed buildings

33. The existing property opposite the site in Wimpole Road is a Grade II listed building. It is a thatched roof building c1600. To the south west of the site, and set well back from the road, is No.44 Wimpole Road, which is also a Grade II listed building, C16 with thatched roof. Views of both these buildings are obtained from Wimpole Road and the views between the buildings form an important part of the setting of both buildings. Policy CH/4 seeks to ensure that the setting of listed buildings is not adversely affected by new developments.
34. The Conservation Manager was previously concerned that the proposed development will harm the countryside views of No.44 Wimpole Road, thereby adversely affecting its setting, and result in the loss of visual relationship between the two listed buildings, adversely affecting the setting of both buildings, and that this impact was increased due to the bulk, form mass and depth of the proposed dwelling on the south west plot.
35. The Inspector accepted that the existing semi-rural aspects of the setting of the two listed buildings and that the erosion of this setting would result in a minor degree of harm to their significance. The views of the Conservation Manager on the current scheme will be reported, however any impact is significantly reduced in the new application.

Neighbour amenity

36. In officers view the direct impact of the proposed development on neighbour amenity, in terms of overlooking, loss of light or overbearing impact, is restricted to the existing dwelling to the north east at 40 Wimpole Road. No 40 Wimpole Road is a two-storey detached house located 4m from the south west boundary. There is a full height ground floor lounge window in the south west elevation facing the application site, and a smaller window. The lounge is a through room with a window in the front elevation and patio doors at the rear.
37. The existing dwelling on the application site is located to the south west of No 40 and is sited 3.2m from the boundary. It is two-storey with a mono-pitched style roof, and is 7.4m at its highest point. There are ground floor and a first floor shower room window in the elevation facing No.40, and there is currently a post and wire fence forming the boundary which allows for overlooking between the two properties.

38. The proposed dwelling on the north east plot will be sited in approximately the same position as the existing dwelling although it will extend slightly less both at the back and front, with the distance from the boundary with No 40 unchanged.
39. The existing property has an impact on No 40 due to overlooking windows and the height of its end wall, which in a mono-pitched form 7.4m at its highest point, is quite dominant when viewed from No 40 and its garden.
40. Although the proposed dwelling is higher (8.2m to ridge) the roof slopes away from No 40 and the rear section of roof is hipped, and the height of wall closest to No 40 reduces to 4.8m. Officers are of the view that whilst the front section of the new dwelling will have a greater impact on No 40 in terms of loss of light, the impact of the rear section will be less than that of the existing dwelling. There is a first floor en-suite window proposed in the north east elevation of the new dwelling closest to No 40. If approved a condition could be imposed requiring this window to be obscure glazed and non-opening. There is a single door in this elevation at ground floor level.
41. The garage close to the boundary with No 40 at the rear of the site, is to be rebuilt and extended in length, with a pitched roof added. Its height will not exceed 3.6m and officers not consider that it will have an unreasonable impact on the occupiers of No 40.
42. The relationship of the proposed dwelling on Plot 42A to No.40 Wimpole Road has not changed since the appeal decision. The Inspector agreed with officers assessment that the proposal would not materially harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No.40 by comparison to the impact of the existing dwelling on the site.

Highway safety

43. Wimpole Road is a narrow rural lane with no footpaths, however the proposed development will result in one additional dwelling only. The Local Highway Authority has not objected to the application and I am of the view that there are no grounds to oppose this application on highway issues.

Drainage

44. Concern has been expressed about the impact of the proposed development on the existing surface water drainage system, and reference has been made to the existing drainage ditches becoming very full at times. The applicant has suggested the introduction of swales to deal with surface water drainage, given the relatively poor soakage rates, and the comments of the Building Control Section on this proposal will be reported. If planning permission were to be granted a condition could be included requiring the submission of a surface water drainage scheme, which would need to demonstrate that it was designed to ensure that run-off from the site would not exceed the existing run-off rate.

Other matters

45. The proposal results in a net increase of one dwelling on the site, which will be required under Policy DP/4 and SF/10 to contribute to relevant infrastructure improvements that will result from the demands placed upon them by the additional occupants.
46. The application accepts this need and a draft Heads of Terms has been submitted covering the above requirements.

Conclusion

47. In dismissing the previous appeal the Inspector the Inspector did not accept that the Council's argument that the proposal did not constitute infill development, but accepted that the size of the dwellings proposed, and particularly that on Plot 42B, would have an adverse impact on the area. Officers are of the view that the revised scheme, with the reduction in the scale of the dwelling on Plot 42B in particular, addresses these concerns.

Recommendation

48. Subject to any additional comments, including those of the Conservation Officer and Building Control Section that delegated powers of approval are given subject to conditions. Officer,

Conditions

49. Conditions should be imposed relating to the following matters

Time limit – 3 years
List of approved drawings
Details of external materials
Visibility splays
Falls, levels and materials of access road
Surface water drainage
Landscaping
Ecology measures
Restriction on hours of use of power operated machinery during construction process
Traffic management plan
Restrict pd rights, and new openings in north east elevation of Plot 42A

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Planning File Ref: S/0902/13/FL and S/0163/12/FL

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