

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th October 2006

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Head of Planning Services

S/1669/06/F - Girton

Erection of Six Dwellings Following Demolition of Existing Dwelling (No. 2 High Street) at 2 High Street and Land Rear of 4 & 6 High Street

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 13th October 2006

Members will visit the site on Monday 2nd October 2006

Site and Proposal

1. This site, measuring 0.26 hectares is formed from land that currently comprises the plot at 2 High Street, which has a detached bungalow on it, and parts of rear gardens to 4 and 6 High Street. The land rises approximately 2.5 metres eastwards from the road towards the rear of the site. It contains a number of trees and currently a hedge marks the frontage of no. 2. To the front of the site there is a grassed verge. There is no footpath on this side of the road. The site is adjoined by residential property at 20 Duck End and 50 High Street to the south and 5 Lawrence Close to the southeast; and gardens serving 8 High Street to the north and 66 – 68 Church Lane to the east. Mature hedges mark the southern and eastern boundaries.
2. This full planning application follows an earlier application (see planning history) and has been amended to address concerns raised. It proposes to demolish the existing 1920s bungalow on the site and to build six dwellings in the form of: a pair of semi-detached, three-bedroom houses to the frontage with garages to the rear; one two-bedroom bungalow; one four-bedroom bungalow with integral garage; and two chalet bungalows with ridge heights of 6.5 metres and integral garages. The proposals will result in development at a density of 23 dwellings per hectare (dph).
3. Plot four of the current proposals has been revised from a chalet bungalow to a bungalow to address overlooking and overbearing concerns. A beech hedge on the southern boundary is retained in its entirety. A garage to plot three has been omitted to free up space for visitor car parking and landscaping. 6m kerb radii to the street have been omitted.
4. A Design and Access Statement and a Flood Risk Assessment accompany the application.

Planning History

5. Planning application ref. **S/0616/64/O** for a bungalow to the rear of 4 High Street was refused. A subsequent appeal was dismissed.
6. Members may recall considering a previous application for six dwellings (ref. **S/0430/06/F**) on this site at the June 2006 meeting, which was refused on the following grounds:

1. The proposed form of development will result in the site having a cramped appearance when viewed within the context of the street scene and wider semi-rural character of the area. This is exacerbated by the lack of space within the scheme for significant soft landscaping. The proposals are therefore contrary to policies P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, adopted 2003, and SE3 and HG10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, adopted 2004, which require new developments to be designed to a high standard and provides a sense of place that responds to the local character of the built environment.
2. The size and height of the proposed dwellings will have a detrimental impact upon the amenities of neighbouring dwellings as, due to differences in ground levels across the site and neighbouring land, they will have an overbearing appearance. The proposals are therefore contrary to policies SE3 and HG10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2004, which require new housing developments to be sensitive to the amenities of neighbours.

Planning Policy

7. **Policy SE3** 'Limited Rural Growth Settlements' of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ('Local Plan') defines Girton as a Limited Rural Growth Settlement in which residential development will be permitted on unallocated land providing the development meets with the criteria of this and other policies included within the Local Plan. Development should provide an appropriate mix of dwellings and should achieve a minimum density of 30dph unless there are strong design grounds for not doing so.
8. **Policy HG10** 'Housing Mix and Design' of the Local Plan requires developments to include a mix of housing types and sizes, with the design and layout being informed by the wider area.
9. **Policy HG11** 'Backland Development' of the Local Plan states that development to the rear of existing properties will only be permitted where the development would not:
 - a. Result in overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing of existing residential properties;
 - b. Result in noise and disturbance to existing residential properties through the use of its access;
 - c. Result in highway dangers through the use of its access; or
 - d. Be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity.
10. **Policy CS1** 'Planning Obligations' – The Council will seek to secure through section 106 agreements or Grampian conditions infrastructure or other forms of development that are necessary as a result of the development proposed.
11. Local Plan **Policy CS5** 'Flood Protection' restricts development where flood risk will be increased.
12. **Policy CS10** 'Education' of the Local Plan seeks financial contributions towards the provision of education where the development would cause the capacity of local schools to be exceeded.

13. **Policy TP1** 'Planning for More Sustainable Travel' of the Local Plan seeks to promote sustainable travel and as such planning permission will only be granted where small-scale increases in travel demands will result, unless satisfactory measures to increase accessibility are included. Standards for maximum car parking levels and requirements for cycle storage are found in Appendices 7/1 and 7/2.
14. **Policy EN5** 'The Landscaping of New Development' of the Local Plan requires trees, hedges and woodland wherever possible to be retained within proposals for new development and landscaping schemes will be secured through appropriate conditions.
15. Local Plan **Policy EN12** 'Nature Conservation: Unidentified Sites' seeks wherever possible to retain features and habitat types of nature conservation value where they occur. Where the need for development outweighs the need to retain such features appropriate mitigation measures will be required.
16. **Policy P1/3 'Sustainable Design in Built Development'** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ('Structure Plan') states that a high standard of design and sustainability should be adopted for all new forms of development.
17. **Policy P5/3** 'Density' of the Structure Plan requires developments to achieve a density appropriate to the area, with a minimum requirement of 30 dwellings per hectare.
18. Structure Plan **Policy P6/1** 'Development-related Provision' restricts development unless additional infrastructure and community requirements generated by the proposals can be secured.
19. Structure Plan **Policy P6/3** 'Flood Defence' requires measures and design features to be included to give sufficient protection against flooding on site or elsewhere locally.
20. **Policy P6/4** 'Drainage' of the Structure Plan states that all new development should avoid exacerbating flood risk locally by utilising water retention systems.
21. Structure Plan **Policy P7/2** 'Biodiversity' seeks to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
22. Structure Plan Policies **P8/1** 'Sustainable Development – Links Between Land Use and Transport', **P8/8** 'Encouraging Walking and Cycling' and **P8/9** 'Provision of Public Rights of Way' seek to ensure that new developments are located where they are highly accessible by public transport, cycle and on foot; reduce travel by car; cater for all users and; provide opportunities for travel choice; and do not compromise safety.
23. **Policy P8/5** 'Provision of Parking' of the Structure Plan requires car parking standards to be maximums, in accordance with PPG13.

Consultation

24. At the time of writing the consultation period had not expired. Responses are awaited from:
Girton Parish Council, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue, Trees and Landscape Officer, Ecology Officer, Drainage Manager, General Works Manager, and the Local Highways Authority. A summary of responses will be provided to Members at Committee or earlier in the form of an appendix, if possible.

25. **Environment Agency** – The site is within flood zone 1 and is of less than 1 hectare in area, therefore as there are no other issues for the Agency, the Council is to assess the application on its behalf in line with standing advice on flood risk and surface water drainage.
26. **Chief Environmental Health Officer** – no impact from an Environmental Health standpoint.
27. **Cambridgeshire County Council's Chief Financial Planning Officer** - Confirms that an educational contribution of £17,00 towards provision of secondary education is required.
28. Building Control Officer does not believe there will be drainage problems, although details of the Flood Risk Assessment are awaited.

Representations

29. The consultation period expires on 27th September 2006 and therefore further responses will be reported verbally to the Committee if received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

30. The occupier of No. 8 High Street objects to cars existing on to a narrow lane junction, causing noise pollution and loss of privacy to his back garden. If the development proceeds a 1.8m high solid wooden fence is required on the boundary to No. 6.
31. The occupiers of No. 68 Church Lane raise concerns in regard to the future maintenance of an underground drainage system beneath No. 2 High Street to prevent flooding of No. 68, increased traffic pressure along the narrow Church Lane and it would be undesirable to lose the natural habitat of trees and hedgerow between 66/68 Church Lane and 2/4/6 High Street.
32. In assessing this planning application the key issues are whether the previous two reasons for refusal have been adequately addressed through this new application. The two issues previously were the impact of the form and layout of the development on the street scene and wider area, and the overbearing impact of the dwellings on neighbouring properties.
33. One of the main concerns in relation to the previous scheme was the impact of plot four on the neighbouring properties. In the current scheme this has been revised from a chalet bungalow to a bungalow, with a reduction in ridge height of 900mm from 6.3 metres to 5.4 metres. In addition, the large beech hedge on the boundary is being retained. Although the site does rise, a bungalow on this plot with such a low ridge height will significantly lessen the visual impact upon 20 Duck End and 5 Lawrence Close, particularly as the hedge will screen views of the plot.
34. A garage to plot 3 has been omitted and replaced with two tandem car parking spaces adjacent to the garage serving plots one and two, reducing the built form visible when viewed from the neighbouring properties at 20 and 50 Duck End. This has the added advantage of freeing up space between plots three and four to provide two visitor car parking spaces and additional soft landscaping within the development.
35. 6 metre kerb radii to the street have been omitted. The implications of this for emergency and refuse vehicles to access the site must be considered, and balanced

a less in a less intrusive form of junction. The nature of consultants will influence the weight to be attached to these factors.

36. In summary, the applicants have done as much as possible to address the relationship of plots 3 and four, in particular on neighbouring properties, and therefore have overcome reason two of the previous refusal. Given that the density of the proposed scheme is just 23 dph, is not within a Conservation Area or setting of a Listed Building, and that the form and layout of the scheme has been improved to address concerns raised, a refusal along of the lines of the first reason for refusal on the previous application would in my opinion be difficult to substantiate. In terms of the character of the area, I do not believe a density greater than that proposed would be appropriate. The approximate density of development between High Street, Duck End and Church Lane south of a footpath link is 12 dph.

Recommendation

37. Subject to the responses of consultees, receipt of a revised FRA, section 106 requiring a contribution toward education provision delegated approval subject to appropriate planning conditions.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File Ref: C/0616/64/O, S/0430/06/F and S/1669/06/F
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings.

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