

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

9th May 2007

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

S/0581/07/F - SHEPRETH

Erection of Two Dwellings and Outbuildings Following Demolition of Existing Bungalow, 17 Meldreth Road for Croft Design and Build Ltd

Recommendation: Approval

Date for Determination: 23rd May 2007

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because Shepreth Parish Council has recommended that it be refused, contrary to the officer recommendation.

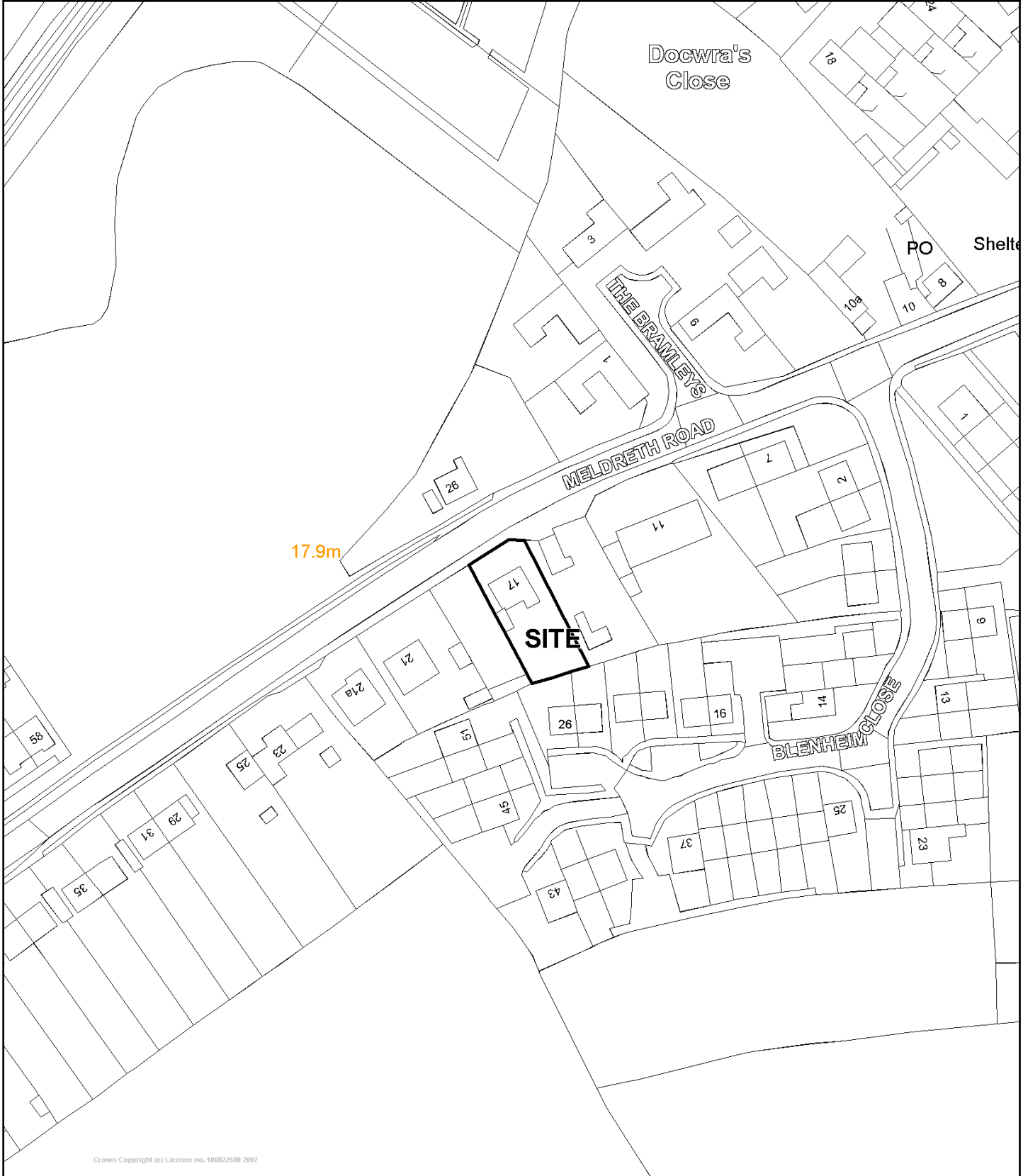
Members will visit this site on 8th May 2007

Site and Proposal

1. Presently the land at number 17 Meldreth Road is occupied by a detached bungalow with a tall hipped roof, which sits 6m back from the highway. To the west the site abuts an area of undeveloped land and to the east the boundary is defined by a tall close-boarded fence, the other side of which there is a pair of recently built semi-detached properties. To the rear the site boundary is defined by a tall close-boarded fence that abuts the curtilages of properties in Blenheim Way. The site has a width of approximately 13 metres and a depth of between 30 and 32 metres.
2. The full application received on the 28th March 2007 proposes to construct a pair of semi-detached chalet style properties at a height of 6.1 metres to the ridge with rooflights serving the first floor rooms. The design of the development incorporates both forward and rear projecting gable ends with ridge heights the same as that of the main building. The proposed dwellings equate to a density of approximately 50 dwellings per hectare and both would have three bedrooms. The building would be finished in a white render with painted timber windows under a natural slate roof. A timber, pitched roof outbuilding is proposed for each of the new dwellings one of which has a height of 3.3m and the other with a height of 3.4m.

Planning History

3. An application for a similarly designed pair of semi-detached properties was submitted and withdrawn in 2006 (**S/1210/06/F**). This application was the subject of objections from the owner/occupiers of properties in Blenheim Close and the Parish Council.



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May Planning Committee 2007

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

4. **Policy P1/3** 'Sustainable Design in Built Development' of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development.
5. **Policy P5/3** 'Density' of the approved Structure Plan 2003 requires increases in the density of new housing development.
6. **Policy P5/5** 'Homes in Rural Areas' of the approved Structure Plan 2003 encourages small scale housing developments in villages.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004/ Local Development Framework

7. **Policy ST/7** of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007, identifies Shepreth as an infill village. **Policy SE5** of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for new dwellings in infill village frameworks considering issues of impact upon character and amenities of the locality.
8. **Policy HG7** 'Affordable Housing on Sites within Village Frameworks' of the Local Plan 2004 requires new residential developments within village frameworks to provide a percentage of affordable housing up to 50% of the total number of dwellings for which planning permission may be given in smaller villages.
9. **Policy HG10** 'Housing Mix and Design' of the Local Plan 2004 sets out the requirements for residential developments to make the best use of sites in addition to be informed by the wider character and context of the surrounding area.

Consultation

10. **Shepreth Parish Council** believes that the proposal represents an overdevelopment of the site. It recommends refusal.
11. **Corporate Manager (Health & Environmental Services)** – Had not responded at the time of writing this report.
12. **Local Highways Authority** - has requested that any permission be conditioned to provide visibility splays of 2m x2m.

Representations

13. None received at the time of writing this report. The consultation period is due to expire on the 2nd May.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

14. This latest proposal follows the withdrawal of the previous application, which was in the process of being refused due to the impact of the then proposed dwellings on the street scene and the amenities of the owner/occupiers in Blenheim Close as a result of overlooking windows. There was also the concern that the proposed dwellings would overdevelop the site by virtue of their scale in relation to neighbouring buildings. The design of this latest proposal has been amended in an attempt to address the aforementioned issues, which are listed below for Members to consider.

15. As the application site is being developed by the applicants and developers of the adjacent site, which came before Members in July 2006 (S/0791/06/F), the issue of whether both sites should be treated as one planning unit, and whether an affordable unit should be provided, also needs to be considered.

Impact upon the street scene

16. Although the proposed building would be significantly wider than the existing bungalow (13.1 metres) it would sit back further from the highway than the existing property (9.8m as oppose to 6m). The main ridge of the new building (6.1m) would match the height of the adjacent pair of properties, which were built by the same applicant. Therefore the bulk of the dwelling would be seen against the neighbouring building when viewed from the west, with a separation of approximately 2.3m between the two properties. There is also a mature hedge at the front of the neighbouring land that although not owned or controlled by the applicant would serve to part screen views of the development. From the east the forward projecting gable would be a noticeable feature that would screen views of the rest of the building. The main bulk of the building would also be screened by the neighbouring pair of dwellings.
17. Given the set back nature of the proposed dwellings and the fact that visually they would accord with the neighbouring pair of semi-detached properties I am of the opinion that there would not be an adverse impact upon the character of the street scene in this part of Meldreth Road.

Impact upon neighbour amenity

18. In this latest proposal there are two outbuildings that are to be located near to the boundary with properties in Blenheim Close. These buildings are no greater than anything that could be built under the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order 1995. I do not consider that the outbuildings would have any significant impact upon neighbour amenity and if anything they would help to part screen the gardens of the new dwellings from overlooking from the properties in Blenheim Close.
19. The issue of the potential overlooking of the aforementioned Blenheim Close properties by the new dwellings has been addressed through the use of high-level rooflights, similar to those used in the neighbouring development. The use of these rooflights together with a condition preventing the insertion of further openings in certain first floor elevations successfully removes the issue of overlooking.

Overdevelopment of the site

20. Both local and national planning policies encourage greater densities of residential developments, where they will not have an unacceptable impact upon the character and amenity of the surrounding area. Given the size of the plot I consider that it is feasible for more than one dwelling to occupy the site.
21. In this particular case although the density of development is higher than that of the neighbouring sites the proposal still manages to maintain more of an open frontage than the site presently enjoys. Moreover although the property has first floor accommodation the overall height of the building is relatively modest. This modest height together with the setting back of the building helps to limit visual impact despite the fact that the proposed building would occupy a large percentage of the width of the site.
22. Although the Parish Council believes the development to constitute an overdevelopment of the site no harm has been identified as a result the overdevelopment. Therefore I consider that the high-density character of the proposal is acceptable given the fact that

there would be no serious loss of neighbour amenity and the visual impact of the development upon the street scene is considered to be acceptable.

Affordable Housing

23. Under Local Plan policy HG7 any new residential development within a village with a population of 3,000 or fewer would require up to 50% of the units to be affordable. The applicant previously submitted an application for this site whilst they were in the process of constructing the adjacent dwellings. At the time it was questioned whether there was a requirement for an affordable unit to be provided, though this argument was not followed through as a result of the application being withdrawn.
24. In considering whether the applicant should provide an affordable unit it is necessary to look at the past planning history of the adjacent site. Moreover an appeal decision in 2005 by a Government inspector for the development of a site in Weston Colville (S/0358/04/F) has some parallels with this case that should be considered. The inspector's report also sets out a list of factors that should be taken into account when considering such applications.
25. In the aforesaid inspector's report the following factors are used to assess whether two adjacent sites should be considered as one planning unit for the purposes of compliance with HG7: whether the sites are within the same ownership; whether they comprise a single site for planning purposes; and whether the proposals constitute a single development.
26. In the case of ownership the applicant purchased the application site whilst they were in the process of developing the adjacent site. The adjacent properties have now been sold so there is no longer any joint ownership of the two sites. However at the time of the submission of the withdrawn application both sites were owned and controlled by the applicant. Although adjacent to each other the two sites have historically been two distinct planning units, and the proposal would be to develop the second site as a separate planning unit, though it will be similar in style to the already developed neighbouring site.
27. The net gain in dwellings is also a consideration as the adjacent site had a net gain of two dwellings, which was accepted without the need for an affordable unit to be provided under application reference S/1643/03/F, which was granted before the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 was adopted. The application site already accommodates one dwelling; therefore the net gain of this particular development would be one new dwelling. Though if both sites were considered as one planning unit there would be a net gain of three. Given the fact that the sites are no longer in the same ownership I consider that it would be difficult to pursue the issue of affordable housing. Moreover if the issue were pursued it would most probably result in the bungalow being extended and sold rather than an affordable unit being provided, which would ultimately be to the detriment of the provision of housing in the village.

Recommendation

28. Approval - Subject to the following conditions;
 1. Standard Condition A (Reason A);
 2. Sc5a – external walls, roofs, and finished floor levels in relation to ground levels.
(Rc - To ensure that the development is not incongruous;
To ensure that the height of the building is well related to ground levels and is not obtrusive;

3. Sc51 – Landscaping (Rc51);
4. Sc52 – Implementation of landscaping (Rc52);
5. Sc60 – Details of boundary treatment of all site boundaries (Rc60);
6. Sc22 – No windows at first floor level in the south and west elevations of the development; (Rc22);
7. During period of construction no power operated machinery shall be operated on the premises before 08.00 on weekdays and 08.00 on Saturdays nor after 18.00 on weekdays and 13.00 on Saturdays (nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays), unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with any agreed noise restrictions.
(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance to adjoining residents.)
8. Removal of permitted development rights (Part 1 Classes A, B, C and E)
(Rc - To protect the amenities of adjoining residents from additional built development that would normally be permitted under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995);
9. The permanent space to be reserved on the site for turning, parking shall be provided before the use commences and thereafter maintained.
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety.)
10. Visibility splays shall be provided on both sides of the access and shall be maintained free from any obstruction over a height of 600 mm within area of 2 m x 2m measured from and along respectively the highway boundary.
(Reason – In the interests of highway safety.)

Informatives

Should pile driven foundations be proposed, then before works commence, a statement of the method for construction of these foundations shall be submitted and agreed by the District Environmental Health Officer so that noise and vibration can be controlled.

During construction there shall be no bonfires or burning of waste on site except with the prior permission of the Environmental Health Officer in accordance with best practice and existing waste management legislation.

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**
P1/3 (Sustainable Design in Built Development)
P5/3 (Density)
P5/5 (Homes in Rural Areas)
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
SE5 (List of Infill Villages),
HG10 (Housing Mix and Design)

2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Overdevelopment of the site

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S/0791/06/F, S/0581/07/F and S/1210/06/F

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