

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

2nd April 2008

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

S/0260/08/O – GAMLINGAY
4 Dwellings Following Demolition of Existing House, 30 Cinques Road
for Mr and Mrs M Walker

Recommendation: Delegated Approval

Date for Determination: 8th April 2008

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee as the officer recommendation of approval without the provision of affordable housing is a departure from the Development Plan and contrary to the recommendation of Gamlingay Parish Council

Departure Application

Site and Proposal

1. No. 30 Cinques Road is a detached dwelling facing Cinques Road on a 0.1ha plot of land, measuring 27m x 36m. The level of the existing house is raised slightly above Cinques Road with a large access in the centre of the site with a poor quality hedge along the remainder of the frontage
2. To the rear of the site is a recently constructed bungalow which occupies part of the former rear garden of No 30. An access drive to serve the bungalow is currently being constructed between the existing house and 28 Cinques Road to the south east, a bungalow.
3. To the north west of the site is a terrace of 3 houses. Opposite the site are residential properties.
4. This outline application, received on 12 February 2008, proposes the demolition of the existing house and its replacement by 2 pairs of three-bedroom dwellings. The application seeks approval of the layout and access at the outline stage. Scale, appearance and landscaping are matters reserved for later approval.
5. The site plan proposes two pairs of semi-detached houses set back from the road but slightly forward of the existing house. The left hand pair is accessed from Cinques Road whilst the right hand pair is to be accessed from the driveway currently being constructed to serve the new bungalow to the rear. Two parking spaces are provided for each dwelling within a parking area which occupies the whole of the front of the site although the layout plan shows it broken up by hedgerow planting.
6. The density is 40 dph.



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7. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement. The ridge height of the proposed dwellings is given as 9.75m.

Planning History

8. The existing house has been the subject of a number of previous planning applications for alterations and extensions which are not directly relevant to the current proposal.
9. In 2006 planning consent was granted for the erection of a bungalow to the rear of 30 Cinques Road, on part of its former garden land (**Ref S/0086/06/F**).

Planning Policy

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007

10. **Policy ST/5** identifies Gamlingay as a Minor Rural Centre where residential development and redevelopment up to a maximum indicative scheme size of 30 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework.
11. **Policy DP/1** states that development will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, as appropriate to its location, scale and form. Amongst other criteria development should make efficient and effective use of land by giving priority to the use of brownfield sites and use of higher densities.
12. **Policy DP/2** states that all new development must be of a high quality of design and, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development.
13. **Policy DP/3** states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on, amongst other criteria, residential amenity, from traffic generated, and on village or countryside/landscape character.
14. **Policy DP/7** states that development and redevelopment of unallocated land within village frameworks will be permitted provided that, amongst other criteria, the retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character and development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours.
15. **Policy HG/1** states that residential developments will make best use of the site by achieving average net densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment. Higher average net densities of at least 40 dwellings per hectare should be achieved in more sustainable locations close to good range of existing or potential services and facilities and where there is, or there is potential for, good local public transport services.
16. **Policy HG/2** sets out the Council's policy in respect of housing mix and requires developments to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of housing types, sizes and affordability to meet local needs. In developments of up to 10 dwellings, market properties should provide at least 40% of homes with 1 or 2 bedrooms and approximately 25% of homes with 3 bedrooms and approximately 25% of homes with 4 or more bedrooms.

17. **Policy HG/3** requires the provision of affordable housing in developments of two or more dwellings.
18. **Policy SF10** states that all developments will be required to contribute to the provision of outdoor playing space and informal open space to meet the additional needs generated by the development in accordance with the standards contained in Policy SF/11.

Consultation

19. **Gamlingay Parish Council** recommends approval. "Due to the timing of the application, many residents have not had the chance to assess the application, although there has been concern raised about the width of Cinques Road in this location and the existing street parking causing difficulties for passing traffic. Council has been informed of high levels of need for affordable housing and, in particular starter homes (i.e. 2 bed) from its Parish results. The request is that the site is given permission for housing with a view to it being specifically suitable for affordable housing, with parking provision on site. Councillors support the density proposals due to the size of the site.
20. The **Local Highway Authority** comments that the proposed access should be as wide as the opening in the hedge, which at 5m, is the minimum that the Highway Authority will accept. The proposed parking spaces appear to be too narrow and should be at least 2.5m wide and 5m deep. The manoeuvring space to the rear of parking spaces also appears short and should be 11m as a minimum (it currently scales at only 10m). Visibility splays should be shown and a condition attached to any consent requiring the manoeuvring area to be kept free from obstruction.

Representations

21. The occupier of 28 Cinques Road, the immediate neighbour to the south east of the site objects stating that it seems ridiculous to pull down a perfectly good home and try and squeeze four houses in its place. It is understood that there will be no garages so it will be like a Tesco car park at the front.
22. It is noted that the drive to the new bungalow to the rear of No 30 is to be used as a shared drive and there is concern that the situation on the ground is not reflected on the submitted plan in that there is a piece of land next to the drive to No 28 which the applicant does not own and the road is far from straight. The garage to No 28 is missing from the plan.
23. The occupiers of 69 Cinques Road object on the grounds of the number of cars that they will have in front of their property. It is noted that the proposed houses have no garages and only a parking space for one car for each house. As most families have 2 or 3 cars this means that cars will be parked on the road where there is already a problem. Although there is a 30mph speed limit cars travel at 50 or 60mph which is very dangerous with cars parked on the road. There is also concern about heavy vehicles during the demolition and construction period, which caused problems when the bungalow at the back was built with damage to grassed areas opposite the site.
24. There would be a loss of view if this scheme were to go ahead.
25. The occupier of 75 Cinques Road fears that the site plan is misleading as no measurements are given. The bungalow recently built behind the existing house is

very close and it is felt that 4 houses on this site would be overcrowded, whereas one or two bungalows would be far more conducive to the area. In addition the number of cars would be dangerously increased considering the bend and T-junction on this busy stretch of road.

26. The occupier of 73 Cinqes Road, opposite the site, is concerned that his bedroom windows facing the proposed development will be affected by increased noise levels from the 8 car parking spaces. The letter rehearses the concerns about additional traffic and car parking outlined above. There is concern at the disruption for at least 8 months during building work and that this will affect his rest time as he works different hours of the day and night and queries what guarantees can be given in this respect. There will be a loss of view as outlined above.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

27. The key issues to be considered with this application is whether the proposed redevelopment is out of character with the street scene, whether it would harm the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, or have an undue impact on highway safety. In addition Members need to assess whether the proposal should comply with the requirement to provide affordable housing and an open space contribution, having had regard to the officer comments on these issues.
28. The principle of the demolition of the existing dwelling and its redevelopment is acceptable. In my view the submitted site plan demonstrates that two pairs of semi-detached houses can be positioned within the site so that they will, subject to the detailed design and issues in respect of the parking layout outlined below, neither look out of character in the street scene nor have an unreasonable adverse impact on the amenity of existing properties. It is my view that the ridge height of 9.75m currently proposed is excessively high and would not aid the integration of the development in the street scene. This point has been taken up with the applicant.
29. In respect of highway safety I have passed on the comments of the Local Highway Authority to the applicant and requested revised drawings. I have also requested that the comments made by the occupier of 28 Cinqes Road are investigated to make sure that the access arrangements proposed are accurate.
30. The scheme provides for two parking spaces for each dwelling, which is in excess of the 1.5 average required by the Local Development Framework although this does allow up to a maximum of 2 spaces for dwellings of 3 or more bedrooms in poorly accessible areas. It is important that these spaces are accurately dimensioned to ensure that this area can function adequately. I share the concerns expressed by local residents about the whole of the front garden area having to be utilised for car parking but to a great extent this is set if the proposed density of 40 dph is to be achieved. Whilst there are hedgerows shown dividing up this area I am not sure how practicable these will be. The establishment of a good hedge on the front boundary will be important in order to help soften the impact of the parking area.
31. There will inevitably be some disturbance during demolition and construction works however hours of working conditions can be imposed.
32. Under Local Development Framework Policy HG/3 the site is required to make a contribution to affordable housing. In this case this would normally be one unit (as there is a net gain of 3) however the applicant states that informal negotiations with officers were begun in advance of the adoption of this policy and, whilst reference to the introduction of the policy was made, delays in dealing with informal

correspondence early in 2007 resulted in follow up advice not being given until a date whereby it was too late to submit a planning application prior to adoption of the new policies. Officers met with the applicant's agent in October 2007 when it was agreed that, having regard to the timing of the informal discussions prior to the adoption of the Local development framework 2007, officers would recommend that this application should not be subject to the requirements of PolicyHG/3. The same would apply to any open space requirement under Policy SF/10 and housing mix under Policy HG/2 as these were not raised at the informal stage. Officers advised that as a result the application would have to be considered as a departure from the development plan. However, I do not consider that the proposal represents a significant departure from the Development Plan to warrant referring the application to the Secretary of State under The Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) (Departures) Directions 1999.

33. Notwithstanding the above, given the comments of Gamlingay Parish Council, I have asked the applicants agent to consider the possibility of a contribution to affordable housing, and will report any response. The officer recommendation however will be that the application is accepted without such contribution in this case.

Recommendation

34. Subject to the receipt of revised drawings that demonstrate a parking area and access that accords with the requirements of the Local Highway Authority and a reduction in the proposed height of the dwellings, I shall recommend that the application is approved subject to conditions.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework – Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- Planning Files Ref: S/0260/08/O and S/0086/06/F

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