

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

4th June 2008

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

**S/0597/08/F – HARDWICK
Erection of Garage at 7 Worcester Avenue, for Mr D Hinson**

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 22nd May 2008

Notes:

Members will visit the site on the morning of the Committee meeting.

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the local member considers that a committee site visit would be appropriate.

Site and Proposal

1. Worcester Avenue is a small residential cul-de-sac, located within the village framework of Hardwick. The area is characterised by two storey semi-detached dwellings set behind open plan frontages.
2. The application site forms part of a pair of semi-detached dwellings that are located to the south west of a reservoir/balancing pond. The parcel of land affected by the proposed development is an area of open land located in front of the main dwelling and adjacent to its existing driveway. A hardstanding has previously been set into an area that was formerly entirely grassed that stretches across the southern edge of the reservoir to a vehicular turning head that allows for manoeuvring within the cul-de-sac. A single tree is located centrally within this parcel of land.
3. A close boarded fence and hedgerow separate this parcel of land from the adjoining single storey residential dwelling at 215 St Neots Road and the reservoir site.
4. This full application, received on 27th March 2008 proposes the erection of a single garage, measuring 4.4m wide, 5.3m deep and with a ridge height of approximately 3.9m on an area of open land in front of the main dwelling. It would be constructed in Tudor facing bricks and concrete grey tiles to match the house.

Planning History

5. The most relevant planning history for the site is as follows:
6. **S/0056/08/F** – application for the erection of a garage 5.1m wide in the same location as that currently proposed. The application was refused on the grounds that the proposal would significantly reduce the openness of the estate and cause harm to the street scene, contrary to Policies DP/2 and DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007 (LDF) and Policy P1/3 of the Structure Plan 2003.

7. **S/1523/05/F** – application for the erection of an revised scheme of extension to the main dwelling. This was approved with a condition precluding parking on the amenity area located in front of the dwelling.
8. **S/0794/05/F** – application for an extension to the main dwelling. The application was refused on the grounds of overbearing impact upon the neighbouring dwelling at 215 St Neots Road and unacceptable visual impact on the street scene in Worcester Avenue.

Planning Policy

9. **Policy P1/3** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ('the County Structure Plan') requires a high standard of design and sustainability for all new development and which provides a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment.
10. **Policy DP/2** of the LDF states that all new development must be of high quality design and, as appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, should (inter alia): preserve or enhance the character of the local area; be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area; and include high quality landscaping compatible with the scale and character of the development and its surroundings.
11. **Policy DP/3** of the LDF states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact: On residential amenity; From traffic generated; On village character; On the countryside, and landscape character; From undue environmental disturbance such as noise, lighting, vibration, odour, noxious emissions or dust; On ecological, wildlife and archaeological interests; and On flooding and flood risk.

Consultation

12. **Hardwick Parish Council** – makes no recommendation and raises no comments.

Representations

13. At the time of preparing this report representations have been received from the neighbouring owner/occupiers at 215 and from the Local Member. The main comments/concerns raised by the neighbour are as follows:
 - (a) Development likely to compromise foundations of existing fence.
 - (b) Roof overhangs into neighbouring land – not acceptable.
 - (c) Development likely to compromise foundations of neighbouring dwelling – Party Wall Act restrictions apply.
 - (d) Already three parking spaces serving dwelling, used in part by taxi business. Likely to lead to intensification of such use changing character of estate further.
 - (e) Garage would have an adverse impact on existing tree.
14. The Local Member has raised the following comments:
 - (a) The applicant has scaled down his original plan to minimize the impact on the street scene.
 - (b) Requires garage to keep his motorbike securely.

- (c) Impact of the garage would be minimal, masked by mature tree.
- (d) No affect on anyone's light.
- (e) Although the Parish Council had misgivings about the original plan it has no objections to the current proposal.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

15. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- (a) Impact upon Residential amenity;
- (b) Impact upon Character and Appearance of the Street Scene

Impact on Residential Amenity

16. The only dwellings likely to be physically affected by the proposed garage are the existing dwelling that the garage would serve and the adjoining residential dwelling at 215 St Neots Road given that there are no other dwellings immediately adjoining the northern boundary on this part of the residential cul-de-sac.
17. By virtue of the height of the proposed garage, which measures 2.4m to eaves level, only approximately 0.6m of the structure would be visible above the existing fence line. As such, given the modest nature of the increase in height above the existing fence line, the scheme is unlikely to result in a serious loss of light or overbearing impact upon the adjoining dwelling at 215 St Neots Road.
18. I note the various comments made by the neighbour. However, issues of gutter overhang, which appears minimal on the plans, Party Wall obligations, and impact upon foundations could not be considered to be material planning issues. Such matters would need to be satisfied, however, under the relevant legislation should the development obtain planning permission. Additionally, the concerns raised with regard to the taxi business are not material to this application. Whilst a taxi business may be operating from this location at present, the application makes no reference to this and, given that the scheme is for a garage to be accessed over the existing driveway, it could not be considered that the development exclusively facilitates such activity such as to warrant its inclusion as part of the development that is being applied for. The impact of a taxi business operating from the site would need to be considered on its own merits, should it be considered to constitute development requiring planning permission.

Impact upon Character and Appearance of the Street Scene

19. The open area that the garage is proposed to be located upon has previously been considered as making a positive contribution to the character of the area, both in the determination of the refused scheme for an alternative garage and at the time of approving an extension to the main dwelling, where a condition of consent sought to prevent parking on the land within which the garage is now proposed.
20. The proposed scheme would effectively impose a built form in this location, where there is none at present, stretching development forwards, serving to reduce the openness and subsequent amount of visual amenity space in the street scene. While the proposed garage has been revised from the earlier scheme to reduce its width and subsequent projection into the open space by 0.7m, the height of the structure remains the same. As such, given the location of the garage forward of the existing dwellings, it is considered that the development continues to result in a detrimental impact upon the street scene.

Recommendation

21. Refusal

Reasons for Recommendation

1. The application site is set on the corner of a residential cul-de-sac and would be located adjacent to an existing balancing pond. The land provides an open aspect in an area with a number of open frontages and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area. The addition of a garage on a section of this land would create a large bulk of development extending onto this land. This would significantly reduce its openness and would therefore be detrimental to the street scene of Worcester Avenue.
2. The application would therefore be contrary to Policy DP/2 of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (LDFDCP) 2007 which states all new development must be of high quality and should preserve or enhance the character of the local area, Policy DP/3 of the LDFDCP 2007 which states planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on village character, and Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 which states a high standard of design for all new development will be required which provides a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment.

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)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning Files Ref: S/0597/08/F, S/0056/08/F, S/1523/05/F, and S/0794/05/F
- Documents referred to in the report including appendices on the website only and reports to previous meetings

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