

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 1st September 2004
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

**S/1430/04/F - Haslingfield
Raising of Roof Height and Addition of Dormer, 2 The Hemlocks
for Mr and Mrs McKenzie**

Recommendation: Approval

Members will visit this site on Tuesday 31st August 2004

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. No 2 The Hemlocks, Haslingfield is a two-storey house with a shallow pitched roof. To the north and west the site abuts the rear gardens of houses in High Street and a bungalow in The Hemlocks. There is existing planting on the west boundary. To the south and east the site abuts The Hemlocks with other similar houses on the opposite side of the road.
2. This application, registered on 9th July 2004, proposes the raising of the height of the existing dwelling by 1.1 metres (from 7.4 to 8.5 metres high) to create two additional bedrooms and shower room/w.c. at second floor level. The operation would involve replacing the existing roof. There would be three rooflights in the front elevation facing The Hemlocks and one rooflight and flat roofed dormer window in the rear elevation which faces the rear of No28 High Street. The application proposes a new bedroom window in the south facing gable end but there will be no new openings in the north facing gable end.

Planning History

2. In June this year a planning application (**Ref: S/0580/04/F**) for a similar development was refused under delegated powers on the grounds that a proposed second floor bedroom window in the north elevation would result in an unreasonable loss of amenity to occupiers of houses to the north by reason of overlooking.

Planning Policy

3. **Policy HG12** of the of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 ("The Local Plan") states that the extension and alteration of dwellings will not be permitted where the design and use of materials would not be in keeping with local characteristics; the proposal would harm seriously the amenities of neighbours through undue loss of privacy, being unduly overbearing in terms of its mass, or would adversely affect surrounding properties by virtue of its design, layout, location or materials; there would be an unacceptable loss of off-street parking or garden space within the curtilage; there would be an unacceptable visual impact upon the street scene; boundary treatment would provide an unacceptable standard of privacy and visual amenity.

4. **Policy P7/6** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (“The County Structure Plan”) states that Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.
5. **Policy EN30** of the Local Plan 2004 seeks to ensure that new development preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

Consultation

6. **Haslingfield Parish Council** recommends refusal. “The Council is very unhappy at this proposal, which is within the conservation area. The increase in height to the building would be inappropriately dominating, bearing in mind the size of the neighbouring cottages, and out of character within the conservation area. We think that this matter is important enough for a site visit and for the decision to be taken by the planning committee.”
7. The **Conservation Manager** comments that “the existing dwelling would appear to date from the 1970’s and is of no significant architectural merit. The proposals will result in a 40-degree pitch to the roof, more in keeping with the traditional roof pitches of the locality, though it will now be at variants to the similar roofs on adjacent properties in The Hemlocks.
8. The lead roof dormer has been appropriately detailed.
9. The additional roof height will not impact on any of the nearby listed buildings, and will not significantly affect the setting of the Conservation Area, though it will slightly increase the overshadowing of the existing Victorian building that is immediately adjacent to this house. From observations made during the course of my site visit, it is apparent that the Conservation Area of Haslingfield is predominantly made up of 1½ and 2 storied properties. I did not notice any other 2-storey dwellings with rooms within their roofs.
10. Recommendation:
No objection, but it should not be taken as a general precedent for 2½ storey dwellings within the Haslingfield Conservation Area. Each must be considered on its merits.”

Representations

11. The occupier of No28 High Street objects to the application on the grounds that the proposed raising of the roof would be totally out of character with the surrounding buildings and would by itself dominate the skyline. As a result the proposal would detract from the conservation nature and attractiveness of the courtyard of No28, an old public house, containing the old Methodist Church and barn.
12. The proposed installation of a dormer window would create a most unattractive focal point on the boundary of the courtyard high above normal second floor window height further increasing the domination of the raised roof on the Conservation Area and severely impacting on the amenity of No28 High Street.
13. Both the proposed velux window and the dormer window on the rear of building would totally overlook the rear garden and back windows of No28. There would be little to prevent the window sizes being increased, the proposed glazing being replaced with clear glass or additional windows being added, once the application has been

approved. Even if these could be prevented, the result would still be a bank of three storey high windows overlooking the courtyard of No28.

14. If approved the proposal would set a precedent for 3-storey conversions proposals in the District which would change the whole character of villages and further reduce the availability of lower priced housing.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

15. The key issues to be considered with this application are the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the impact on the amenity of the occupiers of adjoining dwellings.
16. The Conservation Manager is of the view that the additional roof height will not impact on any of the nearby listed buildings, and will not significantly affect the setting of the Conservation Area, though it will slightly increase the overshadowing of the existing Victorian building that is immediately adjacent to this house. He confirms however that although no objection is raised to this proposal it should not be taken as a general precedent for 2½ storey dwellings within the Haslingfield Conservation Area.
17. The previous application was refused on the grounds that a bedroom window proposed at second floor level in the north elevation would overlook the rear gardens of houses in High Street resulting in an unreasonable loss of privacy. That window has been omitted from the current scheme with the bedroom in the north end being lit by a rooflight in both the front and rear elevations.
18. The existing dwelling has a shallow rear garden and is within 5.5 metres of the boundary with No28 High Street. With regard to the impact of the proposal on No28 High Street, although the raising of the roof height by 1.1 metres will result in some loss of light to the rear garden of that property, I do not consider that it will be significant. The increase in height to 8.5 metres will result in the building being more prominent when viewed from the rear of No28 however I do not consider that the resultant building would be unduly overbearing as to warrant refusing the application.
19. The rooflight in the rear elevation is shown as being positioned 1.7 metres above floor level which will prevent overlooking of the rear garden of No28 High Street. A condition can be attached to any consent to ensure that this is the case. Although the proposed dormer window will be viewed from the rear garden of No28 High Street I am of the view that it will not have an unreasonable visual impact on that property. The dormer window will serve a shower room and w.c. area and a condition can be imposed requiring the window to be obscure glazed and non-opening to prevent overlooking. A further condition can be imposed prohibiting any further openings.
20. Given the concerns expressed by the occupier of No28 High Street I will try to ensure that Members are able to view the site from that property during the site visit. It is my view however that subject to the imposition of the conditions outlined in the preceding paragraph that the proposal will not have an unreasonable adverse impact on the amenity of adjacent properties.

Recommendations

21. That the application be approved subject to the following conditions
 1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (RC A);
 2. SC5a – Details of materials for external walls and roofs (RC5aii);

3. SC22 – No Further Windows – any elevation. (RC22);
4. The proposed rooflight in the west elevation shall be positioned so that the sill is a minimum of 1.7 metres above finished floor level. (Reason – To prevent overlooking of adjacent properties.)
5. The proposed dormer window in the west elevation shall be non-opening and fitted and maintained with obscure glazing. (Reason – To prevent overlooking of adjacent properties.)

Reasons for Approval

1. The approved development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003:**
P7/6 (Historic Built Environment);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004:**
HG12 (Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings within Frameworks),
EN30 (Development in Conservation Areas)
2. The proposal conditionally approved is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Residential amenity including overlooking issues
 - Visual impact on the locality and Conservation Area
3. All other material planning considerations have been taken into account. None is of such significance as to outweigh the reason for the decision to approve the planning application.

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

Planning Application File Ref S/1430/04/F and S/0580/04/F
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004

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