

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

3 November 2010

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services)/
Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

S/1415/10 - SHEPRETH

Erection of Two Dwellings Following Demolition of Existing Bungalow At 21 Meldreth Road for Boswell Izzard

Recommendation: Delegated Approval/Refusal

Date for Determination: 14 October 2010

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because the recommendation of the Parish Council differs to that of the case officer on material planning grounds.

Site and Proposal

1. The site is located within the designated Shepreth village framework and upon submission of the application, there was a bungalow on site. This has since been removed. To the southwest of the site is an existing bungalow of 21a Meldreth Road, whilst to the northeast is an area of grassland, beyond which are further dwellings. To the south of the site is the dwelling and garden of 51 Blenheim Close, located behind a screen of leylandii hedging. There is a hedge along the frontage of the site, and the land on the opposite side of Meldreth Road is outside of the designated village framework.
2. The application, validated on 19 August 2010, seeks the replacement of the original bungalow with two dwellings, each with first floor accommodation. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.

Planning History

3. Application **S/0789/10/F** was withdrawn for the erection of two dwellings following the demolition of the existing bungalow on the site dated 29 July 2010.

Planning Policy

4. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy: ST/7 Infill Villages**
5. **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (LDF DCP) 2007: DP/1 Sustainable Development, DP/2 Design of New Development, DP/3 Development Criteria, DP/4 Infrastructure and New Development, DP/7 Development Frameworks, HG/1 Housing Density, HG/2 Housing Mix, SF/10 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments, SF/11 Open Space Standards, NE/6 Biodiversity, NE/15 Noise Pollution & TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards.**
6. **Open Space in New Developments SPD, Trees and Development Sites SPD & District Design Guide SPD.**

7. **Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions:** Advises that conditions should be necessary, relevant to planning, relevant to the development permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.
8. **Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations:** Advises that planning obligations must be relevant to planning, necessary, directly related to the proposed development, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and reasonable in all other respect.

Consultation

9. **Shepreth Parish Council** recommends refusal of the application on grounds of the dwellings being too large for the plot, considerably higher than the neighbouring properties and not sympathetic to the street scene; the loss of the frontage hedge; overlooking towards 51 Blenheim Close; and insufficient off-street parking.
10. The **Local Highways Authority** originally recommended refusal of the application on grounds of restricted vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays that would be detrimental to highway safety. Following further negotiations, the Local Highways Authority has accepted that reduced splays are acceptable provided they can be demonstrated on plan form.
11. The **Council's Landscape Officer** requests conditions regarding landscaping and boundary treatment.
12. The **Council's Trees Officer** requests a condition regarding foundation detail to protect existing planting on the site.

Representations

13. No further representations have been received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

14. The key considerations regarding the application are the principle of development, the impact upon the street scene, the impact upon the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties, highways safety and parking, the loss of the frontage hedge, and open space provision.

The Principle of Development

15. Shepreth is classified as an Infill Village in the LDF Core Strategy, where residential development and redevelopment within village frameworks will be restricted to not more than two dwellings given four different criteria. Criteria b allows such redevelopment of an existing residential curtilage. There is in-principle support for the development, subject to site specific issues.
16. Policy HG/1 of the LDF DCP 2007 seeks residential developments to make best use of sites by achieving average net densities of at least 30 dwellings per hectare. The site has an area of approximately 0.056 hectares. The existing dwelling on the site would represent development at 18 dwellings per hectare. The redevelopment to allow two dwellings increases the density of development on site to 36 dwellings per hectare, and would represent a more efficient use of the land. Policy HG/2 of the LDF DCP 2007 seeks a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of sizes to meet local needs. The proposal would provide a two-bed unit and a four-bed unit, which

would meet the requirements of the policy. There is no requirement for affordable housing as part of the scheme as there is a net gain of only one dwelling.

The Impact Upon the Street Scene

17. No. 21 Meldreth Road was a bungalow located to the western side of the site, allowing a small side garden to the east. It was located close to 21a, whilst to the east remains an area of grassland that creates a further open space in the street scene. The proposed dwellings would create a significant increase in bulk across the frontage of the plot. They would each be located just 0.7m from their respective boundary, with a 1.8m gap between the two. This is not uncommon in the locality. Nos. 17a and 17b extend across the majority of their plot, as do nos. 13 and 15.
18. There are a variety of dwelling types along Meldreth Road, with no one distinct character of dwelling. The proposed dwellings have a low eaves height, which would reduce their bulk when viewed from Meldreth Road, with the tall roof sloping away, albeit steeply, from the road. The dwellings would be taller than the bungalow at 21a Meldreth Road. This dwelling is set slightly of the boundary, giving a break between the dwellings. The proposal would be of a similar height to 17a and 17b Meldreth Road. There are examples of frontage rooflights in the locality. There is also a large gravelled parking area to the frontage of 17a and 17b.
19. Whilst the proposal would lead to taller dwellings, and an increase in footprint across the site, it is not considered that the dwellings would significantly harm the setting of the street scene. The issue regarding the frontage hedge is discussed below.

The Impact Upon the Amenity of Occupiers of Neighbouring Properties

20. Plot 2 would be located on a similar building line to 21a Meldreth Road, although the rear two-storey element would extend further into the plot. This dwelling has three facing ground floor windows facing the site. Of these, one is obscure glazed serving a bathroom, one serves a study and one is a secondary window to the lounge. The boundary between the plots is currently a low fence with trellis, giving good views into the site from these windows. The proposal shows a 1.5m fence to be constructed along the boundary, although this is likely to be further considered through a boundary detail condition. Whilst the development would be visible from these three windows, given the orientation no loss of light would result. Given the previous location of 21 Meldreth Road on the plot, I do not consider that any serious increase in overbearing towards 21a Meldreth Road would result. A condition can ensure no windows are added to the first floor facing elevation of plot 2.
21. The rear boundary of the site is a row of tall leylandii hedging within the application site, beyond which is the side elevation of 51 Blenheim Close. Should the hedge be removed, the dwellings would be visible from the rear garden of this property. It is not considered that any serious harm would result from this. However, the bathroom window of plot 2 would allow views straight into the rear garden. This window is now shown to serve a bathroom and being fixed and obscure glazed. This is considered essential to prevent future overlooking towards 51 Blenheim Close.
22. The area of land to the east is currently grassed approximately 9m in width. This site does have a planning history for a dwelling, but the last extant application expired in 2009. Beyond this are 17a and 17b, which has a blank facing elevation. The proposal shows three rooflights in the side elevation at first floor level at plot 1. Clarification is sought as to whether these would be set at high level to prevent overlooking towards the rear garden of 17b Meldreth Road. Members will be updated on this matter.

23. Subject to the potential overlooking towards the rear garden of 17b Meldreth Road, it is considered that no loss of amenity would occur subject to a number of restrictive conditions.

Highway Safety and Parking

24. The Local Highways Authority originally recommended refusal of the scheme, as the dwellings would be served by a shared access and no vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays have been submitted. The Local Highways Authority have been sent speed data direct from the applicant, and it is considered that Manual for Streets guidance could be considered for the site. This would allow a reduced visibility splay of 2.4m by 43m. A plan has been submitted showing this, although it is overly complicated, and therefore a further plan has been requested. Members will be updated on the further negotiations regarding visibility.
25. There are local concerns regarding the number of parking spaces on the site. Each unit has two designated spaces. The Council's maximum parking standards seeks 1.5 dwellings per unit, with space for visitors. The parking provided on the site therefore meets these standards and is considered acceptable for the scale of the development.

The Loss of the Frontage Hedge

26. The site has a frontage of approximately 21m along Meldreth Road. Prior to the demolition of the existing dwelling, a hedge ran across the frontage, broken by the single vehicle and pedestrian accesses. The hedge continues along the frontage of 21a Meldreth Road. The introduction of a shared access requires a wider access than usual. The proposed plan shows the access measuring 10m in width. This is excessive and requires the loss of a significant amount of the hedge, with little space to plant a suitable replacement. Further negotiations will take place to attempt to allow space for more planting across the frontage, in order to retain the green frontage. Members will be updated on this matter.
27. The Trees Officer has no objections to the scheme subject to a standard condition regarding submission of foundation details. No vegetation on the site is protected in its own right, but it does add to the green nature of the area. Any approval should include such a condition.

Open Space Provision

28. The applicant notes in the Design and Access Statement his willingness to contribute towards open space infrastructure and community facilities infrastructure. This follows previous correspondence from application S/0789/10/F. Given the change to the mix of dwellings, the required contributions are less than previously noted. The open space contribution will be £3,399.42, whilst the community infrastructure contribution totals £573.73, with both to be index-linked. The previous correspondence also mentioned the need for provision of waste receptacles and the Section 106 monitoring fee.

Recommendation

29. Delegated approval/refusal subject to confirmation from the Local Highways Authority regarding the safety of the shared access, and confirmation that the bedroom rooflights to plot 1 would not cause overlooking to 17b Meldreth Road. If the

application were approved, conditions would be required regarding the plans to be approved, open space provision, community facilities provision, the section 106 monitoring fee, provision of waste receptacles, restrictions on the hours of construction, prevention of windows to the rear elevations, obscure glazing to the relevant windows, foundation details, landscaping and boundary treatments.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy
- Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007
- Open Space in New Developments SPD, Trees and Development Sites SPD & District Design Guide SPD
- Circular 11/95 – The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions.
- Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations
- Planning Files ref: S/1415/10 and S/0789/10/F

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