

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

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### **S/2161/10 - SHEPRETH Erection of two dwellings - 21 Meldreth Road, Shepreth for Boswell Izzard**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 31st January 2011**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site is located within the designated Shepreth village framework. There was previously a bungalow on the site, although this has recently been removed. To the southwest of the site is an existing bungalow of 21a Meldreth Road, whilst to the northeast is a two-storey property. 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 a portion of 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 2nd December 2010, seeks the erection of two dwellings, each with first floor accommodation. The application has been amended dated 10th January 2011. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement.

#### **Planning History**

3. Members will be aware that a previous scheme for the erection of two dwellings following the demolition of the existing bungalow (S/1415/10) was refused at Planning Committee on 3rd November 2010 against officer recommendation. Members visited the site on this day. The reasons for refusal were the impact upon the character of the area, overbearing impact from 21a Meldreth Road, loss of the frontage hedge, and failure to provide adequate vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays.
4. Application **S/0789/10/F** was withdrawn for the erection of two dwellings following the demolition of the existing bungalow on the site dated 29th July 2010.

#### **Planning Policy**

5. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, ST/7 Infill Villages.**

6. **Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (LDF DCP) 2007:**  
**DP/1** Sustainable Development, **DP2** 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/1** Energy Efficiency, **NE/6** Biodiversity, **NE/15** Noise Pollution & **TR/2** Car and Cycle Parking Standards.
7. **Open Space in New Developments SPD 2009, Trees and Development Sites SPD 2009 & District Design Guide SPD 2010.**
8. **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.
9. **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**

10. **Shepreth Parish Council** recommends refusal on grounds of the dwellings being too tall and therefore appearing visually cramped and dominating and therefore out of character, and the loss of the frontage hedge and its impact upon the local area. Members will be updated on any further comments regarding the amended plans.
11. **Acting Environmental Health Manager** has concerns regarding noise and therefore requests planning conditions relating to time of use of power operated machinery and pile foundations. An informative regarding bonfires and the burning of waste is also recommended.
12. The Council's **Trees Officer** notes no objections to the proposals.
13. The **Local Highways Authority** requests a number of conditions on the site. These relate to retention of pedestrian and vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays, drainage of the access, and the materials to be used for the access. An informative regarding works to the public highway is also proposed.
14. Members will be updated on any comments from the Landscape Officer.

### **Representations**

15. The occupiers of **17a Meldreth Road** note that works should be between 08.00 and 17.30 on weekdays only. Boundary trees should not cause root damage to the existing dwelling, and any hedge should be low to avoid shadowing. The height of the dwellings should match 17 Meldreth Road to maintain the visual appeal of the street.

16. Members will be updated on any comments in relation to the amended plans.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

17. 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, highway safety and parking, the loss of the frontage hedge, and open space provision.

#### *The Principle of Development*

18. Shepreth is classified as an Infill Village in LDF Core Strategy, where residential development and redevelopment within village frameworks will be restricted to not more than two dwellings given four different criteria. Criterion b allows such redevelopment of an existing residential curtilage. There is in-principle support for the development, subject to site specific issues.

19. 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 0.083 hectares. The redevelopment to allow two dwellings would provide a density of 24 dwellings per hectare. This is below that of the policy. However, the previous application was refused on grounds of a cramped form of development, and the increase in site area would be beneficial to allow further spacing. The reduced density is considered acceptable in this instance.

20. 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.

#### *Impact upon the Street Scene*

21. 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 an increase in bulk across the frontage of the plot. The spacings between the dwellings have now been increased. Plot 1 is between 1 and 1.5m from the side boundary, there is a gap of 2m between the plots, and plot 2 is now between 1.9 and 2.3m from the opposite side boundary. The dwellings have been designed to have gables fronting the street. The gap between the two units would appear larger than on plan form given this design. The increase in the site area has allowed plot 1 to be a larger dwelling whilst allowing such an increase in space. The amended plan shows a larger hipped element to further reduce its bulk.

22. 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 off the boundary, giving a further break between the dwellings. The proposal

would be slightly taller than 17a and 17b Meldreth Road, but only by 0.5m. There are examples of frontage rooflights in the locality. There is also a large gravelled parking area to the frontage of 17a and 17b.

23. 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*

24. 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 is set further away from 21a than the previously refused scheme. 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. Conditions can ensure the facing rooflights are high level as shown and that no further windows are added to the first floor facing elevation of plot 2, and that a suitable boundary treatment is provided.
25. The rear boundary of the site was previously a row of tall leylandii hedging within the application site, which has recently been removed. Beyond the rear boundary is the side elevation of 51 Blenheim Close. Given the hedge removal, the dwellings would be visible from the rear garden of this property. It is not considered that any serious harm would result from this. A condition would be required to prevent windows in the rear elevation of plot 2, which would overlook the rear garden of 51 Blenheim Close.
26. Plot 1 would be located forward of the building line of 17b Meldreth Road. This property has a ground floor window in its facing elevation. This would allow some views of the property but would not be located opposite the gable. There is a door and window in the front elevation that would view the forward aspect. However, no harm would again result to the outlook from these windows.
27. The increase in site area would bring plot 1 closer to 26 Blenheim Close. The development would be visible from the windows of this dwelling, but given the orientation and distance, no harm would be caused to its occupants. A condition preventing windows in the rear elevation of plot 1 would however be required.

*Highway Safety and Parking*

28. The comments from the Local Highways Authority are noted. Highway safety was a previous reason for refusal. By including the site area whilst retaining a central access, the required visibility splays can be achieved on site. A further plan showing the proposed turning areas will be provided by the applicant.

### *Loss of the Frontage Hedge*

29. The site area has increased to 31m along Meldreth Road. The new site area has no front boundary and is currently behind temporary fencing. The proposed hedge, subject to a reason for refusal of the previous application, remains although it is broken by pedestrian and vehicle accesses. To provide the relevant vehicle-to-vehicle visibility splays, this hedge would need to be removed. Whilst this is unfortunate, the hedge is not protected in its own right and could be removed at any time. The extra land in the application provides the potential for a longer hedge to be provided in the future, to the benefit of the street scene. The access width has also been significantly reduced to 4m. It is appreciated that any replacement hedge will require time to mature. However the removal of the hedge is considered acceptable in this instance, provided a landscaping condition is added. The comments from the Trees Officer are noted.

### *Open Space Provision*

30. The applicant has confirmed, in their letter dated 10th January 2011, their commitment to contribute towards open space provisions, community facility provisions, waste receptacle provision and Section 106 monitoring. A condition can ensure this is sought, with an informative providing details of the figures.

### **Decision/Recommendation**

31. Delegated approval, subject to receipt of a plan showing the shared turning areas for each dwelling, and any comments received in relation to the amended plans. If the application were approved, conditions would be required regarding the plans to be approved, open space provision, external materials to be used, 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 at first floor level, a minimum cill height for the high level rooflights where necessary, landscaping and boundary treatments, and highway conditions relating to retention of visibility splays drainage of the access, and the materials to be used for the access. An informative regarding works to the public highway is also proposed.

**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 File ref: S/2161/10, S/1415/10 and S/0789/10/F.**

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