

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

2nd March 2011

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

S/2155/10 - GIRTON

Erection of Building to Provide Five Flats Following Demolition of Existing Dwelling - 11, Mayfield Road, Girton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB3 0PH for Mr David Hargrave, Lon-ist

Recommendation: Approve Conditionally

Date for Determination: 31st January 2011

Notes:

This application has been reported to the Planning Committee as Officer recommendation is contrary to that of the Parish Council.

Members will visit the site on the 2nd March 2011.

Site and Proposal

1. The application site comprises a large residential plot of approximately 0.11ha which at present is occupied by a single dwelling – No.11 Mayfield Road - an unoccupied detached dwelling with a significant expanse of rear garden area, most of which is severely overgrown. There are also several large mature trees within the site, most of which are located within the rear garden.
2. No.11 Mayfield Road is sited at the end of the adopted extent of Mayfield Road and is a detached two-storey dwelling redolent of typical 1920s-1930s house design. Externally the dwelling is characterised by strong brickwork, concrete roof tiles and a hipped roof profile. Vehicular access into the site is afforded from Mayfield Road.
3. Mayfield Road is a narrow linear street that runs south to north with largely single dwelling plots running back from the highway to both the east and west. At the north end of Mayfield Road the highway stops and becomes a private access serving a limited number of detached dwellings. House age, design, mass and scale vary along the length of Mayfield Road but the general character is one of harmonious variety.
4. The full planning application, submitted on 1st December 2010, proposes the erection of a two and a half storey building forming five internal flats of a mix of one and two bedroom. The application is a resubmission of application ref. S/0468/08/F with an amended access arrangement. The design of the proposed building does not differ between the previous approval and the current application. Application S/0468/08/F is an extant application and could be implemented today, however Officers are led to believe that part of the proposed site access is upon third party land and third party permission is not believed to be forthcoming in this instance.

5. The plans have been amended to address concerns identified by both officers and local residents that the access details shown were misleading – see plans refs 2462-04-Rev A and 2462-05-Rev A date stamped 26th January 2010.

Planning History

6. **S/0377/06/F** – For side and rear extensions to no.11 was approved.
7. **S/1246/07/F** – For the Erection of Four Flats of a classical architectural form and proposing a similar access layout to the current proposals was refused for a number of reasons including; design, lack of bin & cycle storage, loss of privacy, failure to provide landscaping details and lack of pedestrian and vehicle visibility splays with a potential to cause an impact upon highway safety.
8. **S/1753/07/F** – For the Erection of Four Flats of the same visual appearance and access arrangements as the scheme approved under S/1246/07/F was refused on the grounds of design, lack of landscaping proposals, insufficient information regarding car parking, manoeuvring and visibility and the failure to provide a sufficient level of affordable housing provision.
9. **S/0468/08/F** – For the Erection of Five Flats was conditionally approved. The scheme proposed a development of identical architectural design to that under consideration today, however the access layout comprised a traditional carriageway design and small turning feature incorporating a tree.

Planning Policy

10. **National Planning Policy**

Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing

11. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007**

ST/6 – Group Villages

12. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007:**

DP/1 - Sustainable Development

DP/2 - Design of New Development

DP/3 - Development Criteria

DP/4 - Infrastructure and New Developments

DP/7 - Development Frameworks

HG/1 - Housing Density

HG/2 - Housing Mix

HG/3 - Affordable Housing

SF/10 - Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments

SF/11 - Open Space Standards

NE/1 – Energy Efficiency

NE/2 - Renewable Energy

NE/6 - Biodiversity
TR/1 - Planning for more Sustainable Travel
TR/2 - Car and Cycle Parking Standards

13. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):**

Design Guide SPD – Adopted March 2010
Trees and Development Sites SPD – Adopted March 2010
Open Space in New Development SPD – Adopted January 2009

Consultations

14. **Girton Parish Council** – Recommends refusal stating;

'The committee considered this matter carefully taking note that there had been a number of attempts to develop this property. Five flats in this location would undoubtedly cause parking and other traffic problems and the committee felt that this was not acceptable. The committee had received a number of letters from residents who were also against this development. Therefore the Parish Council recommends that the application be refused on traffic grounds.'

Following amendment to the application the Parish Council maintains its objection to the proposals.

15. **Local Highways Authority** - Raises no objection to the proposals recommending standard conditions regarding bound material for the driveway, drainage and retention of the manoeuvring area free of obstruction.

16. **Tree Officer** – Recommends that a landscaping scheme be conditioned, commenting;

'Previous comments on this application to achieve a tree within the parking turning area design to the front were driven by comments from residents on the harshness of the proposals considering the existing front hedge they were looking onto.'

'Given that the fence has now been erected where the hedge used to be this has clearly changed that character of the area and has removed the vegetation that softened the site, which the Council were looking to replace with a tree. For this reason I can see no argument now for trying to achieve the previous design incorporating a tree.'

17. **Landscape Design Officer** – Recommends that a landscaping scheme be conditioned.

18. **Environmental Health Officer** – Raises no objections to the proposals. Recommends that a standard condition limiting the use of power-operated machinery on site be applied.

19. **Sustrans** – 'Cycle parking is commendably close to the building but we doubt it has sufficient width at each end satisfactorily to clear the building and parked cars as bikes are parked or removed. It should be sheltered and appears not to be'

20. **Housing Development Manager** – Agrees to a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision of affordable housing in this instance.
21. **Pocock and Shaw (independent valuation)** – ‘on the question of the commuted sum I feel that this should now be reduced to £40,000. Since my previous report, property values fell substantially during the remaining 9 months of 2008 with something of a recovery during 2009 which continued until the early part of 2010 although there was a further fall in the latter half of last year. The net result is that prices are now roughly the same as they were when I produced the last report. In the interim period, however, there seems to have been an increase in building costs which will impact on the developers profit as will the fact that he has had to finance the purchase of the land for almost 3 more years’.

Representations

22. Letters of representation have been received from the occupants of nos; 1, 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14 & 15 Mayfield Road & Nos; 97, 99A, 101 & 103A Cambridge Road objecting to the proposals for the following reasons:
- a) The proposed design and nature of 5 flats is out of context with the existing detached properties.
 - b) Increase in traffic would cause increased problems for delivery and service vehicles using Mayfield Road due to additional on street parking.
 - c) Increased danger to pedestrians using Mayfield Road.
 - d) Failure to overcome the reasons for refusal of applications S/1246/07/F & S/1753/07/F in terms of scale and mass of the building.
 - e) Noise and disturbance to residents from traffic movements.
 - f) Overbearing and overshadowing upon neighbouring dwellings.
 - g) The national policy context of the recent amendments to PPS 3.
 - h) Failure to provide pedestrian visibility splays and an inadequate access width.
 - i) Failure to provide short term parking for service and visitor vehicles will force traffic to park on Mayfield Road.
 - j) Insufficient bin storage provision.
 - k) Constrained access width not suitable for a scheme of 5 flats.
 - l) Smell arising from additional refuse storage.
 - m) Loss of the turning feature incorporated into application S/0468/08/F makes this proposal less appealing.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

23. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The principle of the development having regard to the change in national planning policy PPS 3;
 - The impact of the proposals upon the character and appearance of the area;
 - The impact upon residential amenity;
 - The revised access and parking arrangements and the impact upon highway safety.

The Principle of the Development Having Regard to the Change in National Planning Policy PPS 3

24. As outlined above the current application is a resubmission of planning application reference S/0468/08/F that was approved by the Planning Committee on the 1st July 2008. Since this time the change in national administration has resulted in a revision to Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS 3) under which the previous application was, in part, determined.
25. The key changes to PPS 3 are the deletion of a national indicative minimum housing density of 30dph from para 47 of this document and a change in the definition of previously developed land i.e. brownfield sites, to exclude private residential gardens (Annexe B of PPS 3). It should be noted that PPS 3 still strongly promotes the efficient use of land as a key consideration for any planning application (para 45). At the same time policy HG/1 of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 remains the statutorily adopted policy for the district and requires that “Residential developments will make best use of land by achieving average net densities of at least 30dph unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require different treatment. Higher net densities of at least 40dph should be achieved in more sustainable locations”.
26. The cumulative effect of the recent change to national policy and adopted local policy means that planning decisions should use 30dph as the required density unless other material considerations indicate that a different density is more appropriate, having regard to the best use of land. Furthermore the site in question is now classified as a brownfield site rather than greenfield as previously. The implication of this change in classification applies to policy ST/6 of the Core Strategy which classes Girton as a ‘Group Village’ and therefore capable in principle of accommodating individual schemes of residential development of up to a maximum indicative size of 8 units as opposed to a maximum indicative number of 15 units for any brownfield site within the village.
27. The proposed scheme seeks the erection of 5 residential units, which equate to a density of approximately 47dph.
28. 5 units are in accordance with the stipulations of policy ST/6, being less than the indicative maximum of 8 permitted in principle on this green field site.
29. The proposed density of 47dph is considered appropriate in this instance given that the location is sustainable being within close proximity of and

affording a variety of public and private transport links to nearby Cambridge City, which is the largest node of service provision in the area.

The Impact of the Proposals upon the Character and Appearance of the Area

30. The net density proposed is achieved within a single building and the design of this, whilst being of a contemporary idiom that is currently not present amongst the dwelling design along Mayfield Road, is not considered to be at odds with the general feeling of harmonious variety that characterises the street as identified above. Similarly the more general gabled form and frontage span are not incongruous to the surrounding design or span of some of the neighbouring dwellings. No.12 for example has a greater frontage span than the proposed building, similarly the substantial span of the terrace of nos 97-103 Cambridge Road has a commanding presence within the street scene. To this end it is considered that residential development of the site in question in accordance with the scheme put forward would not be detrimentally uncharacteristic to the character and appearance of the area or wholly unsustainable at the density proposed.
31. In contrast applications ref.S/1246/07/F and S/1753/07/F comprised similar proposals for a large two storey development of four flats. The building proposed was a bland interpretation of classical architectural form and style and had a similar plan form & footprint to the current proposals. Both applications proposed a similar access arrangement to that currently proposed.
32. Both applications were refused for myriad reasons. Critically though the design of the proposals formed a common key reason for refusal, with both applications being refused on the grounds of mass, height and design (this wording varies slightly between the two decisions).
33. Although not thoroughly addressed in the Committee Report for application ref.S/0468/08/F the question of whether the scheme submitted under this application overcame the previous reasons of refusal would have formed a key consideration in arriving at the recommendation by both Officers and Committee members alike. For avoidance of doubt it is considered appropriate to outline this reasoning in this report.
34. The frontage span of the 2007 proposals were similar to that proposed by the current scheme. However the visual massing of the frontage elevation of the 2007 scheme was significantly greater than that currently proposed due to the fact that the ridge line proposed in 2007 ran parallel to Mayfield Road and thus presented a flank elevation and substantial roof slope to the street. The current proposals, whilst proposing a similar frontage span, mitigate this massing effect by employing a ridge that is perpendicular to Mayfield Road. The resultant impact is that massing is reduced and a greater sense of openness is retained within the street scene.
35. The proposals put forward under applications ref. S/1246/07/F and S/1753/07/F proposed ridge heights of approximately 9.5m and 8.7m respectively. The current proposals have a ridge height of approximately 10m (although in reality approximately 1m of this height is taken up by the architectural detail of the pointed element of the 'interlocking roof'). The

heights of surrounding two storey dwellings are typical two storey height and thus around 8m.

36. The proposed height, whilst being in excess of previous schemes that have been refused on the grounds of scale, is incorporated into an architectural design that follows the eaves heights of surrounding dwellings, has a more appropriate mass and retains a greater degree of openness to that of the 2007 schemes and thus is not considered to be to the detriment of the character and appearance of Mayfield Road. Hence the previous citing of scale as a reason for refusal is considered to be overcome by the present scheme.
37. When considering the more general subject of 'design' it is clear that whilst the proposals submitted in accordance with the 2007 applications were of a bland and ubiquitous articulation the current proposals are of a bespoke architecture, the likes of which are advocated by the Adopted Design Guide for the re-development of infill plots (para.5.60) and is considered to contribute to the architectural variety and quality of the surrounding area.
38. As such the proposed scheme is considered to overcome the previous reasons for refusal of applications S/1246/07/F & S/1753/07/F with regard to design.

The Impact upon Residential Amenity

39. The impact upon the residential amenity of surrounding properties is not considered to have significantly changed from the impact of the previously approved scheme. The elevational aspects of the proposal do not vary from that approved in accordance with application ref.S/0468/08/F and there appears to have been no material change in circumstance with regard to the layout and use of the two residential sites that abut the application site.
40. Similarly the access amendments proposed will not give rise to any material increase in the intensity of traffic movements associated with the scheme. Thus noise and disturbance associated with traffic movements is not considered to be materially greater than the previously approved scheme.

Parking and Highway Safety

41. Plan refs. 2462-04-Rev A and 2462-05-Rev A date stamped 26th January 2010 illustrate the proposed access and parking layouts. A traditional carriageway layout is proposed with an access width of 4.1m which corresponds with the width of the adopted public highway affordable for use as access.
42. The Local Highways Authority do not consider that the proposed access arrangement would unduly harm highway safety at this point making the following comments;

'The minimum access width for an emergency service vehicle is 2.75m, but 3.1m is preferred.'

The proposed access is able to achieve a width of 4.1m within the confines of the adopted public highway. This will allow two domestic cars to just pass

each other, though what is in effect a width restriction rather than being a longer drive or similar.

The publication of Manual for Streets 2 in September 2010 has allowed Highway Engineers much greater freedom within guidance to place sites within their context, rather than having to rely on a series of more prescriptive measures. The proposed access has excellent visibility along Mayfield Road. The visibility from the access to the private drive is more constrained. However, the 'hit and miss' fence along with the lower section of the same at the proposed entrance should allow satisfactory inter-vehicle visibility in particular as vehicle speeds will inherently be low at this location. Most users of either the proposed entrance and or the existing access will be aware of the constraints, so should behave appropriately. It is highly unlikely that motor vehicles will achieve excessive speeds at this point and therefore, although representing a point of conflict (all accesses of whatever nature do) the likelihood of a personal injury accident occurring is very low.'

43. There is also the matter that previous applications ref. S/1246/07/F and S/1753/07/F were refused on highway safety grounds and proposed a similar access arrangement. However it should be noted that the access width proposed for these previous schemes was approximately 3m whereas the current proposals are approximately 4.1m. Further to this at the time of the determination of these applications the common boundary with the private access to the west of the access comprised a coniferous hedge which was considered at the time to inhibit visibility to the greater extent than the current hit and miss fence treatment.
44. In addition to this, and also a material consideration, is the publication of Manual for Streets 2 which gives guidance on the consideration of sites within their context, rather than having to rely on a series of more prescriptive measures.
45. With regard to parking provision, letters of representation received raise concerns for the impact of overspill parking upon Mayfield Road, which at present, has no parking restrictions along the length of the adopted highway.
46. The scheme proposes seven car parking spaces (one disabled) to serve the 5 flats and sheltered cycle parking provision for 8 cycles. It is considered reasonable to condition the implementation of the parking areas prior to occupation of the development.
47. Policy TR/2 "Car & Cycle Parking Standards" states that for residential development the "maximum" standard is for 1.5 space per dwelling. At this maximum standard the site should provide 7.5 spaces. However, this site is located within the heart of the village, with a bus stop located at the bottom of Mayfield Road with the junction to Girton Road. In light of the scale of the development and the nearby services for public transport it is deemed that the provision of 7 spaces is acceptable within this location as it accords with Policy TR/1 "Planning for More Sustainable Travel" which states that planning permission will not be granted for developments likely to give rise to a material increase in travel demands unless the site has a sufficient standard of accessibility to offer an appropriate choice of travel by public transport or other non-car travel mode. In line with this policy the Council is minded to minimise the amount of car parking provision in new developments by restricting car parking to the maximum levels.

48. There is no dedicated parking provision for sporadic demand arising from service and visitors vehicles. Residents of Mayfield Road are concerned that this could lead to increased parking on Mayfield Road itself, which is a narrow lane. These concerns, whilst salient, would be hard to sustain as a reason for refusal due to the fact that there are no parking restrictions along Mayfield Road at present that would restrict vehicles from parking along its length. Thus the identified impact could reasonably occur irrespective of the granting of planning permission.
49. Critically, this is the same level of parking provision as proposed by the scheme that was previously approved in accordance with application ref. S/0468/08/F. There is therefore no sound basis to oppose the scheme on these grounds.

Developer Contributions

50. Policies SF/10, SF/11 and DP/4 of the LDF DCP DPD 2007 require provision of open space, community facilities, bin provision and affordable housing in accordance with the scale of any scheme proposed. It has previously been agreed that affordable housing will be provided off-site by way of a suitable financial contribution.
51. At the time of writing the precise level of developer contribution for the above is undergoing negotiation in accordance with the provisions of policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework, Development Control Policies DPD, 2007. An update will be issued to members of the Planning Committee to confirm the nature and scale of contributions in this instance.

Conclusion

52. This application has generated a significant amount of local representation, however, having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account, it is considered that there are no justifiable grounds to prevent planning permission from being granted in this instance.

Recommendation

53. Approve, as amended by plan refs 2462-04-Rev A and 2462-05-Rev A date stamped 26th January 2010

Conditions

1. **The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development, which have not been acted upon.)
2. **The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 2462-04-Rev A and 2462-05-Rev A date stamped 26th January 2010, 2462-02, 2462-06, 2462-07, 2462-08, 2462-09, 2462-10, 2462-11, 2462-12, 2462-13, 2462-14, 2462-15 & 2462-16.**

(Reason – To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990)

3. **No development shall take place until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the buildings hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

(Reason - To ensure the appearance of the development is satisfactory in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

4. **No development shall take place until details of the refuse storage accommodation following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details:**

(Reason – To ensure refuse storage is adequately provided within the site without causing visual harm to the area)

5. **No development shall take place until full details of hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development. The details shall also include specification of all proposed trees, hedges and shrub planting, which shall include details of species, density and size of stock.**

(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

6. **All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.**

(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

7. **No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected upon the site. The boundary treatment shall be completed before the development is occupied in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be retained.**

(Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the site does not detract from the character of the area in accordance with Policy DP/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- 8. The development, hereby permitted, shall not be occupied until details of a scheme for the provision of outdoor sports, play and informal open space, community facility and waste receptacle infrastructure to meet the needs of the development in accordance with Policies DP/4, SF/10 and SF/11 of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

(Reason - To ensure the development provides a suitable level of public open space, community facilities and waste receptacle infrastructure for occupants of the development, in accordance with Policies DP/4, SF/10 and SF/11 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007.
- 9. The development, hereby permitted, shall not be occupied until details of a scheme for the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of the development in accordance with Policies DP/4 and HG/3 of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

(Reason - To ensure the development provides a suitable level of affordable housing in accordance with Policies DP/4 and HG/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007.
- 10. No development shall take place until a scheme of ecological enhancement outlining the provision of bird and bat boxes has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

(Reason – To ensure ecological enhancement of the site in accordance with Policy NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 11. No demolition works shall commence on site until a management plan in relation to construction traffic and storage of building materials has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

(Reason – In the interests of Highway Safety.)
- 12. During the period of demolition and construction, no power operated machinery shall be operated on the site before 0800 hours and after 1800 hours on weekdays and 1300 hours on Saturdays, nor at any time on Sundays and Bank Holidays, unless otherwise previously agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.**

(Reason - To minimise noise disturbance for adjoining residents in accordance with Policy NE/15 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
- 13. The bicycle parking facilities as shown on the approved plan refs 2462-04-Rev A and 2462-05-Rev A date stamped 26th January 2010 are to be provided prior to the first occupation of the development and retained at all times thereafter.**

(Reason – To ensure the development provides adequate secure cycle parking, as required by policy TR/2 of the Local Development Framework Development Control Policies 2007.)

- 14. The development shall not be occupied until the car parking area indicated on the approved plan refs 2462-04-Rev A and 2462-05-Rev A date stamped 26th January 2010, including any parking spaces for the mobility impaired has been hard surfaced, sealed and marked out in parking bays. The car parking area shall be retained in this form at all times. The car park shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles that are related to the use of the development.**
(Reason – To ensure the development is served by adequate car parking, as required by Policy TR/2 of the Local Development Framework 2007.)

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Design Guide SPD – Adopted March 2010
- PPS3: Housing

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