

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

2 March 2011

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

S/2171/10 – ORWELL

Extend existing dwelling and build new dwelling in garden, 25 Lotfield Street, for Mr & Mrs Gary Hilbrow

Recommendation: Refusal

Date for Determination: 1st February 2011

Notes:

This Application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination at the request of Cllr David Bird.

Members of Committee will visit the site on the morning of 2nd March 2011.

Site and Proposal

1. The application site lies on the north side of Lotfield Street and is approximately 808sq metres. Lotfield Street lies within the southern part of the village and is accessed from Town Green Road and Stocks Lane. The site lies within Orwell Development Framework boundary. No.25 lies outside of the Orwell Conservation Area, which runs primarily along the High Street to the north. There are four bungalows occupying the north side of Lotfield Street and No 25 is the last of these when accessing from Town Green Road. Opposite the property there are three grade 2 listed properties.
2. The application site is triangular in shape tapering towards the east where it meets the bend in the road and the side garden of No23a. The rear of the plot also backs onto the garden of no 23 Lotfield Street. The existing three bedroomed bungalow is positioned to the western end and comprises a central area under a simple pitched roof with its gables facing the road and rear of the property. The rest of the existing property lies under flat roofs and comprises a hall/cloaks and double garage to the west side and a bathroom, bedroom and conservatory to the rear. The whole property is set behind an evergreen hedge, which substantially screens the existing bungalow and its garden when viewed from the Street except at the western end where there is vehicular access to the drive and garage. The rear boundary is a combination of a fence and conifers and backs onto the gardens of Numbers 23 and 23a Lotfield Street. The conifers have been cut by the residents to the rear but are believed to be within the ownership of No 25. The surrounding area is a mix of detached and semi detached properties of different sizes and situated on differing plot sizes. All the bungalows on the North side of Lotfield Street have small rear gardens.
3. The full planning application, submitted on 8th December 2010, proposes the blocking up of the existing vehicular access and the formation of a new double shared access immediately to the east of the existing dwelling to provide four car parking spaces to

serve both the existing property and the new property. The new dwelling is proposed to be sited in the side garden to the east with a floor plan of approx 54sqm and provides two bedrooms and a bathroom within the roof space and a ground floor living room and kitchen/dining room.

4. The existing bungalow will be altered and extended. The existing conservatory will be removed and replaced with a single storey extension to provide an additional bedroom and ensuite all to extend behind the existing flat roofed building that fronts Lotfield Street. Two new pitched roofs will cover the whole of the existing and extended dwelling including the existing garage on the west side, which will become a kitchen dining room. The existing bungalow is predominately single storey with a height of approx 2.6m. The existing pitched roof rises to approx 4.1m under a shallow pitch. The extended bungalow will have a ridge height of 6.2 east west across the rear of the property and the height of the gable fronting Lotfield Street is proposed to be slightly lower at approx 6m.
5. The applicants did not undertake any pre application advice with the Planning Department.

Planning History

6. None of relevance.

Planning Policy

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document, adopted January 2007:

ST/6 – Group Village

7. South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD, adopted July 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

NE/1 – Energy efficiency

NE/6 – Biodiversity

CH/4 – Development within the curtilage or setting of a listed building

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

SF/11 – Open Space Standards

Biodiversity SPD – Adopted July 2010

District Design Guide SPD – Adopted March 2010

Listed Buildings SPD – Adopted 2nd July 2009

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.

Circular 05/2005 (Planning Obligations) - Advises that planning obligations must be relevant to planning, necessary, directly relevant to the development to be permitted, fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind and reasonable in all other respects.

Consultations

8. **Orwell Parish Council** – Recommends approval subject to a condition that the velux roof lights on the new dwelling are located as high as possible in the roof to avoid overlooking of the adjacent property. There are however concerns with regard to access and parking. The proposed shared access will provide no space for turning to allow exit in forward gear from the site and will necessitate “shunting” of the vehicles unless some are parked in the street thus increasing the street parking. The Council suggest that the plans could be modified to provide a better solution to the off street parking. Concern was also raised that the proposed development of the existing dwelling and the building of a new dwelling will result in an over development of the whole site.
9. **Conservation Officer** – Comments there are many grade II listed buildings on Lotfield Street and the adjacent Town Green Road, principally timber-framed structures of the 16th or 17th centuries. Those nearest the present site include numbers 22 and 26-28, directly opposite, and number 32, diagonally opposite to the west. In some cases their importance is partly disguised by modernised exteriors, but number 22, with its timber-frame, jetty, and close studding, provides striking external evidence of its architectural interest. Any new work should preserve or enhance the setting of these listed buildings, particularly number 22.
10. The existing modern bungalow with flat-roofed extensions has a fairly neutral effect on the historic environment, although it should be feasible to devise an extension which enhances its impact. However the proposed design does not fulfil this requirement. The added height of the new structure would make it more dominant, and the rooflights, with their eye-catching reflective surfaces on the roof slopes, would exacerbate this effect. The large expanse and very slack roof pitch of the new cross wing are out of scale with the setting. The assertive modern materials, including the plate glass of the windows and the upvc of the doors and window frames, are at variance with the natural materials of the historic buildings. The applicant is invited to revise the design, employing low height, narrow ranges, and natural materials, and if necessary seeking informal advice.
11. The proposed new development site adjacent to number 25 is one of several small plots of open land on Lotfield Street, for example before number 30, and between numbers 20 and 22. They greatly enhance the setting of the listed buildings, which could on the other hand be harmed by an increase in the density of the existing development, and accordingly they should probably not be built upon. The domestic paraphernalia associated with a new dwelling, including the two new parking spaces, would also be unwelcome in context.
12. If, however, the applicant wishes to pursue this proposal he would need to provide evidence of its impact on the historic environment. It would be helpful, for example, to have montages and sections of the site showing the flanking buildings, particularly the listed structures, and the proposed dwelling in situ. This should accompany a Heritage statement.
13. Recommendation: refuse on the grounds that the proposal would be detrimental to the setting of listed buildings, contrary to LDF policy CH/4

14. **Local Highways Authority** – Comments that as the proposal will serve two dwellings the Highway Authority will seek suitable inter-vehicular visibility splays to the adopted highway. The maximum splays should be 2.4x43m. However, if empirical data in the form of a speed and volume count were provided the Highway Authority might accept a lower provision. Conditions are recommended in the event of approval.

Representations

15. Letters of have been received from Nos 23,23a and 24 Lotfield Street raising the following objections:
- (a) The proposed access point is virtually on a blind corner, which incorporates a junction to a busy housing estate. There have been several near misses in the past. Lack of visibility caused by high hedges.
 - (b) Cars are frequently parked from the proposed access to the new house to the Lotfield junction with Town Green Road. An additional property will add to parking problems.
 - (c) With only 4 car parking spaces, visitors will park on the road causing further problems.
 - (d) The plot is too small and extremely close to the rear boundaries with Nos 23 and 23a Lotfield Street taking light from the house and garden and resulting in loss of privacy.
 - (e) Proposed planting on the rear boundary will exacerbate the loss of light to the neighbours at 23, and 23a.
 - (f) Concern is raised regarding the adequacy of the drainage and sewerage system. The area has suffered in the past.
 - (g) Overdevelopment, insufficient space for a house and garden.
 - (h) Lotfield Street has experienced recent vehicular incidents; this proposal will make this more likely to be a hazard.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

16. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Impact on the setting of the Listed Buildings
 - Impact on the Character of the Area
 - Residential amenity
 - Highway Safety
 - Infrastructure requirements

Impact on the character of the area and the setting of the listed buildings

17. The site is currently largely hidden from view behind the frontage hedge. The existing bungalow is partially visible from the Street and the hedge screens its side garden where the additional dwelling is proposed and only the fruit trees and conifers to the rear are visible from the road.
18. DCP Policy DP/7 supports development of unallocated land within development frameworks provided that
- a) retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character;
 - b) Development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours; and
 - c) there is the necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development.

19. Policy DP/2 and the District-wide Design Guide also provides design criteria for new development.
20. The alterations to the existing dwelling will raise the ridge height by approx 2m and the resulting gable that fronts Lotfield Street will be considerably more bulky than exist at present .For this reason I agree with the Conservation Officers comments that the extensions to the existing property will adversely impact the listed buildings opposite. I also believe that a gable of this bulk and in such close proximity to the street is out of character with the bungalows on this side of the street, which are generally set back from the road with generous front gardens. It should be noted that this impact is worse because the land on which the existing dwelling is sited is higher than the adjacent street.
21. The new dwelling has a ridge height just higher than the 6m proposed for the extended existing bungalow. Whilst this ridge height will be set back further from the Street than the gable the footprint of the dwelling will be as close to the hedge and street as the existing bungalow. The new dwelling will have two dormers which are of disproportionate in relation to the scale of the dwelling and out of character with the low bungalows that dominate this side of Lotfield Street. Taken together the bulk, design and position of the new dwelling will impact adversely on the Listed buildings opposite. I also believe that because of its height above the street level and its design, with disproportionate dormers, the dwelling will be out of character with this side of the street, which is predominately of bungalows that are lower or set well back from the street.

Residential Amenity

22. The raising of the roof of the existing bungalow will result in it being seen to a greater extent by its neighbours. However I do not believe that this or the addition of high roof lights over the new kitchen area will adversely impact on the neighbour to the side or the rear.
23. The new dwelling will be a similar distance off the boundary to the rear as that for the existing bungalow but the proposal does include a first floor and the proposed roof lights would cause overlooking if they are of clear glass. The height and position of the dwelling will in my opinion unduly dominate the gardens of the properties (No23, 23a) to the rear. Developing the side garden of the existing bungalow will leave very limited garden space for both the existing and new dwelling. Whilst some properties in the surrounding area do have limited garden space in this particular case the new dwellings limited garden will be in very close (2m at the closest) to the rear garden of No 23a. With such limited amenity space I am concerned that inevitable noise and disturbance from the new dwelling will impact on this neighbour.

Highway Safety

24. The Highway Comments have been referred to the applicant. Additional drawings have been provided by the applicant showing a visibility spay. Unfortunately this additional drawing does not show a correct visibility splay. Further revised plans have been requested from the applicant to demonstrate adequate visibility. Members will be updated on this issue at the Committee meeting.

Infrastructure Requirements

25. In accordance with the requirements of Policy DP/4 and SF/10, as well as the Supplementary Planning Document on Open Space, all residential developments are expected to contribute towards: the off-site provision and maintenance of open space, the provision of indoor community facilities, and the provision of household waste receptacles. For the two-bedroomed dwelling proposed, this results in a requirement for contributions of £ 2,244.90 towards open space ,£ 371.00 towards community facilities and £69.50 towards household waste receptacles, as well as additional costs towards Section 106 monitoring (£50) and legal fees (minimum £350). I have asked the applicant to confirm in writing that his client is in agreement to pay these contribution in the event that planning consent is permitted. Members will be updated on this issue at the Committee meeting.

Recommendation

26. **Refuse.**

For the Following Reason:

1. **The proposed roof extensions to the existing property at No 25 Lotfield Street will result in a disproportionately large gable elevation which when viewed from Lotfield Street will dominate the street and be out of character with the surrounding area. It will also result in harm to the setting of listed building (No.26) opposite the site. To this end the proposal is contrary to policies DP/2, DP/7& CH/4 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD, 2007 which seek to ensure that the design of all new development is of high quality and appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and that the setting of Listed Buildings is safeguarded.**
2. **The proposed new dwelling is sited on a narrow and tapering garden near to the bend in Lotfield Street. This side of the street is predominately occupied by bungalows. The design and dominant position of the new dwelling rising as it will well above the hedge will be out of character with the existing street scene. The dwelling by virtue of its siting and height will also harm the setting of Listed Building (No. 22) opposite. As such the proposal is contrary to policies DP/2, DP/3 and DP/7 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 which seek to ensure that the design of all new development is of high quality and appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and that the setting of Listed Buildings is safeguarded.**
3. **The size and siting of the new dwelling will harm the amenity of neighbouring properties to the rear of the site by reason of being overbearing on the outlook from the rear gardens of 23 and 23a Lotfield Street. As such the proposal is contrary to policies DP/2, DP/3 and DP/7 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007. As such the proposal is contrary to policies DP/3 and DP/7 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007 which seek to protect residential amenity.**
4. **The application as submitted does not demonstrate that adequate vehicular visibility spays can be achieved in accordance with the requirements of the Local Highway Authority. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DP/3 of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework**

Development Control Policies DPD, 2007 which seeks appropriate access from the highway network that does not compromise safety.

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework 2007
- Listed Buildings SPD – Adopted 2nd July 2009
- Biodiversity SPD – Adopted July 2010
- District Design Guide SPD – Adopted March 2010

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