

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Development and Conservation Control Committee	2 nd March 2005
AUTHOR/S:	Director of Development Services	

S/2582/04/F - Shepreth

Three Dwellings (Revised Scheme) at 20 High Street, Shepreth for David Reed Homes

Date of Determination: 16th February 2005
Recommendation: Approval

Conservation Area

Site and Proposal

1. This 0.16ha site lies on the west side of the High Street. There is currently a single dwelling positioned approximately in the centre of the site which has been extended with a flat roof forward projection. A number of outbuildings lie to the side and rear. To the south is no. 22 High Street, a two storey dwelling with mature trees on the boundary with the application site. To the north is no. 18 High Street, a white painted cottage with single storey rear elements and a separate single flat roof garage to the side. To the rear of this property, and attached to it, is a barn (Grade II Listed) that forms part of no. 14/16 High Street (house de-listed in December 1987), to the north of no. 18. To the west is open countryside.
2. The site lies within the village framework for Shepreth.
3. The full planning application, received on 22nd December 2004, proposes the erection of an affordable cottage style house at the front of the site with a ridge height of approximately 8m and the erection of two dwellings to the rear with ridge heights of approximately 8.5m and with a barn like appearance following demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.

Planning History

4. In November 2002 Conservation Area consent was granted for the total demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.
5. On 11th March 2004 planning permission was granted for three dwellings, including one affordable. A Section 106 agreement is in place to ensure that the affordable dwelling is occupied only by qualifying persons and secured in perpetuity for that purpose.

Planning Policy

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (the Structure Plan)
Policy P1/3 - Sustainable Design in Built Development.

6. This policy stresses the need for a high standard of design and a sense of place which responds to the local character of the built environment, amongst a whole host of other sustainability considerations.

Structure Plan Policy P7/6 - Historic Built Environment

7. Local Planning Authorities will protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic built environment.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 (the Local Plan) Policy SE5 - List of Infill Villages

8. Shepreth is listed as an Infill village.

Residential developments within the village frameworks of these villages will be restricted to not more than two dwellings comprising:

1. A gap in an otherwise built-up frontage to an existing road, provided that it is not sufficiently large to accommodate more than two dwellings on similar curtilages to those adjoining; or
 2. The redevelopment or sub-division of an existing residential curtilage; or
 3. The sub-division of an existing dwelling; or
 4. Subject to the provisions of Policy EM8, the conversion or redevelopment of a non-residential building where this would not result in a loss of local employment.
9. Provided the site in its present form does not form an essential part of village character, and development is sympathetic to the historic interests, character, and amenities of the locality.
10. In very exceptional cases a slightly larger development may be permitted if this would lead to the sustainable recycling of a brownfield site bringing positive overall benefit to the village.

Local Plan Policy HG10 - Housing Mix and Design

11. Residential developments will be required to contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of types, sizes (including 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings) and affordability, making the best use of the site and promoting a sense of community which reflects local needs.
12. The design and layout of schemes should be informed by the wider character and context of the local townscape and landscape. Schemes should also achieve high quality design and distinctiveness, avoiding inflexible standards and promoting energy efficiency. The District Council will support the preparation of Village Design Statements to secure these aims.

Local Plan Policy EN30 - Development in Conservation Areas

13. The District Council will require that applications for planning permission for development in Conservation Areas or affecting their setting, be accompanied by sufficient details to allow the impact of the proposals to be assessed. This must include drawings or other pictorial material which illustrates the proposed buildings in their context, and in most cases outline applications will not be acceptable. Proposals will be expected to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas especially in terms of their scale, massing, roof

materials and wall materials. The District Council will refuse permission for schemes which do not specify traditional local materials and details and which do not fit comfortably into their context.

Consultation

Parish Council

14. Recommends refusal. It states:

“The Parish Council strongly objects to the height of the proposed dwellings and feels that any new development should be in keeping with the rest of the village.”

Conservation Manager

“Site:

The site is in the grounds of a small cottage set back from the High Street and running up to the boundary of the conservation area. To the west is a collection of scrub and mature trees with open countryside beyond. The character of this part of the village retains its historic appearance of a loose collection of vernacular properties, with hedgerows tightly enclosing the street frontage and agricultural buildings in the background.

Policy: EN30

Proposal:

The proposal is to demolish the existing site buildings and erect 3 residential properties. The foreground property is proposed as a detached cottage. Its architectural style is of a modest, 19th century brick house, with symmetrical elevations and using locally appropriate materials. To the rear there are two much larger detached properties designed to reflect the scale and visual character of agricultural buildings.

Considerations:

This is an amended version of a scheme which has previously received consent and which I supported. Conservation Area Consent was granted in tandem to the previously approved scheme for the demolition of the existing property on the site and the various outbuildings. Both this current scheme and the earlier (approved) version were subject to considerable negotiation to try to achieve a high quality scheme.

The design principle established in the earlier version is to reflect the agricultural character of the settlement. Hence the vernacular style cottage and the barn-like building to the background. I am the opinion that in general the proposed development has been successful in retaining the visual character of the site.

The foreground cottage is relatively modest, unassuming and visually well balanced. However, the eventual quality of the development will depend to a significant degree on the construction details. I would, therefore, suggest that conditions are applied to ensure that (as implied by the drawings) the windows have real brick arches, and that they are painted timber, set into appropriate reveals to ensure that there is a depth and texture to the elevation. Similarly, the main materials (brick & slate) will need to be conditioned to provide samples.

With regard to the larger barn-like buildings, these will be viewed across the site with the vista constrained by the foreground cottage. The approach has, therefore, been

to try to focus on achieving a general appearance, scale, and form which is a convincing attempt to suggest agricultural buildings. I am of the opinion that the proposed scheme has been generally successful in creating a collection of simple forms, such that the views of the building will be uncluttered ridge-lines and the expanse of roof. Where details are evident they are generally of the form that would be appropriate in a barn conversion, including open cart sheds and punched irregular openings on the main elevations. I would prefer to see a further simplified projecting gable to plot 2, (by reducing the first floor windows) but do not have any substantive objection to the proposal.

With regards to the access, I am of the opinion that the loss of the hedge, by reason of the imposed visibility splay is unfortunate, but understand this is a highway requirement and that the hedgerow will be replanted and strengthened. The surface material for the access drive should be conditioned to give a bound natural gravel finish, reflecting the informality of an agricultural access road.

I would also suggest that planting, both within the site and on the boundary is strengthened, particularly at the rear such that mass of the group is broken and the more domestic form of the rear elevation is screened to enable the focus of the site to remain on the roofscape.

Conclusion:

I am of the opinion, that this development makes a reasonable attempt to address the concern to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area. I therefore support the proposal, as amended subject to the imposition of detailed conditions to control materials and architectural details."

Chief Environmental Health Officer

12. No objections subject to safeguarding measures during construction.

Representations

13. One letter of objection has been received from the occupiers of No. 14/16 High Street, Shepreth.

"The proposal will over develop the site because the houses at the rear are too big for the space. The new footprint of these houses appears to be bigger [than] the previous scheme which was also too big.

The houses at the rear are too tall. The drawings are not very exact but it appears that the height has increased to 9 metres. Permission was given for two houses at 8.3 metres after objections and even these were 1.5 metres higher than the adjacent old barn upon which they were supposed to be styled. The houses in this revised proposal are 1.7 metres higher than the tallest house in the High Street".

Planning Comments - Key Issues

14. The key issues are: The impact of the proposal of the amenity of occupiers of nearby properties, the impact on the visual quality of the street scene and the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Street scene and Conservation Area

15. Members may recall resolving to grant planning permission for a previous scheme, similar to the current proposal, in November 2003 (approved March 2004). The

affordable cottage style dwelling remains unchanged apart from a minor revision to the layout of the parking area to its rear.

16. The principal changes are to the other two dwellings. The simple barn like design of those previously approved has been replaced with a more complex approach. Whilst this loses the simplicity of the earlier designs the approach using high quality materials and more innovative design will enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area in my view. The revised dwellings are similar in scale and height - plot 1 is approximately 8.5m high and plot 2 8.3m high as opposed to the approved scheme where both dwellings were approximately 8.3m high.
17. Through negotiation prior to the submission of the application the southern most element of the house on plot 2 has been reduced in height and bulk following officers concerns that this dwelling will be seen at the end of the driveway and should not appear too bulky. The detail on the gable end facing the High Street has also been simplified from that originally proposed. The footprints and orientation have changed somewhat from the earlier scheme but overall the dwellings are in the same positions on the site. I take the view that these dwellings will be seen set well back within the site - their apparent heights and impact will therefore be reduced and will not have any materially greater impact on the street scene and Conservation Area than those already approved. I welcome the use of good quality materials and the design approach.

Amenity

18. Plot 1
There are no windows at first floor in the north elevation. A bedroom window at first floor above the garage in the east elevation is a concern as views into the garden of the adjacent property, No. 18 would be possible. However, I see no reason why this window cannot be obscure glazed as there are further windows shown in the south (front) elevation of the garage to serve this bedroom which will not create any overlooking of any existing dwelling or either of the other two proposed dwellings. Other windows in the south elevation serve a link and an ensuite and will not cause any overlooking (provided the ensuite window is obscure glazed). Windows in the west elevation look out towards fields and will not cause any overlooking.
19. Plot 2
Windows in the first floor of the south and east elevations will afford oblique views into the rear garden of No. 22 High Street but there is good planting to prevent any material overlooking and further planting can be required. Windows in the west elevation look out onto fields and those in the north are to be obscure glazed.
20. The driveway is a good distance off the boundary with No. 22 and separated by planting, its use should not cause any material loss of amenity to the occupiers of this property.
21. Windows in the northern gable end of the cottage at the front of the site will have views into a window in the side of No. 18 but these will be very oblique and in my view will not cause any material loss of privacy. (The window position has not changed from the approved scheme).

Car parking

22. There is sufficient space on site for two cars to park and turn for each dwelling so that they may enter and leave the site in forward gear.

Hedge on frontage

23. It will be necessary to replant the hedge in order to achieve satisfactory visibility splays.

Recommendation

- A. A Section 106 Agreement be negotiated to ensure that the affordable dwelling is occupied only by qualifying persons and secured in perpetuity for that purpose; and
- B. Following the completion of the Section 106 agreement approval subject to the following conditions:
1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 5 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. No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used for the external walls and roofs have 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 that visually the development accords with neighbouring buildings and to ensure that the development is not incongruous and does not harm the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with Policies SE5, HG10, EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
 3. No development shall commence until details of the surface water drainage and foul sewage disposal have 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 satisfactory drainage of the site and to ensure the satisfactory disposal of foul sewage from the site in accordance with Policies CS2 and CS3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
 4. No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used for hard surfaced areas within the site including roads, driveways and car parking areas have 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 that the development enhances the character of the area in accordance with Policies HG10, EN30 and EN31 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
 5. No further windows, doors or openings of any kind shall be inserted in the first floor of the north or south elevations of 'Plot 1'. The north, east or south elevations of 'Plot 2' or in the north or south elevations of the 'Cottage', hereby permitted, unless expressly authorised by planning permission granted by the Local Planning Authority in that behalf.
(Reason - To safeguard the privacy of occupiers of adjoining properties in accordance with Policies SE5 and HG10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
 6. No development shall commence until details of finished floor levels of the buildings in relation to ground levels have 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 that the height of the buildings is well related to ground levels and is not obtrusive in accordance with the requirements of Policies SE5, HG10, EN30 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)

7. Details of the treatment of all site boundaries, including internal site boundaries, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the work completed in accordance with the approved details before the buildings are occupied or the development is completed, whichever is the sooner.
(Reason - To protect the amenities of the adjoining properties and to ensure that the appearance of the site does not detract from the character of the area, in accordance with the requirements of Policies SE5, EN31 and HG10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
8. No development shall commence until details of the proposed windows and doors have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority; the windows and doors shall be of timber construction and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - To ensure that the development enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.)
9. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which 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.
(Reason - To enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area in accordance with the requirements of Policies SE5, EN5, EN31 and HG10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
10. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
(Reason - To enhance the quality of the development and to assimilate it within the area in accordance with the requirements of Policies SE5, EN5, EN31 and HG10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
11. No development shall take place within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. (Developers will wish to ensure that in drawing up a scheme, the timetable for the investigation is included within the details of the agreed scheme.)
(Reason - To secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of the remains in accordance with Policy EN15 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)
12. The use shall not commence until space has been laid out within the site (in accordance with plan No. 04013-03RevA) for the parking and turning of cars and

that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking and turning of vehicles.

(Reason - To ensure adequate space is provided and thereafter maintained on site for the parking of vehicles and in accordance with Policy TP1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)

13. Prior to the occupation of any of the dwellings, hereby permitted, a 1.8m wide footway shall be provided along the entire frontage of the site.
(Reason - In the interest of highway safety.)
14. Visibility splays shall be provided on either side of the junction of the proposed access road with the public highway. The minimum dimensions to provide the required splay lines shall be 2.4m measured along the centre line of the proposed access road from its junction with the channel line of the public highway, and 43.0m. to the north and 70.0m to the south measured along the channel line of the public highway from the centre line of the proposed access road.
(Reason - In the interest of highway safety.)
15. Visibility splays shall be provided on both sides of the access and shall be maintained free from any obstruction over a height of 600mm within an area of 2.0m x 2.0m measured from and along respectively the back of the footway.
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety.)
16. No development shall take place until details of measures for bat mitigation and conservation have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These measures should include:
 - a) Survey of the immediate grounds specifically for bats in order to ascertain information on any bats species present (surveys should be undertaken at an appropriate time of year and by a suitably experienced professional.)
 - b) Inspection of existing buildings on site within one month prior to their demolition or alteration to determine presence or absence of roosting or hibernating bats;
 - c) No building containing bats shall be demolished until the bats have been safely excluded using such measures as have been previously submitted to and approved by the Council; and
 - d) Provision prior to demolition or alteration of existing buildings and the commencement of development, of a new bat roost/Hibernacula constructed to a design and in a location previously approved by the Council.

(Reason - In the interests of the protection of protected species in accordance with the requirements of Policy EN13 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.)

Informatives

EA Standing advice.

Reasons for Approval

1. The development is considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:

- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P1/3** (Sustainable design in built development) and P7/6 (Historic Built Environment);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: SE5** (List of Infill Villages),
 - **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design) and EN30 (Development in Conservation Areas)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
- Overdevelopment of the site.
 - Visual impact.

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

- Planning application files reference S/2582/04/F and S/1824/02/F
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

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