

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 13th May 2005

AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/0462/05/F - Waterbeach Erection of 8 Houses Following Demolition of Existing Bungalow, 12 Pieces Lane, for Heddon Management Ltd

**Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 3rd May 2005**

Site and Proposal

1. Nos. 12 and 13 Pieces Lane are two detached 1950's houses each in a plot of approximately 0.2 hectares on the eastern edge of the village with No 13's eastern boundary the village framework. To the north is a garage court, to the west, Hartley Close, a cul-de-sac of houses and bungalows, and with other houses to the south, on the opposite side of Pieces Lane.
2. The large rear garden of No. 13 is being developed at present with the construction of seven houses. (See History).
3. The full application, received on 8th March, proposes the demolition of the present bungalow, No. 12, and the formation of a new access roadway along the eastern boundary of the site which will serve a terrace of three 2-bed houses, together with seven 3-bed. detached houses. Density is 29.6 dpha.

History - no 13 Pieces Lane

4. In March 2002, consent was refused for 3 dwellings to the rear of No. 13 for reasons of a) too low a density (15 dpha) and b) piecemeal development, - the land should be developed comprehensively with No. 12 adjacent. The subsequent appeal was dismissed.
5. In July 2003 outline approval was granted for six houses on that site with the means of access and siting of the houses forming part of the submission. Subsequently reserved matters consent was granted in December 2003, with another approval in May 2004 to build a pair of houses on an enlarged plot, previously approved for one detached property. This resulted in a total of seven houses, plus No. 13, the existing bungalow.

History - No. 12 Pieces Lane

6. At the March 2004 Committee, item 14, full application for the erection of eight houses following the demolition of the existing bungalow, No. 12 Pieces Lane, with a similar access to that now proposed, was refused for the reasons:
 - "1. The proposed housing scheme would be contrary to the aims of Policy P1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policy HG10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan - Adopted 2004 in that development, in conjunction with that at present under construction to the rear

of No. 13 Pieces Lane, would result in a poor and sub-standard form of layout whereby:

- No 13 Pieces Lane will have an access roadway in close proximity either side,
 - Plots 1 and 7 on the adjoining development would have the new access roadway running at the bottom of their gardens within 6.7m of the rear living, dining and bedroom windows.
 - The relationship of the easternmost of the block of three terraced houses to No. 6 on the adjoining development is unacceptable in that the rear elevation of the former would be in line with the front elevation of the latter. A two-storey gable elevation, 6.0m in depth and 1200mm off the boundary would reduce all light to the rear garden of the proposed end terraced property and would dominate the garden and outlook from the house.
 - The two access roadways, running parallel to each other for a distance of 43.0m with little scope for planting in between, would result in a poor standard of layout unduly dominated by hard surfaced areas.”
7. At Appeal the main issues looked at by the inspector were the effect of the development on residential amenities through disturbance, loss of light and privacy, and overbearing appearance, and whether the scheme would be in keeping with the character of this part of the village.
8. Although the appeal was dismissed, the only issue which caused the Inspector concern was the layout which had two pairs of houses at right angles to the roadway, resulting in a poor layout dominated by walls, gable walls, and hard-surfaced areas. The development would be incongruous and out of keeping with the prevailing character of its surroundings.

Policy

9. **Policy P1/3** of the Structure Plan 2003 expects a high standard of design and sustainability in new developments, to include:
- Responding to local character
 - Includes a defined sense of enclosure
 - Pays attention to the details of form, massing, textures, colours and landscaping
10. **Policy SE2** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 allocates Waterbeach as a Rural Growth Settlement.
11. **Policy HG7** confirms that Affordable Housing will not be a requirement for developments of up to 10 dwellings in villages, such as Waterbeach, of more than 3,000 population.
12. **Policy HG10** asks for a mix of house types and a high quality of design and distinctiveness.

Consultations

13. **Waterbeach Parish Council**, which previously supported the earlier application subject to 30% Affordable Housing and tree screening, now objects “Due to the additional road and all issues raised on previous application”. The Parish asks that, if approved, there should be a designated footpath in Pieces Lane across the roadway.
14. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service** requests the provision of fire hydrants (these can be conditioned).
15. **The Chief Environmental Health Officer** has no objections but requests a condition restricting use of machinery during construction outside certain hours. Informatives should be included on any consent relating to pile driven foundations, if proposed, plus the need to submit a demolition Notice.
16. **The Landscape Design Officer** has no objections in principle but is negotiating on one or two revisions to the submitted scheme.
17. **The Waterbeach Level Internal Drainage Board** advises that the site, although outside the Board’s District, drains into it, being within the Bottisham Locks Pumping Station catchment which has no residual capacity. Providing surface water is disposed of via soakaways or infiltration methods, no objections are raised. If other means of disposal are planned, the Board asks to be re-consulted.

Representations

18. Two letters of objection have been received, one from the owner of 13 Pieces Lane adjacent, the other from No. 20 on the opposite side of the road.
19. No. 13 asks that the following points be looked at prior to consideration of the application:
 - “1. The demolition of No. 12 will not result in any increase in dwellings.
 2. Cause unnecessary congestion whilst demolition and construction takes place.
 3. Conflict with best use of land policy by unnecessary road construction.
 4. Create a negative rather than unified use of community.
 5. The inconspicuous roadway already constructed will not be available to use and possible widening replaced by over 2 metres of landscaping, shrubbery and fencing to separate.
 6. The 2 metres of landscaping and fencing highlighted at the appeal will further isolate the two communities.
 7. Two roads instead of one will increase postal delivery problems, numbering and naming of this proposed second road.
 8. The whole proposal is based on one part of the appeal where the inspector concluded he did not have the judgement before him.
 9. The project overall does not make good planning or good planning policy sense. Whilst it may only be contrary to particular parts of various policies once approved, will be a permanent memorial to how planning can be manipulated by aggressive means.
 10. If this proposal is really valid why wasn’t it deposited in 2001.”
20. In conclusion he states:

“All things considered I believe this new application does not use the land available to its best potential and to the best potential benefit to the community as a whole. If the bungalow, No. 12, were to be left in situ and the access road already available utilised there would be adequate land for 7 dwellings (mirroring the adjacent

development nearing completion) which would create **one** community encompassing both developments with the correct number of units available for habitation therefore filling the requirements of current policies.”

21. No. 20 objects strongly for reasons of access and traffic. Points raised include:
- No. 13 would have a road either side of them
 - With as many as 16 + cars coming out of the roadway in the mornings, there will be hold-ups and danger. Cars are frequently parked on Pieces Lane outside houses.
 - Access should be via the new roadway to the rear of No 13.
 - Access onto Way Lane is difficult because of the poor visibility.
22. Car ownership in Pieces Lane, Pieces Terrace and Hartley Close is referred to in detail and photographs of the Lane are provided showing the traffic situation, including the lorries delivering for the development behind No. 13.
23. Reference is also made to alternative access being off the bottom of Hartley Close, the water table and possible flooding, and loss of light to the adjacent bungalows from the new houses.

Planning Comments

24. There are two main issues to be considered in respect of this resubmission, and these are:
25. Can the site be developed in isolation i.e. without having to utilise the new roadway to the rear of No. 13?, and
Have the concerns of the Inspector relating to layout been overcome?

Access

26. I have to agree that a much better development would have resulted if the two land owners (Nos. 12 and 13 Pieces Lane) had got together and submitted a joint scheme for the whole site. However, that opportunity is not before Committee.
27. Although the Highway Authority could not object to a second access roadway onto Pieces Lane, the earlier refusal (see History above) referred to the “poor standard of layout unduly dominated by hard surfaced areas” with little scope for planting in between.
28. The Inspector referred to the fact that No. 13 Pieces Lane would abut three roads which is not a good arrangement with the occupiers experiencing more disturbance than might otherwise be the case. However he felt that the provision of fencing and appropriate landscaping along the boundary would provide reasonable protection. He was “not persuaded that the marginal shortcomings of the proposals are of a magnitude that justifies refusing permission.”
29. With regards the layout and separate access the Inspector also stated:
- “I understand why the appellant has chosen to pursue proposals independent of the land to the east, where the permission requires the layout to be available to service the appeal site.

That involves judgements that are not before me and if the right layout can be devised for the appeal site without reliance on the adjoining land there should be no reason why permission should not be granted.”

30. In light of this, I cannot see a reason to object to the application for reasons of a second access. Although the two roadways will still run parallel to each other, there will be a combined width of nearly 2.0m between them for planting. The Landscape Design Officer feels that this will be acceptable, subject to a revised planting schedule.

Layout

31. This was the Inspector’s main objection to the previous application and the reason why the Appeal was dismissed. He stated in his letter:

“As to the second main consideration, I saw that development in the locality follows conventional patterns. Most dwellings are sited facing the roads, with varying road frontages and, mostly, lawned or planted gardens at the front. Pieces Court is not materially different. The development under construction is more intensive than other residential combinations in the area but it reflects this style of building arrangement with shallow front areas, and it is not out of place.

Because of the constraints of the site, the proposals adopt a contrasting approach. Most of the gardens and open space associated with the dwellings would be concealed behind the houses or their garden walls. The main aspect into the development would be of an extensive area of tarmac or similar roadway enclosed in a tunnel-like condition, on the one side by fencing along the eastern boundary, and on the other by the long brick garden walls and the walls of the houses contiguous with the road. The dominating and unattractive impression of this hard surfacing would be augmented by the parking areas, one of some considerable size in front of the terraced housing, and block paving between the semi-detached houses.

I have no difficulty in agreeing with the Council that this form of building would be incongruous, and markedly out of keeping with the prevailing character of development in the surroundings. There would be little scope for planting to relieve the substantial scale and unsympathetic appearance of brickwork and metalled surfacing and the perception from within and without the development would be of an area influenced entirely by the needs of vehicles, with little regard for a people-friendly environment. The building of houses at right angles to, and on the back edge of the road, would be out of the ordinary. No sense of personal place would be created and the adverse effects of this unsatisfactory composition would be exacerbated by the duplication of the (albeit hidden) estate road on the adjoining development.”

32. The problem with the earlier layout was that the two pairs of semi detached houses in the centre of the site were at right angles to the roadway. This resulted in garden walls and the house gables being on the back edge of the roadway. In addition to this there were two large areas reserved for car-parking and a paved area as a forecourt to the four houses. There was no scope for any landscaping.
33. The scheme was urban in character, with the Inspector referring to it as “incongruous”.
34. The present layout reduces the width of the roadway by 1.5m and changing the 2 x pairs of semi-detached houses to four detached houses fronting the estate road. By

setting back privacy fencing to the rear/side gardens by 6.0m from the estate road, there is plenty of room for landscaping along the road, even including trees, not just shrubs.

35. A condition will be necessary to ensure that these front gardens cannot be fenced in the future, and hence incorporated into the rear gardens. The house on Plot 1, facing Pieces Lane and adjacent No. 11, is in a similar position to that of the previous application which was judged to be acceptable.
36. Plots 2-5 (inclusive) have no first floor windows at the rear facing the bungalows in Hartley Close. Permitted development rights should be excluded to prevent additional windows being installed.
37. The relationship of Plot 8 to the new house to the rear of No. 13 Pieces Lane is better than that previously judged to be acceptable by the Inspector.
38. Plot 6 would be better set back as its rear outlook, facing north, is dominated by the flank wall of Plot 7 to the east. I am discussing this with the Agents.
39. I am somewhat surprised to note that the Parish Council is now objecting to the scheme, having previously recommended approval to the earlier application.
40. Its request for a “designated footpath...across the roadway” is noted but this will be no different to every other estate roadway where the kerbs are dropped either side of the junction radii for pedestrians, children, prams and pushchairs. The points raised by the two neighbours have all been fully considered previously.

Recommendation

Subject to satisfactory landscaping plans and a better relationship between Plots 6 and 7, approval subject to:

1. Standard Condition A” - RC “A”
2. SC5 a) Materials “walls and roofs” RC5a)ii)
b) S.W. drainage RC5b)
c) Refuse storage RC5d)
d) Finished floor levels RC5e)
e) Hard-landscaping RC5f)
3. SC52 Implementation of landscaping RC52.
4. SC21 Withdrawal of permitted development
i) PART 2 (minor operations), Class A (erection of gates, walls and fences) RC21d)
5. SC22 No further windows “rear first floor elevations of Plots 2-5 inc.” RC22.
6. SC60 Boundary treatment “all” RC60 + “and” RC43.
7. Para C3(b) p. parking. RC10 safety.
8. Provision of fire hydrants.

9. SC26 “During the period of construction and demolition no power operated machinery” (RC26).

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: SE2** (Development in Rural Growth Settlements),
 - **HG7** (Affordable Housing)
 - **HG10** (Housing Mix and Design) and EN30 (Development in/adjacent to 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:
 - Highway dangers
 - Traffic/parking
 - Layout
 - Flooding

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning file Ref. S/2089/03/F, S/0932/03/O, S/1958/01/O and S/0462/05/F

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