

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

5 August 2015

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number: S/0844/15/OL

Parish: Barton

Proposal: Outline Application for the demolition of existing dwelling and construction of three dwellings with access included (all other matters are to be reserved).

Site address: 15 Comberton Road, Barton

Applicant(s): Mrs M Thwaites

Recommendation: Approval

Key material considerations: Character and Appearance
Highway Safety
Residential amenity
Trees

Committee Site Visit: 4 August 2015

Departure Application: No

Presenting Officer: Rebecca Ward

Application brought to Committee because: The recommendation of the Parish Council conflicts with that of Planning Officers.

Date by which decision due: 3 July 2015

1. **Planning History**

None of relevance

Planning Policies

2. **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012**

South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, adopted January 2007

ST/ 6 Group Villages

3. **South Cambridgeshire LDF 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 Village Frameworks
HG/1 Housing Density
NE/15 Noise Pollution
SF/10 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space and New Developments
SF/11 Open Space Standards

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

District Design Guide SPD – adopted March 2010
Open Space in New Developments SPD – adopted January 2009
Landscape in New Developments SPD – adopted March 2010

5. **Proposed Submission Local Plan (July 2013)**

CC/4 Sustainable Design and Construction
H/7 Housing Density
H/11 Residential Space Standards
H/13 Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside
HQ/1 Design Principles
S/3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
S/7 Development Frameworks
S/6 Group Village
SC/7 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments
SC/8 Open Space Standards
TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel

Consultations

6. **Parish Council** – Recommends refusal for the following reasons:

- The proposed building of three houses would represent overdevelopment of the site and intrude on the green and relatively open nature of that part of the village.
- The access to the proposed houses, shared with three existing properties, would be narrow and curved and only allow one vehicle at a time, offering a poor view of an approaching vehicle.
- The Parish Council is very reluctant to agree to an outline application, which in itself shows no precise detail of the size, location, and especially design of the proposed houses.
- We also know that the owners of two neighbouring properties have submitted objections directly to the council.

7. **Local Highways Authority** – No objections raised to the scheme. Pre-application advice was sought from Local Highways Authority prior to the determination of the application. The LHA visited the site before making comments. The following conditions should be added to any planning permission:- Visibility splays and Traffic Management Plan

8. **County Council Archology Team** – No objections raised in principle but a condition requiring a programme of archaeological investigation should be undertaken prior to the commencement of development. Records have indicated that the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential located in close proximity to St Peters Church and the medieval settlement that once extended along Comberton Road to the west of the church and the moated university farm.
9. **Trees Officer** – No comments received

Representations

10. Owner/Occupier of 13a, 15a, 15b, 17, and 25 – Object to the proposal on the following grounds:

Highway Safety – Increase in vehicle movements, visibility of oncoming traffic on the bend, unsuitable for construction traffic, obstruction of access to No.13 and No.13a, insufficient on-site parking.

Character and Appearance – Removal of trees will downgrade the area, increased density that will not be in character, cramped form of development.

Amenity Concerns – Overlooking

Other Matters – Concerns with the red line and boundary/ownership issues, lack of information in regards to tree species.

Site and Proposal

11. No.15 Comberton Road, Barton is a detached 1930s dwelling which set in a plot of 0.22ha. The site lies within the village development framework of Barton but is not within the Conservation Area. The site contains a number of established trees, none of which have Tree Preservation Orders. The rear boundary of the site abuts the Cambridge Green Belt.
12. This outline application, as amended by drawings received on 24 June 2015, relates to the erection of three detached two-storey dwellings and the associated access. The layout, design, scales and landscaping is to be considered by a Reserved Matters application.
13. The existing dwelling on the site is to be demolished and the indicative block plan demonstrates how the dwellings and associated garages could laid out.
14. The dwelling will be served by the existing private access driveway, which will be shared with four other properties.

Planning Comments

15. The key issues in this case are the principle of development, impact on the character of the area, residential amenity and highway safety.

Principle of Development

16. The NPPF advises that every effort should be made to identify and then meet the housing needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Additionally the Development Plan (Core Strategy Development Plan Document adopted January 2007 and Development Control Policies Development Plan adopted January 2007) identifies Barton as a 'Group Village' where the construction of new residential dwellings within the framework is supported.
17. The proposed development would have been acceptable in principle having regard to adopted LDF and emerging Local Plan policies, had policies ST/6 and DP/7 not become out of date as a consequence of the Council not currently being able to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
18. The site is 0.23 hectares in size and with the provision of three dwellings on the site would lead to a density of 13.2 dwellings per hectare. Officers consider this density to be acceptable in regards to policy HG/1, which states that residential developments should make best use of the site, by achieving average net densities of 30 dwellings per hectare unless there are exceptional local circumstances that require a different treatment. In this instance officers accept this lower density due to the site location on the edge of the village framework and the physical constraints of the site.
19. The current dwelling on the site was built around the 1930's and officers consider it to be quite a unique/attractive building and very much of its time. However, the building is not located within a Conservation Area, it is not prominent in the street, nor is it considered to be suitable for listing. As such, officer cannot require its retention.
20. As the scheme represents a net increase of only two dwellings, there is no need to consider affordable housing in this instance. For the above reasons, officers consider the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable, subject to the considerations set out below.

Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

21. The comments and concerns of the neighbouring and the parish council are acknowledged in relation to the density, layout and appearance of the development. These points are assessed as follows.
22. The proposal is located within a residential area characterised by a mixture of housing styles and sizes. The dwellings in the area are all set within reasonable sized plots surrounded by trees and hedgerows giving the area that semi-rural/edge of village feel.
23. From the Comberton Road the proposal site is set back by approximately 30m (from its closest boundary) and between this are other residential properties and trees/hedgerows. Officers consider the site to be discrete with limited views from the public highway.
24. As this is only an outline planning application the layout of the dwellings on the site is indicative. However, officers consider the submitted plan demonstrates that three dwellings could sufficiently fit on the site with the ability to still retain a large number of trees on all boundaries of the site.
25. By virtue of the site's discrete nature, away from the main road, officers consider a scheme of three dwellings would continue to retain that semi rural character as

described above without having an adverse impact to the street character and mixed housing styles in the local area in accordance with policies DP/2 and DP/3 of the Local Development Framework.

Access, Parking and Highway Safety

26. The agent/applicants were involved with pre-application discussions with the Local Highways Authority prior to submitting the application. This involved a meeting on site to discuss the scheme for two additional dwellings on the site.
27. The site is accessed off a private drive from Comberton Road. The drive is un-adopted and currently serves four properties (including No.15, No.15a, No.15b and No.17). All of these properties have access to off-street parking facilities. The access from the highway verge also accommodates two entrance points for the residents of No.13 and No.13a.
28. The concerns of the residents relate to the restricted width of the drive, constrained access for larger vehicles and the poor visibility of two cars on a bend. However, it is important to note that the current driveway is only 3m in width at certain points and cars are required to wait on the verge (adjacent to the highway) for vehicles to pass. The same situation would arise for large delivery vehicles to the properties.
29. The minimum spacing for two cars to pass at a squeeze, in accordance with Manual for Streets, is 4.1m. The guidance document does identify that any curvature nature of the street would also need to be considered.
30. The plans were amended on the 24 June 2015, to increase the width of the drive at the more constrained points. The plans now demonstrate that a width of 4.7m can be achieved from the access point of the drive up to the boundary of the proposal site. The proposal will seek to remove some of the shrubs on the southern part of the access and the drive widened to accommodate car movements. A planting/buffer area could be accommodated beyond the southern part of the access to soften the boundary.
31. Occupiers of the properties will need to continue to take due care when entering/exiting the site. However, officers consider the new arrangement would be an improvement from what is currently practiced and would be sufficient in allowing two cars to pass without the need to reverse and wait on the verge. In the event this does need to take place, officers are minded this would only be for a short period, allowing the occupiers of No.13 and No.13a to still have access without any prolonged obstruction.
32. Critically, the Local Highway Authority have been asked to confirm there would not be any threat to highway safety or the free flow of traffic on the public highway as a result of this scheme. In response, it has confirmed that it has no objections relating to highway safety.
33. Sufficient car parking is provided for both the proposed dwellings accordance with Policy TR/2. Two parking spaces are provided for the existing and proposed dwelling and with sufficient space to meet the required 2.5m x 5m dimensions of the Local Highway Authority. The development therefore does not present an adverse impact upon existing on-street parking.
34. Officers consider the points raised by residents relate to matters of inconvenience rather than highway safety. For these reasons, officers conclude that the proposal

would not be prejudicial to highway safety and it would accord with policy TR/2 and with policy DP/3 1(c).

Residential Amenity

35. As the application has been submitted in outline, officers are not able to make detailed comments on the impact of the scheme in regards to issues of overlooking, overbearance, shadowing of neighbouring sites. However, the layout proposed on the block plan is considered sufficient to demonstrate that three dwellings could be achievable without having any direct adverse impacts.
34. The creation of a further two dwellings in this location would give rise to further traffic and car fumes but to a limited extent given the size/scale of the development. The concern raised in relation to car fumes is therefore not considered to be significant in this instance.
35. Consequently, at this outline stage, development for three new dwellings need not have any unacceptable adverse impacts upon residential amenity in accordance with Policy DP/3. A standard condition is nonetheless recommended to control noise and disturbance during the construction process.

Trees

36. The tree survey identifies 26 different trees on the site which are a mixture of mature and semi mature native and exotic broadleaves and evergreens. As a result of the development six trees will need to be removed, three of which are considered to be diseased or dying.
37. The indicative site plan shows that some of the hard surfaces might be within the Root Protection Areas of the trees and as such special construction techniques could be used to minimise disturbance. Officers recommend a condition for details to be submitted. Additional tree planting has been proposed on the site, however due to the current stock levels on the site, officers do not consider this is be a necessity.
38. Officers consider the proposed development would not have a major long term impact on the site's tree stock. The majority of trees along the rear boundary will be retained and as such will retain the soft buffer with the adjacent Green Belt land. As proposed, the development is not considered to have an adverse impact on biodiversity in accordance with policy NE/6 of the Local Development Framework.

Outdoor Playspace and Indoor Community Infrastructure

39. Local Development Framework policies state that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements towards the provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. Contributions towards open space, sport and recreation facilities, indoor community facilities and waste receptacles had been identified. Such provision cannot be made on site and can therefore only be provided by way of financial contributions.
40. National Planning Practice Guidance seeks to remove the disproportionate burden of developer contributions on small scale developers. It advises that tariff style contributions should not be sought for sites of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of 1000 square metres. The development falls within this threshold.

41. The Guidance is a material consideration and the benefits of the development are considered to outweigh the need to make suitable arrangements for the provision of infrastructure. No request for such provision is now therefore sought.

Other Matters

42. Residents and members of the Parish Council have asked for the application to be considered as a full planning application rather than an outline application. Whilst officers are mindful that this will provide them with the comfort of knowing how the proposed scheme will be finished, the local planning authority has to consider what is set out before it.
43. In accordance with the above comments officers consider there is scope for three dwellings to fit on the site without causing any detrimental harm to neighbouring amenity, or the character of the area.

Conclusion

44. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF explains that the presumption in favour of sustainable development means granting permission unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, or policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be resisted.
45. In this instance, the development is considered to be compatible with the local area and acceptable in highway safety terms. On this basis, there are no adverse impacts that would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal. Accordingly, the development is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

46. Approval, subject to the following:

Conditions

- a) **Approval of the details of the layout of the site, the scale and appearance of buildings and landscaping (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced.**
(Reason - The application is in outline only.)
- b) **Application for the approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.**
(Reason - The application is in outline only.)
- c) **The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.**
(Reason - The application is in outline only.)
- d) **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.**

The boundary treatment for each dwelling shall be completed before that dwelling 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.)

- e) The landscaping details required in condition 1 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.)

- f) 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.)

- g) 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.)

- h) No development shall take place until a traffic management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to address the following areas of concern:**

- i) Movements and control of muck away from lorries (all loading and unloading should be undertaken off the adopted public highway)**
- ii) Contractor parking, for both phases all such parking should be within the curtilage of the site and not on the street.**
- iii) Movements and control of all deliveries (all loading and unloading should be undertaken off the adopted public highway)**
- iv) Control of dust, mud and debris (please note it is an offence under the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or debris onto the adopted public highway)**

(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

- i) Prior to the first occupation of the development visibility splays shall be provided each side of the vehicular access in full accordance with the**

details indicated on the submitted plan No.2364-03 rev B. The splays shall thereafter be maintained free from any obstruction exceeding 0.6m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.

(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission July 2013
- South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- Planning File Ref S/0844/15/F

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