

APPLICATION NUMBER: FUL/2013/0891
ADDRESS: Rostherne New Road
PROPOSAL: Erection of 3 dwellings

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to consider the above application.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **refused** for the reasons outlined in the attached schedule.

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION SITE

The application site is located to the north of New Road, it has been cleared and is currently vacant, but until recently was formerly the site of a bungalow. The site is part of the historic area of Keresley Green. The site adjoins No.1 New Road to the west, Fir Tree House to the east and a commercial property and Rose Tree Cottage, High Street, to the north. To the south, on the opposite side of the road, is Church Court, a relatively modern block of flats.

PROPOSAL

This proposal is for the erection of three detached dwellings with associated parking. The dwellings would sit along one building line, set back approximately 10m from the highway and would be individual in design. Plots one and two would have the same footprint (5.8 x 8.8m) and plot three would be larger (7.5 x 9.5m).

Plots one and three would have a gable end facing New Road; plot two would have its ridge running east to west. The design and access statement states that the designs have changed to minimise the overall visual impact of the proposal, which will now represent a 21% reduction in the front elevation facing New Road. Each property would be separated by 1m and there would be a 1m gap between plots one and three and the side boundaries of the site. There would be two off street parking spaces for each property.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There have been a number of planning applications however, the following are the most recent/relevant:-

FUL/2011/1841 – Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of two dwellings – approved by Planning Committee 1st December 2011.

FUL/2013/0404 – Erection of three dwellings – refused by Planning Committee 9th May 2013.

Reason: The proposed development would be contrary to Policies BE2 and H12 of the Coventry Development Plan 2001 in that it would result in an unacceptable overdevelopment of this restricted site, giving a cramped appearance which is out of character with the locality.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

- CDP; H12, BE2, H9, AM22
- SPG Extending Your Home adopted by Planning Committee on 10 April 2003 and reviewed on 15 December 2005, both following public consultation exercise in accordance with PPG12

- National Planning Policy Framework

STATUTORY CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- Highways – no objections
- Ecology – no objections

PUBLIC RESPONSES

- Notification letters were sent to 3/6/13
- Site notice was posted on 5/6/13
- 3 representations have been received from neighbours concerned about overdevelopment; the houses being too close together and to the boundary; 2 houses is the maximum the site can accommodate; the 3 houses proposed are much smaller than the surrounding properties; increased overlooking of neighbours; bungalows would be more appropriate; the design of the houses does not accord with Ancient Arden guidelines; lack of parking; highway safety

ISSUES

Policy H9 dealing with windfall housing sites indicates that proposals for housing development on sites not identified will be permitted subject to:

- compatibility with nearby uses;
- the provision of an attractive residential environment;
- convenient pedestrian access to local facilities;
- being well served by public transport; and
- compatibility with other plan policies.

Policy BE2 seeks a high quality urban design and encourages guidance in the form of SPG.

Policy AM22 requires that safe and appropriate access to the highway system together with satisfactory on site arrangements for vehicle manoeuvring so as to ensure safety for all users. The supporting text makes clear that consideration must also be given to the impact of access and manoeuvring arrangements on neighbouring users and the amenity of residents.

The main issues in determining this application are the impact on neighbouring amenity, design and highway considerations.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

To protect the amenity of existing residents a minimum distance of 20m is required between new and existing windows; there is a gap over 24m between the proposed windows of the properties and windows at Church Court opposite, exceeding the 20m recommended and the distance between the two developments is therefore considered acceptable.

A minimum 10m depth of rear garden will normally be required in the interests of achieving acceptable living standards, minimising overshadowing and maintaining privacy. The garden depth of all 3 dwellings is over 10m which exceeds the recommendation and is akin to the sizes of gardens in the immediate vicinity. The mature boundary treatment and the distance of Rose Cottage from the shared rear boundary (approximately 25m) also protects against any significant loss of privacy or overlooking and would help screen the development from view of this property.

Plot 1 would be 1m from the boundary with the adjacent bungalow. However as there are no habitable room windows in this side elevation, there is no concern that the proximity of the new development would cause loss of outlook and given its orientation to the east of the bungalow, any loss of light or overshadowing would only be in the mornings. It does not project beyond the rear elevation of the bungalow therefore it would accord with Supplementary Planning Guidance in relation to rear windows.

There is the potential for loss of privacy through an increase in overlooking to neighbouring gardens. A first floor rear bedroom window would be located close to the boundary with the adjacent No.1 New Road bungalow, which would increase the likelihood of overlooking, however, the window would look down the garden and would not be in a position foreign to the relationship between other two storey properties' windows and gardens in the vicinity, therefore whilst there would be an increase in the potential for overlooking, the relationship to the boundary is not one which would cause such loss of privacy to warrant refusal of the application on this basis alone.

Plot 3 would sit closer to the boundary with Fir Tree House than the previous proposal and would infringe a 45-degree sightline taken from the middle of the closest first floor window (despite the design and access statement saying it does not). However, whilst this infringement is contrary to guidance, the distance of the infringement would be at approximately 16m, therefore it is unlikely that the dwelling would cause harm through loss of light or overshadowing. The Fir Tree House plot is large, therefore it is also unlikely that the proposed dwelling would cause harm to its outlook or visual amenities.

Design

The design and access statement states that the properties have been designed reflecting the 'Ancient Arden' character of the old Keresley village. The designs of the properties are relatively conventional. House type A incorporates some classic cottage style features such as the high pitched roof, the brick arches above the windows and corbelling below the eaves; however house type B appears more modern with the canopy across the front reminiscent of something found on a modern housing estate. The site is just outside the area covered by the Design Guidelines for Development in Coventry's Ancient Arden 1995. There is an assortment of properties in the area (bungalows, flats and a mixture of old and new houses) therefore the designs of these properties would not appear incongruous within the street scene. However, there is an issue with the overriding principle of 3 dwellings on site.

Officers had previously approved a scheme for 2 properties, which were adequately spaced out and the sizes of the plots were in keeping with the character of other plots within the street. They were also staggered back from one another, which again, helped to integrate them into the varied building line. However, there is only 1m between each property in the new scheme and the smallest plot is just 7m in width, which creates a very tight relationship between the 3 properties, resulting in a density which is not characteristic of New Road. The nearest example of a higher density row of properties in the street is further to the east, where there are 3 detached properties (Shiloh, Poppins and Broadlea), however, these properties are separated by a minimum 1.6m separation gap and each plot is over 10m wide. It is considered that the extra 600mm provides that much needed breathing space between the properties, to integrate them into the street scene without making them appear overcrowded.

Whilst, the proposal accords with the guidance for new residential development in terms of its impact upon neighbouring amenity and highway safety, the main issue is the impact on the street scene and the character of the area. The re-submitted plans effectively show the same layout which was refused by Planning Committee in May 2013, but just changing the designs to two gable ended properties instead of one in an attempt to reduce the massing of the buildings facing New Road. Officers informally discussed possible changes with the agent following the previous refusal and suggested that much larger spacing between properties may reduce the impact. However, this was not taken on board and Officers consider that the change in house design does not overcome the previous reasons for refusal.

It is therefore considered that the minimum separation distances and small plots create an overly restricted relationship and the straight building line of the 3 properties results in an overly uniform row, which combine to create an uncharacteristic scheme, alien to the more arbitrary nature of the street scene and the spacious character of the area.

Highways

The provision of two off-street spaces accords with our recommended planning guidance for new developments. The Highways Officer has raised no objection to the increase in dwellings or the lack of a turning space on the forecourt of plots 1 and 2, giving the reason that New Road is relatively quiet with slow moving traffic. The proposal therefore accords with Policy AM22 for new developments.

Conclusion

The reason for Coventry City Council refusing planning permission are the same as previously as the development is not in accordance with Policies H9 or BE2 of the Coventry Development Plan 2001, SPG and National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore the application is not considered acceptable as the development would result in an unacceptable overdevelopment of this restricted site, giving a cramped appearance which is out of character with the locality.