D&R 30/7/07

Application Number: ADC/0379/07 **Recommendation – APPROVE**

Site: **Land to Rear of 22 Steepdown Road, Sompting**

Proposal: **2 semi-detached chalet-style bungalows (using existing access to 22 Steepdown Road)**

The Application

The application relates to the land to the rear of No.22, a detached hip-roofed bungalow on the east side of Steepdown Road. The bungalow itself has no extensions but it has a detached garage on the north side.

The proposal is to erect a pair of semi-detached, three-bedroom chalet bungalows to the rear of the existing bungalow, demolishing the existing garage, constructing a shared drive along the north side boundary, and providing 6 car parking spaces.

West of the site access, on the opposite side of Steepdown Road, on lower ground, is Dovecote Mews (the converted outbuildings of former Halewick Farm) and to the east are the rear gardens of properties in Halewick Lane. The properties within the vicinity are generally bungalows, both detached and semi-detached. To the north, in Sedbury Road, the properties are on higher ground and many tend to have been altered, some with rear extensions and conservatories, some with rear dormers. The application property has a rear garden very much larger than those of the surrounding properties.

The site is 89m in total length by 27m wide at its widest point (where the proposed dwellings would be located). It narrows towards the front and is 18m in width where it meets the road. Its area is 0.18 hectare, with the land rising to the east and north.

The proposed dwellings are 'L' shaped in design with two ground floor bedrooms, bathroom and the entrance hall at the front (west); the kitchen dining and living spaces toward the rear and one master bedroom with ensuite in the roof space. Space is provided for a home office in the roof which overlooks the living area.

Consultations and Representations

County Transport Planning Services: No objection subject to conditions requiring provision of parking spaces, on-site turning, heavy-duty access crossover, driveway construction details, pedestrian visibility splays of 2m by 2m and vehicular splays of 2.4m by 43m and provision for contractors storage on-site and wheelwash.

Sompting Parish Council: To ~~be reported~~. No obj.

Third Parties: 5 2 letters of objection have been received from residents at 2.4.10 No's 12 & 14 Sedbury Road, whose main objections/concerns are:-

- Overlooking and loss of privacy. The plans show trees on all sides of the site except the north side – if trees were to be planted here will the new residents remove them?
- Loss of trees and hedging and disturbance to wildlife.
- Access danger owing to loss of vision caused by parked cars on the roadside.
- Cramped driveway due to parking making emergency access difficult.
- Combined with proposals at No.21 Halewick Lane it would result in too many people and vehicles, in too small a plot causing more noise and disturbance.
- Loss of security at the rear resulting from the new access way.
- Loss of gardens in the area to numerous extensions and new dwellings.
- Questions as to who would be responsible for maintaining the Leylandii conifer trees which are extremely tall and not lopped since planted about 15 years ago.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted West Sussex Structure Plan 2001-16 (WSCC 2005): LOC1, CH1, NE1-2, ERA1,DEV1, DEV3-5.
Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996): AG1, AH1-2, AH5, AT12 and Appendix 11 'Supplementary Planning Guidance' comprising Development Control Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'.
Adur Local Plan – Submission Core Strategy 2006-26(ADC 2007): H1, H3, , T3-4, ENV4-5.
Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology (WSCC 2003 and ADC 2004)
PPS1 'Delivering Sustainable Development' (ODPM 2005)
PPS3 ' Housing' (DCLG 2006)

Planning Assessment

Policies

The site is located within a residential part of the built-up area of Sompting and the proposal constitutes infilling as provided for in both Structure and Local Plan policies. There is no objection in principle to infill development within the built-up area and, in order to meet the housing requirements of the approved Structure Plan and Local Plan, a significant proportion of housing development by way of 'unidentified' small infill sites is necessary.

Structure Plan policies give significant weight to making the best use of land through higher density development provided that the impact on the character of the area and environment is acceptable (LOC1, ERA1, CH1) and subject to policy DEV1 requiring high quality development. Policy DEV4 states

(amongst other things) that development should not be permitted unless the travel needs it generates are met. DEV5 states that "Development should not be permitted unless the level of parking is compatible with the need to avoid environmental or safety problems and the need is to encourage walking, cycling and the use of passenger transport where this is or can be a realistic alternative".

Local Plan policy AH2 relates to new residential development (by way of infilling and redevelopment) and states that new dwellings should be designed so that their appearance, character and scale create a pleasant place in which to live and are in keeping with and enhance the existing local environment with particular attention being paid to architectural form, height, materials, density, layout of buildings and hardsurfaced areas; they do not have an unneighbourly effect due to loss of privacy; daylight/sunlight; outlook or open space, incorporating adequate standards of residential amenity for the new dwellings in terms of amenity space, daylight, outlook and privacy; access and parking provision meets the adopted standards; and they accord with the Council's DC Standard No.2 'Space Around New Dwellings and Flats'.

Government policy guidance PPS3 encourages best use of urban land for housing at higher densities (minimum 30 dwellings per hectare) and without rigid application of parking and amenity space standards.

Policy H3 of the Submission Core Strategy sets a minimum density of 35 dwellings per hectare, but states that lower densities will be acceptable if they fit in with the unique character of the area.

Density, character and visual amenity

The surrounding area is at a lower density than that set out in Government guidance, being 25 dwellings per hectare (dph) whilst the existing property itself is only 5.5 dph. The proposed semi-detached properties would result in the site having a density 16.5 dph, which is still far below Government guidance but it is considered that this low density is justified, as a portion of the site would be taken up with the proposed driveway and parking and the new properties need to fit in with the character of the locality and not appear out of keeping. The site is currently laid to mature gardens with large shrubs and some conifer trees on the boundaries, none of which are specimens worthy of preserving.

The proposed semi-detached bungalows would have a ridge height of 5.7m which is considered to be in keeping with existing bungalows. Most of the surrounding dwellings are hip-roofed but some have been extended to gables and part-hipped gables. It is felt that the proposed part-hipped roof would integrate sufficiently and not appear incongruous. The elevations of the proposal use a mix of brickwork and render with decorative brick panels which is considered to be acceptable.

Residential amenity- effect on surrounding dwellings

The north side boundary with No.2 Sedbury Road is a 1.4m high block work wall, which then turns into a boundary comprised of shrubs and conifer trees adjacent to the gardens of No's 10–14, but no physical boundary fence or wall exists. The eastern boundary is made up of multiple shrubs and climbing plants to a height of approximately 2m. The southern boundary consists of a thick high hedge (2.4m) adjacent to No.19 Halewick Lane which then changes into a post and rail fence adjacent to the garden of No.18 Halewick Lane.

The proposed dwellings would face westwards with the principal windows of their living rooms facing onto their rear gardens, with the rear gardens of properties in Halewick Lane to the east.

The site directly to the east (No.21 Halewick Lane) is the subject of a current planning application (ADC/363/07) to demolish the existing bungalow and erect a terrace of 4 three-bedroom houses. In the context of this application the main concerns would be the potential to overlook the existing bungalow or any of the four proposed houses. The existing bungalow to the east has a rear garden length of 12.5m and the proposed new development would only reduce this to 11m. As the proposals for 22 Steepdown Road retain a garden length of 21m, the total distance between the facing principal windows would be a minimum of 32m which greatly exceeds the minimum standard of 21m and would avoid overlooking.

The only firstfloor windows in the north and south side elevations of the proposed chalet bungalows would serve bathrooms and would be obscurely glazed to prevent overlooking. There would be a rooflight and two groundfloor windows but these would not result in unacceptable overlooking. The northernmost would face toward the rear of No.14 Sedbury Road which is sited on higher ground at a distance of 24m away. The southernmost would face the side of the end of the long rear garden of No.18 Steepdown Road.

The existing bungalow (No.22) is sited on lower ground to that of the proposed dwellings but the 34m distance between the rear windows of the existing bungalow and the front windows of the proposed dwellings would be sufficient to provide adequate privacy.

It is proposed by the applicant that many of the large shrubs and trees which currently screen the site should be retained. A planting condition would not only assist privacy for adjoining gardens but would also to help integrate the buildings into the existing hillside without appearing too stark.

Residential amenity – proposed dwellings

The garden sizes of the proposed new dwellings would be 260sqm for the northernmost property and 210sqm for the one to the south, whilst the existing bungalow would retain a garden size of 270sqm. These are well in excess of minimum standards. Bin storage and recycling areas are shown.

Access and parking

Parking provision of two car parking spaces per dwelling is provided in line with the West Sussex revised parking standards.

The access drive to street would need to be reconstructed but the sightlines would remain unchanged.

The existing bungalow has its main front door to the side and it is proposed that the driveway would be reduced in width at this point to 3.9m to enable a 1m wide pathway to be provided for safe access. The rest of the driveway would be 4.9m in width. The driveway is considered to be acceptable in terms of the level of activity that would be likely for the proposed development.

Sustainable and Resource Efficient Buildings

Policy ENV4 of the Adur Development Plan – Submission Core Strategy states that measures will be required to ensure new buildings achieve efficient environmental performance and to meet the Government's new Code for Sustainable Homes. Policy H3 Also requires all new homes to be designed to 'Lifetime Homes' standards.

The dwellings are proposed to be built from structurally insulated panels (SIPs) which allows the structure to be designed and built off-site, which reduces waste and disturbance to neighbours and is a more efficient form of building. They will include rainwater recycling; grey water recycling; energy efficient appliances and either combined heat and power boilers or solar water heating.

Recommendation

A. Subject to completion by 17 August 2007 of a satisfactory section 106 Obligation undertaking to pay £2,275 to sustainable transport improvements in the area, APPROVE for reason that:-

2 pp;

Subject to:-

1. C1Ci (Standard time limit)
2. C7Ci (Details of walls and fencing related to the buildings to be approved and implemented)
3. C8Biv (Provision of parking spaces) (amended)
4. C9Ai (Provision of heavy-duty access crossover) (amended)
5. C9Ciii (Provision and retention of on-site turning area) (amended)
6. C9F (Provision of pedestrian splays) (amended)
7. C9G (Provision of visibility splays)
8. C9H (Construction details of driveway) (amended)
9. C9N (Temporary provision for contractor's materials, etc)
10. C9S (Temporary wheelcleaning facility during construction)
11. C11Ai (Landscaping scheme including existing trees to be approved

P.T.O

and implemented and replacement of those that die)

12. C12Ai (External materials for walls and roof of building to be approved)
13. C18K (Provision for waste storage)
14. The proposed dwellings shall achieve efficient environmental performance by, prior to their occupation, being completed to achieve at least level 3 of the Code of Sustainable Homes in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.
15. The proposed dwellings shall, prior to their occupation, be completed to meet the 'Lifetime Homes' standards in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA.

B. In the event that a satisfactory section 106 Obligation is not completed by 17 August 2007 (the date that the statutory period for determining the application expires), that authority to refuse the application be delegated to the Head of Planning and Community on grounds that it does not comply with Structure Plan Policies DEV3-5, Submission Core Strategy policy T3 and the Revised West Sussex Parking Standards and Transport Contributions Methodology requiring improvements to sustainable transport in the area.

.....