

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE
10TH APRIL 2003
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

PCC 10.04.03
PART 1
ITEM NO
FOR DECISION
CPO

S6/2002/470/FP
PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND
CONSTRUCTION OF 2 DETACHED DWELLING HOUSES
6 HILL RISE, CUFFLEY

APPLICANT: CRESTHAVEN DEVELOPMENTS LTD

(Northaw & Cuffley)

NOTE TO MEMBERS

This application was reported to the last meeting of this Committee on 13th March 2003 where Members deferred making a decision to allow a site visit to be undertaken. The content of my report and recommendation is unchanged from the previous meeting and is detailed below. Any further observations received will be reported to Members.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is located on the eastern side of Hill Rise near to its junction with Plough Hill. It comprises a detached dwelling set back 15 metres from the highway in a plot with a frontage of 18 metres in width. The plot has a total depth of 110 metres and enlarges to 33 metres in width for the last 50 metres. It is enclosed on all boundaries by established hedges with several mature trees on its northern and southern boundaries. The wider eastern half of the plot was used as an orchard and there are still a number of fruit trees in this area.
- 1.2 The site is bounded on all sides by detached and semi-detached residential properties in Hill Rise and Orchard Close. The ground levels fall sharply to the north outside of the site and, to a lesser extent, to the east so that properties in Orchard Close are at a lower level. There is a single vehicular access to the site from Hill Rise.
- 1.3 There is no relevant planning history on this site.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application proposes to demolish part of the existing dwelling, reducing the width of the frontage by 2.5 metres, to provide an access drive into the rear of the site. The application originally proposed to construct 4, detached dwellings on the wider part of the site which was later amended to 3. However, following concerns expressed by officers, this has now been amended to 2 dwellings. Plot 1 would be located adjacent to the rear garden of the existing dwelling and the proposed

dwelling on the larger plot 2 would be sited at an angle to the rear and side boundaries, maintaining a distance of at least 12m at its closest point from the boundary with Orchard Close. The proposed dwellings have a footprint of 15m x 9m and a maximum roof height of 7m. The dwellings are designed with the first floor accommodation contained mostly within the roof and dormer windows on the front and rear elevations. Both dwellings would have detached double garages. The new dwellings would have rear garden depths of between 11 and 18 metres while the existing dwelling at no. 6 would retain a rear garden of between 22-26m. The new dwellings would be served by a single vehicular access from Hill Rise which would be enlarged and the existing dwelling would have a separate crossover.

3.0 MAIN RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 Welwyn Hatfield District Plan Alterations No.1 – 1998

Policy BEV 9 - Other specified settlements
GEN criteria 1 – Design and Siting of Buildings
GEN criteria 3 – Impact on Amenities of Residential Properties
GEN criteria 4 – Servicing, Access and Car Parking
RES criteria 17 – Character of Settlements

4.0 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

- 4.1 This application was publicised by the posting of a site notice and direct notification of adjacent residential properties. 24 letters of objection were received in respect of the first proposal for 4 dwellings from residents in Tolmers Avenue, Hill Rise, Orchard Close and Kingsmead. Objections were on the grounds that the proposal represented an over-development of the site, would affect the appearance of the street, would appear unduly dominant and would impact on the privacy of adjoining residents. Also concerned that the site access was inadequate, that there would be insufficient parking for new dwellings, would create a danger on the highway and would affect the water table and existing sewage system.
- 4.2 Everyone who had commented on the first proposal was re-consulted on the later amended plans which reduced the scheme to 3 dwellings. As a result, 10 further letters of objection were received which reiterated earlier concerns. 1 letter confirming no further objections was also received from a resident in Hill Rise. Neighbours have now been re-consulted on these latest amendments for 2 dwellings. Any further observations received will be reported to Members. Since the application was deferred at the last meeting, two further letters of objection have been received from 2 addresses in Orchard Close. They reiterate earlier objections that the dwellings will appear intrusive from neighbouring properties, that permitted development rights should be removed and that all levels should be known before development commences.
- 4.3 Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council object to the amended scheme on the grounds that this is backland development which does not enhance the character of Cuffley. They have now been re-consulted and any further comments will be reported to Members.
- 4.4 County Highways Authority originally objected to the application as a number of highways design issues had not been resolved. Following further discussions with

the applicants and the submission of additional information, this objection has now been withdrawn.

- 4.5 Northaw and Cuffley Residents Association object on the grounds that the proposal is out of character and would impinge upon the privacy of adjoining occupiers.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 3, published in August 2000, states that Authorities should avoid developments that make an inefficient use of land i.e less than 30 dwellings per hectare, but the guidance also advises that developments should not compromise the quality of the environment and that regard should be had to the immediate neighbouring buildings and townscape of the wider locality. PPG3 advises that new housing development of whatever scale should not be viewed in isolation but should respect and enhance the local character of an area.
- 5.2 This residential area is characterised by detached and semi-detached dwellings in a fairly regular plot pattern. The plot sizes reduce in depth moving north along Hill Rise and Orchard Close, to the east, has considerably smaller plots. Therefore, the application site, no.6, is located within a plot which is considerably larger than any others surrounding. The proposed scheme would reduce the garden of no.6 to around 22 metres in depth, a size which is not out of character with the surrounding development. The proposed dwellings would have smaller rear gardens, similar to those in Orchard Close. Therefore, I am satisfied that the proposed pattern of development reflects the existing pattern and so accords with policy BEV9 and RES criteria 17 in this respect.
- 5.3 The proposed dwellings would be well separated from existing properties in Hill Rise, which would be at a higher ground level, and Tolmers Avenue to the north, which is at a lower level. Properties in Orchard Close would be closest to the proposed scheme and are at a lower ground level. The dwelling on plot 2 would maintain a distance of 28 metres from the rear of the nearest property, High Mead, to the east. I am satisfied that, taking the difference in levels into account and with the lowered roof height now proposed, this separation is still sufficient to ensure that the dwellings would not appear unduly dominant from this property or result in a cramped form of development, in accordance with RES criteria 17.
- 5.4 The traditional design of the proposed dwellings is acceptable and not out of keeping with the varying house styles in the surrounding area. I consider that they will have a limited visual impact on the street scene due to their separation from the road. The access to the development is provided by the partial demolition of no.6, reducing the frontage by 2.5 metres. I have no objection to this alteration as the resulting dwelling will appear acceptable in the street.
- 5.5 The proposed dwellings would be served by a private drive off Hill Rise. Following confirmation of the site lines that can be provided, the Highway Authority are now satisfied with the scheme. A brick-built bin store will be provided at the top of the drive. Car parking for the dwellings is provided in accordance with our adopted standards. Although the garage serving no.6 would be demolished, parking for 2 vehicles would be provided to the front of the dwelling which is acceptable.

5.6 There are a number of mature trees along the boundaries of this site. They are well separated from the proposed dwellings and I would expect to see them retained as part of an approved landscaping scheme for the development.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 I am satisfied that the proposed layout reflects the existing pattern of development in the surrounding area. The dwellings are sufficiently separated from existing properties to ensure that they do not harm existing residential amenities. The highways issues have now been resolved and I am satisfied that the development will have limited impact on the appearance of the street or the character of the area. I consider that the development meets the aims of PPG3 and is acceptable in terms of adopted district plan policies. However, given the marked changes in ground level in the immediate area, I recommend that a levels condition is imposed.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

7.1 I recommend that planning permission be granted in respect of application no. S6/2002/470/FP subject to the following conditions;

1. SC01 Time limit full permission
2. SC19 Materials details to be approved
3. SC09 Landscaping scheme full permission
4. SC25 Levels
5. SC26 Setting out

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application file(s) S6/2002/470/FP



6 Hill Rise, Cuffley

SCALE: 1:1250

DRAWN BY: Margaret Walker

DATE 24th February 2003

Drawing No:

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