

REFERENCE: 10/00058/FUL

SITE: 11 Moorend Road

PROPOSAL: Erection of a two-storey semi-detached dwelling to the side and erection of new porch to front elevation of the existing property

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse

1. The proposal

- 1.1 The applicant is proposing to erect a new dwelling, attached to the side of the existing property. To facilitate this, it is proposed to demolish the existing gable wall and make the existing property narrower thereby freeing up additional space for the proposed dwelling. The new dwelling is proposed to be two storeys in height and has been designed to read as an extension to the existing property.
- 1.2 Revised plans were received on 4 June 2010 which amends the replacement porch on the existing property to a canopy porch. In addition, the roof of the proposed two storey projection has been amended from a gable end to a hipped roof to reduce the bulk of this rear elevation.
- 1.3 The application site forms one half of a pair of semi-detached houses located on the corner of Moorend Road and Moorend Crescent. It is located within the central conservation area, opposite the recently constructed development at the old Ambulance Station.
- 1.4 The application is before committee as it constitutes development on garden land.

2. History

- 2.1 There is no planning history on this site.

3. Policies and guidance

Adopted Local Plan Policies:

CP 4 Safe and sustainable living
CP 7 Design
BE 1 Open space in conservation areas
GE 5 Protection and replacement of trees
GE 6 Trees and development
HS 1 Housing development
HS 2 Housing Density
RC 6 Play space in residential development
UI 3 Sustainable Drainage Systems
TP 1 Development and highway safety
TP 6 Parking provision in development

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Play space in residential development (2003)

Central Conservation Area Leckhampton character appraisal and management plan
SPD (2008)

Planning Policy Guidance/Statements

PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS 3: Housing
PPS 5: Planning for the historic environment
PPG 13: Transport

4. Consultation responses

4.1 Civic Society

We question whether there is space for what is proposed on the site, and are concerned that what is proposed would not sit comfortably with the existing dwellings.

4.2 Architects Panel

1. Project Description and Reference.

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2. Observations on Presentation.

The presentation is acceptable but it would benefit some further site context or photographs to explain the aspect onto Moorend Crescent.

3. Principal of Development.

We believe the site is suitable for a new dwelling in location and scale terms.

4. Quality of Design.

The proposed design appears to be designed as an extension of the existing house. This provides issues with over shading, car parking access and the actual details to the existing house. We would suggest the scheme could be designed as an extension to the terrace and this would overcome some of these issues. We also question whether the development would be better addressing Moorend Crescent?

5. Summary.

Although the aesthetics are acceptable in principal the scheme is meanly designed and we would suggest the layout and massing are revised to provide a better thought out scheme.

6. Recommendation.

The panel could not support the scheme in its current configuration and suggest the applicant should withdraw the scheme and redesign.

4.3 County Council Highways Authority

This application is essentially for a new dwelling to be served by the existing vehicular access to 11 Moorend Road (which is located on Moorend Crescent) and for a new vehicular access to serve the existing dwelling. The proposed vehicular access to serve the existing dwelling would be located so as to exit onto a speed table. After discussions with Gloucestershire Highways it is considered that this

proposed access would not damage the speed table, therefore subject to conditions a suitable vehicular access can be constructed at this location.

However, the access as shown on the submitted plans should be centred and widened in order to provide 2 parking spaces and 45 degree visibility splays from these spaces. The existing vehicular access located on Moorend Crescent should I believe be slightly improved, as regards visibility splays in order to serve the proposed dwelling. Although for a new 3 bed dwelling 2 parking spaces would be desirable due to the likely level of car ownership, given the close proximity to amenities and good public transport links I am content with 1 space.

I recommend that no highway objection be raised to this application subject to the following conditions being attached to any permission granted:

Notwithstanding the submitted plans, no works shall commence on site until details of a modified vehicular access to serve the existing dwelling (currently known as 11 Moorend Road) showing 45 degree visibility splays, adequate surfacing, drainage facilities and 2 car parking spaces have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the access facilities shall then be completed in all respects in accordance with those agreed details prior to the commencement of any other works on site, and shall be retained and maintained available for use at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory means of access and parking is provided and maintained for the existing dwelling, in the interests of highway safety.

Prior to occupation of the proposed dwelling the existing access facility shall be modified and improved with 45 degree splayed sight lines provided from a point either side of the driveway 4.5m. back from the carriageway edge extending to the highway boundary and the area in advance of the splay lines kept free from obstruction and surfaced in bituminous macadam or other approved material and thereafter similarly maintained.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory means of access is provided and maintained in the interests of highway safety.

The proposed dwelling shall not be occupied until car parking has been provided in accordance with the submitted plan and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

Reason: To ensure that adequate off-road parking is provided, in the interests of highway safety.

4.4 Tree Officer

The tree section has no objections to this application. Please can a landscaping scheme be conditioned to include tree planting to mitigate the loss of trees within a conservation area.

5. Publicity and representations

5.1 Letters were sent to 30 neighbouring properties, advising that the application had been received. In addition to this, a site notice was put up adjacent to the site and an advert placed within the Gloucestershire Echo. In response to this publication, 5 letters of objection were received with the following comments made;

- The proposal will turn a pair of semi-detached houses in an unbalanced terrace of three;

- Proposal removes existing trees and landscape without showing replacements; this will result in loss of habitat;
- The proposed development will cause loss of light to neighbouring properties;
- Increased flood risk;
- Lack of parking provision in an area which already suffers with on street car parking.

5.2 These matters are all material planning considerations and will therefore be considered in the following section of the report.

6. Officer Comments

6.1. Determining Issues

6.1 The determining issues relevant to this application are the design and layout of the proposed dwelling, its impact on the wider conservation area, its impact on neighbouring amenity and issues relating to highway safety.

6.2 Principle of development

6.2.1 Members will be aware of the recent amendment to PPS3 which removes garden land from the definition of previously developed land, and therefore there is no automatic presumption that this site is suitable for residential development.

6.3.2 Notwithstanding this amendment to PPS3, the proposal still has to be assessed against the provisions of Local Plan policy HS1 and the advice contained within the SPD relating to Garden Land and Infill development. Policy HS1 advises that housing development will be permitted on land allocated for housing development and previously-developed land. Importantly, however, the policy does not suggest that planning permission will **only** be granted on such sites. It is the view of your officers therefore that despite the amendments to PPS3, development has to be assessed against local plan policy on a site by site basis. The report will therefore seek to assess the application in this manner.

6.3 The site and its context

6.3.1 The application site is located on the corner of Moorend Road and Moorend Crescent. Whilst partially screened by landscaping, as members will appreciate on planning view, the site offers an undeveloped corner in this otherwise relatively built up locality.

6.3.2 The application site constitutes one half of a pair of semi-detached houses. The proposal seeks to reduce the width of the existing house and also construct a porch to the front elevation to replace the access that is currently located to the side of the property.

6.3.3 The character of the area is varied, consisting of a mix of terraced, detached and semi-detached houses. It is acknowledged that the opposite corner of Moorend Road and Moorend Crescent is filled by a variety of building types, and that these are built more closely to the highway.

6.4 Design and layout

6.4.1 Local Plan Policy CP7 requires development to be of a high standard of architectural design. Officers consider that the proposed development fails to comply with objectives of this policy and certainly conflicts with the advice contained within the Development on Garden Land and Infill sites in Cheltenham.

6.4.2 As identified above, the application site is currently an undeveloped corner in otherwise relatively built up locality. Whilst this space is not huge, it is considered to make an important contribution to the character of the area. Question C1 of the appendix to the garden land SPD refers to the contribution that space and landscaping can make to the local character. It is considered that the space to the side of the existing dwelling softens this prominent corner and therefore to reduce the level of landscaping would be harmful to the locality.

6.4.3 The layout does suggest that the Ash Tree, currently located to the side of the existing dwelling, will be replaced with a tree to the front of the site, and also that the existing hedging will be retained, but the gap between the existing gable end and the edge of the site will reduce from 6 metres, to 2 metres. Officers consider the reduction of this space to this extent to be inappropriate, and would be harmful to the character of the locality.

6.4.4 Whilst it is considered important to preserve the open corner to an extent greater than proposed, it is also important to note that the gable wall of the existing building is to be demolished to enlarge the space for the new dwelling. This will make the existing dwelling 600mm narrower, enabling the proposed dwelling to sit on the site whilst retaining an element of landscaping between the new dwelling and the footpath.

6.4.5 It is considered that such a contrived form of development cannot be supported in such a prominent location, within the central conservation area.

6.4.6 Question C5 of the appendix to the Garden Land SPD refers to frontage development and the importance of plot widths. Whilst officers acknowledge that plot widths within the locality do differ given the mix of house types, if a new dwelling is to be attached to an existing pair of semi-detached houses, then the plot width is an important consideration. This proposal, if built, would result in a terrace of three properties all of differing widths which would clearly result in a disjointed street scene that would be harmful to the locality.

6.4.7 Officers are aware that the applicant has tried to address the comments provided by the Architects Panel; revised plans now show the dwelling fronting Moorend Crescent and an attempt has been made to design it so that it reads as an extension to the existing building, but officers do not consider that this is appropriate way to approach development on this prominent site and the revised plans are certainly not sufficient to support the scheme.

6.4.8 If the proposal were to be designed to read as an extension, officers would expect the scheme to demonstrate subservience to the existing building. Adopted advice within the Residential Alterations and extensions SPD suggests that this would usually be done by incorporating an appropriate set back, and reducing the width of the addition; officers would suggest that to read as a suitably subservient extension, the width should be reduced to a maximum of 3.5 metres. It would also require the width of the existing dwelling to be maintained. Notwithstanding this

approach, a new dwelling designed to read as an extension would fail to comply with the provisions of the garden land SPD due to the issues already outlined above. If the existing dwelling is to be extended, it should be to accommodate an enlargement to the living accommodation within the existing property, not to provide a new dwelling. It is clear that this has not been achieved and the proposal fails to read as a successful extension to the existing house, or as a successful new dwelling.

6.4.9 It is evident that the proposed development is a contrived form of development which does not adequately address the character of the locality or respect the form of the parent building. The proposal would result in a disjointed street scene and would be harmful to the wider conservation area. This view is supported by the Conservation Officer who advises that;

The proposal to construct a dwelling attached to the side of the existing building is wholly inappropriate. Maps show that the existing pair of semi-detached cottages has historically been surrounded by space and it is this open character of the site that is a key characteristic of the locality and is something which must be preserved.

The existing buildings are set back from the frontage and the open and green character enhances the prominent corner and street frontages. With this in mind, the proposal to extend the building with a substantial two storey house would erode significant open space within the conservation area. Furthermore, the historic vernacular buildings stand well in the site and the simple and balanced proportions within their design would be harmfully altered.

The existing vernacular cottages, which are identified as 'positive buildings' in the Leckhampton Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan, have survived without being substantially altered. Therefore, this proposal would, in my opinion erode the character and appearance of the conservation area, and the architectural integrity of the historic cottages, and is thus unacceptable.

I feel that the prominent corner site is sensitive to development and it is unfortunate that this application shows no consideration of the key characteristics of the site and buildings. The proposal to introduce an additional dwelling to the site and effectively create a terrace would compromise the historic development of the area and would disrupt the established urban grain.

6.5 Impact on neighbouring property

6.5.1 Local Plan Policy CP4 requires development to protect the existing amenity of neighbouring land users and the locality. Whilst there has been objection to the potential loss of light caused by this proposed addition, officers do not share these concerns. The proposed new dwelling is located sufficiently far away from neighbouring properties to ensure that the scheme complies with the relevant loss of light tests and the proposal will not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy.

6.5.2 It is considered that whilst there are other shortcomings with the application, the proposal does adequately protect the existing amenity of neighbouring land users.

6.6 Access and highway issues

6.6.1 Members will note that whilst no objection has been raised by the County Council, they have suggested conditions to improve the vehicular access to both the proposed dwelling and the space shown for the existing property. These alterations are required to improve pedestrian visibility and given that conditions could overcome

this concern, officers do not consider it appropriate to refuse the application on this basis.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 To conclude, officers are not satisfied that this proposed new dwelling achieves the high standard of design expected within the central conservation area. As outlined above, the proposal will result in a terrace of three properties, all of differing widths, and this create a disjointed and contrived street scene in this prominent location. Furthermore, the space to the side of the existing property is considered to make an important contribution to the locality. This undeveloped space, adjacent to the junction of the two roads, softens the street scene in an otherwise built up location. The reduction of this space, in such a contrived manner, would be harmful to the locality and the wider conservation area, and therefore cannot be supported.

7.2 It is recommended that this application be refused.