

APPLICATION NO: 16/01755/CONDIT		OFFICER: Miss Chloe Smart	
DATE REGISTERED: 29th September 2016		DATE OF EXPIRY: 24th November 2016	
WARD: Swindon Village		PARISH: Swindon	
APPLICANT:	Centaur Homes Ltd		
AGENT:	Mr Rob Ellis, SFPlanning		
LOCATION:	Land At Manor Farm, Manor Road, Swindon Village		
PROPOSAL:	Variation of condition 2 (approved drawings) for application no. 14/01823/FUL to include alterations to fenestration and detailing of dwellings and an amendment to the width of the access road.		

Recommendation: Permit subject to Legal Agreement

Update to Officer Report

1. OFFICER COMMENTS

1.1. This update follows the officer introduction and consultation responses to the previous application. As set out in the initial report, revised Conservation Officer comments and officer comments on the scheme were scheduled to follow.

1.2. Below is a copy of the revised Conservation Officer comments, based on amendments which have been made to the scheme:

Revised drawings have been submitted addressing some of the concerns outlined above; windows have been enlarged and the string course re-introduced. As such whilst not all the points raised in the earlier comments have been addressed, what is now proposed is a considerable improvement on the earlier designs.

Conservation and Heritage summary:

Although, in my opinion, there is room for further enhancement to these proposals, the revised drawings will produce a scheme that is better than the one in the earlier submission. As such approval is recommended.

1.3. **Determining Issues**

1.4. As highlighted within the introduction, this application seeks amendments to two aspects of a previously approved application for two houses and six bungalows (planning ref: 14/01823/FUL). The amendments comprise alterations to the access road to the site, which would result in a reduction in width and also to the design of the previous approval.

1.5. The key issues in determining the existing approval on the site were as follows, (i) the principle of development, (ii) the design and layout, impact on setting of adjacent listed structures and conservation area, (iii) impact on neighbouring properties, (iv) access and highways issues, (v) trees, (vi) biodiversity and (vii) flooding.

1.6. Due to the nature of the application, this report will focus purely on the matters which are being amended and consider their acceptability. Matters such as the principle of

development will not be re-visited and the officer reports for the existing approval remain relevant.

1.7. **Design and layout**

- 1.8. Local Plan Policy CP7 requires development to be of a high standard of architectural design and to complement and respect neighbouring development. Proposals within the conservation area are also required to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.
- 1.9. The alterations to the scheme relate primarily to the fenestration and detailing of the approved dwellings. In order to set out the alterations each house type will be discussed in turn. Starting firstly with House Type B, the changes amount to an increase in height of the terrace of buildings by just under one metre. In addition, the windows have been amended from sash windows to casement windows and some alterations made to the porches of the dwellings and the chimneys.
- 1.10. With regards to House Type C, the height of the buildings has been increased by approximately 300mm from the approved ridge height. The rear elevation fenestration has been amended and an additional first floor window introduced; the bay window to the front of the dwelling amended to a flush window and alterations to a casement window.
- 1.11. Finally, changes have been made to House Types D and E, now referred to as D1 and D2 in this application. The mass and scale of the buildings remains consistent with the existing approval, but the window design has been amended from a sash appearance to a casement and an additional window introduced to both front elevations. The chimneys have also been altered.
- 1.12. Both the Council's Conservation Officer and Historic England have been consulted on the amended application. Historic England confirms that they are happy for the Council to determine the application in line with national guidance and with the advice of the Council's Conservation Officer.
- 1.13. Within the initial consultation response the Conservation Officer confirmed that the design remains similar in some ways to that previously approved but it was considered that it had been altered by the changes to the fenestration, changes to some doors, alterations to details and the reorientation of chimneys. Of particular concern were the window placement and design and loss of the string course detailing.
- 1.14. Following the comments received from the Conservation Officer, the applicant was asked to address the window design and placement and re-introduce some of the previous detailing. The applicant has re-introduced the string course detailing and also amended the window design. The initially submitted proposal incorporated casement windows which were made to look like sash. Officers considered a more appropriate approach would be to just propose a casement window and in doing this, the proportions of the windows have improved together with their placement on the buildings.
- 1.15. In the case of House Type C, the introduction of a first floor window is a significant improvement to that rear elevation as this improves the solid to void ratio of the windows to masonry and is architecturally more pleasing.

- 1.16. The Parish Council has provided a detailed consultation response and within this concerns are raised regarding amendments to the design, in particular, the increase in height of two of the house types. House Type C is referred to as having a three storey appearance. The increase in height of these properties is minimal at 300mm. The property remains two storey in scale and it is not considered the increase in height will give the dwellings the appearance of a three storey dwelling. Whilst these comments are noted, this is not something officers consider to be unacceptable.
- 1.17. The Conservation Officer has been re-consulted on the amendments which have been made to the design. It has been confirmed that whilst not all the points initially raised have been addressed, what is now proposed is an improvement on earlier designs and whilst there is room for further enhancement, the revised drawings will produce a better scheme than the earlier submission and as such, approval is recommended.
- 1.18. Whilst officers acknowledge that additional alterations could be made to the scheme, it is not considered that these are necessary in order to support the scheme. When considering what are now relatively minor differences between the existing approval and the proposed scheme and the fact that some of the design has been lifted by alterations, the proposal is considered acceptable. The mass and scale of the dwellings remains broadly consistent with the approved scheme, albeit there are some slight increases in height. In addition, the overall style of properties remains consistent, as does the layout and the varied palette of materials. It was noted as part of the previous approval that the use of these materials within the development was appropriate and the range of materials considered to respond to the distinctive varied character.
- 1.19. In summary, whilst aspects of the design have been amended, the overall scheme remains one that would complement and respect what is a relatively mixed character within the area. The proposal was previously considered to have a neutral impact on the conservation area and was not considered particularly visually prominent and this remains the case.
- 1.20. In terms of the setting of the adjacent grade II* listed church, this will remain consistent with that of the previous approval which was considered acceptable. Members will recollect a legal agreement formed part of the previous approval to ensure the land to the south of the church remained undeveloped. This has been updated in draft form to accompany this application and any decision would be subject to the completion of this agreement.
- 1.21. Overall, the scheme is considered in accordance with Local Plan Policy CP7, would preserve the character of the conservation area and also preserve the setting of the nearby listed church.
- 1.22. **Highway Considerations**
- 1.23. The proposal involves a reduction in the width of the approved access road to the scheme. The alterations to the access road stem from the previous approval not having any segregated provision for pedestrians. On reflection, the applicant considered it beneficial to provide a footway along the access road for a safe refuge area and ensure there is no conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

1.24. The road has been narrowed to a width of 4.1 metres in parts (3.1 metres for road and one metre for pedestrian area) which allows for one vehicle. The reason for this is to ensure it is clear that only one vehicle can travel along this part of the access road at any time. A passing place has been provided at the end of the access road, which is 50 metres from Church Lane.

1.25. The applicant engaged in discussions with the County Council prior to submitting this application. Gloucestershire County Council Highways have been formally consulted on the amendments to the access road. Initially additional information was requested which the applicant subsequently provided. The updated plan demonstrates suitable forward visibility from the passing place which has been provided to Church Road. Based on the amendments to the scheme, the Highway Authority raise no objection and have suggested a single condition is attached in relation to laying the vehicular access out in accordance with the submitted drawing, which has been attached to this recommendation.

1.26. Refuse and Recycling

1.27. As part of the previous approval, the applicant had demonstrated that a large refuse vehicle can manoeuvre within the development itself which remains unchanged by the proposed alterations to the scheme.

1.28. The width of the access road has been reduced to 3.1 metres at its narrowest part, with a one metre pedestrian area in addition to this. The document 'Requirements for Refuse and Recycling Provision in new developments' confirms that the widest point of a refuse vehicle is 2.6 metres (including wing mirrors). A refuse vehicle and a car, would not be able to pass each other on the access road, but due to the visibility, the provision of a passing place and the fact that Highways raise no objection, this is not considered unacceptable in terms of highway safety.

1.29. Impact on neighbouring amenity

1.30. Local Plan Policy CP4 requires development to protect the amenity of neighbouring land users and the locality.

1.31. The proposed layout of the scheme remains unaltered. As set out, the majority of the alterations to the dwellings relate to design detailing and some height increases to the dwellings.

1.32. The proposed height increases are considered marginal and will not result in any unacceptable overbearing impact or loss of light to neighbouring dwellings. The fenestration alterations are also not considered to result in any unacceptable loss of privacy.

1.33. A concern has been raised regarding plots 7 and 8 and a floor plan requested to show proposed windows. A floor plan for both D1 and D2 accompanies the application. This shows that first floor windows are located to the side elevations of these properties and only rooflights are proposed within the rear elevation of the first floor, which will not cause an unacceptable loss of privacy.

- 1.34. The proposal remains compliant with Local Plan Policy CP4 in terms of protecting the amenity of neighbouring land users.
- 1.35. **Other comments**
- 1.36. Within the Parish Council's comments conditions attached to the previous permission are referred to and copies requested of the information required to satisfy this. Information in relation to these conditions has not been submitted to the Local Planning Authority at this stage as it is not yet required. The wording of the conditions attached to the existing approval is such that certain information should be required either 'prior to commencement' or 'prior to occupation', neither of which has taken place.
- 1.37. Members should note that this application would issue a fresh permission and a fresh set of conditions which would need to be complied with. Officers have reviewed the previous conditions and since the original approval, the government has encouraged local planning authorities to re-consider trigger points for conditions, essentially to ensure detailed information relating to later parts of construction is not required for submission prior to any works commencing on site. In light of this, the conditions attached to the previous approval have been reviewed and where necessary re-worded.
- 1.38. In relation to matters such as Ecology, Trees and Archaeology, any necessary conditions which needed to be incorporated from the previous approval have been attached to this recommendation.

2. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. In conclusion, whilst aspects of the design have been amended, the overall scheme remains one that would complement and respect what is a relatively mixed character within the area. The proposal was previously considered to have a neutral impact on the conservation area and was not considered particularly visually prominent and this remains the case.
- 2.2. In terms of the setting of the adjacent grade II* listed church, this will remain consistent with that of the previous approval which was considered acceptable and as set out, a legal agreement is being updated to ensure this land remains undeveloped, even with the issuing of a fresh planning permission.
- 2.3. Overall, the scheme is considered in accordance with Local Plan Policy CP7, would preserve the character of the conservation area and also preserve the setting of the nearby listed church. In addition, the proposal remains compliant with Local Plan Policy CP4 in terms of respecting neighbouring amenity.
- 2.4. Whilst a number of objections have been received and the Parish Council have provided a lengthy objection letter, Gloucestershire County Council raises no objection to the amended width of the access road.
- 2.5. In light of all of the above, the recommendation is to approve this application, subject to completion of a Deed of Variation, to tie the existing legal agreement to this planning permission and the a series of suggested conditions which are to be circulated by way of an update.

