

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Wednesday,
30 May 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor A. Smith (Chairman) and

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, D.R. Brown, Mrs. P. Crathorne, V. Crosby, Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, P. Gittins, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Gray, Mrs. I. Hewitson, J.E. Higgin, T. Hogan, B. Lamb, D.A. Newell, B.M. Ord, B. Stephens, K. Thompson, T. Ward, W. Waters and J. Wayman J.P

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, B.F. Avery J.P, Mrs. D. Bowman, T. Brimm, J. Burton, V. Chapman, D. Chaytor, Mrs. K. Conroy, D. Farry, T.F. Forrest, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, D.M. Hancock, A. Hodgson, Mrs. L. Hovvels, G.M.R. Howe, J.G. Huntington, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, Mrs. S. J. Iveson, Mrs. I. Jackson, J.M. Khan, Mrs. E. Maddison, C. Nelson, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, Mrs. C. Potts, J. Robinson J.P, A. Warburton and Mrs E. M. Wood

DC.1/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor B. Stephens disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in the item to be discussed – worked with applicant's architect.

DC.2/07 APPLICATIONS - BOROUGH MATTERS

N.B. In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members' Code of Conduct Councillor B. Stephens declared an interest in this item and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting thereon.

The Committee considered a schedule in respect of the following application which was to be determined by the Committee. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Modifications to elevations, erection of rear extensions incorporating a granny annex, erection of canopy to front elevation and erection of triple garage to rear, The Larches, Thorpe Larches, Mr. M. Mehra, 39, The Leas, Sedgefield, Plan Ref : 7/2006/0737/DM.

The Committee was informed that at its meeting on 27th April, 2007 it had been decided that consideration of the above application be deferred pending an inspection of the site.

Members visited the site and re-assembled in the Council Offices to determine the application.

For the purpose of members of the public present at the meeting, officers clarified the nature of the decision-making process and the role of the Development Control Committee in determining planning application, planning guidance and policies.

Officers then outlined details of the applications. It was explained that planning permission was sought for a variety of works to improve and extend the residential property located in the hamlet of Thorpe Larches. Extensive works had already been undertaken to improve the property which had been vacant and in need of renovation. The site had been subject to previous and current complaints regarding unauthorised work and this application had been submitted with a view to resolving any outstanding matters.

The Committee was informed that objections had been received in relation to these proposals relating mainly to the following issues :-

- The extension is too large in relation to the existing dwelling.
- The extension is out of character with the area.
- The granny annex appears to represent a further property rather than an extension. It will add to the sewage and will also place more demand on the access.
- The extension will be visible from neighbouring properties.
- The proposal will result in the loss of light and privacy.
- Some works have been undertaken without the benefit of planning permission.
- The newt survey by Natural England was inadequate.
- The drainage arrangements are insufficient and will significantly add to the risk of local flooding.
- There has been damage to the local environment and the extension will affect trees.
- Concerns that with all the planning delays the building works will never be finished and the property will become derelict again.
- The proposal will have an adverse impact upon a range of trees

A letter of support had also been submitted paying tribute to the owners for the restoration of the house and taste and quality of materials.

Members were informed that the development including the kitchen extension and conservatory met the requirements of Policy H15 and the residential extensions supplementary planning document.

The development would have little effect on privacy or amenity of the occupier of the adjacent property.

In considering the proposal regard had been given to all points of objection submitted. It was considered that these had been addressed within the planning considerations.

The Committee was informed that representations had been received, on behalf of the objectors from England and Lyle, Town Planners. A copy of those representations were circulated for Members consideration.

It was explained that Mr. Smith, a local resident, was present at the meeting to outline the objections of four local residents.

Mr. Smith explained that one of the major objections was to the scale of the development which sought to exceed the 50% guideline limit. He considered that, through compromise, the 50% guideline could be achieved, by reducing the size of the kitchen and conservatory. The garage development was also considered to be unnecessary.

The objectors were also of the opinion that the development was not in compliance with other properties in the hamlet and the style of the property had been affected. There were also overlooking windows which, although being advised were permitted development, Mr. Smith considered should be of obscure glass,

In respect of screening, the objectors did not consider that the hedgerow would provide adequate screening and that there would be damage to the environment and trees caused by the development.

Mr. Smith pointed out that the existing property had a hip roof whereas the extension would have a gable roof, which would be out of context.

Mr. Smith referred to a triple garage which the applicant proposed to build under permitted development rights. Mr. Smith was of the opinion that as the height of the garage exceeded four metres the garage required planning permission and therefore ought to be considered by Committee. He also raised a query regarding the applicants intentions with regard to any further development to the rear of the property. The development would set an undesirable precedent.

The objectors also raised concerns regarding drainage to the site. It was explained that there were significant flooding issues associated with the site which needed to be addressed. As there was no mains drainage discharge was directed into a beck. The proposed development would increase the amount of discharge into the beck and cause ecological damage.

Thorpe Larches was a rural area with essentially "farmhouse" style developments. The proposed development was not in keeping with that and raised a significant number of issues.

In response officers explained that those elements under consideration were limited to the kitchen, conservatory, utility annex and attached single garage. Officers agreed that the triple garage required planning permission but this was purely on a technicality as its design incorporated a cupola which exceeded 4 metres in height. The applicant had been advised to remove the cupola so that it amounted to permitted development. In respect of surface water and drainage a condition was attached to deal with those issues.

Mr. Lavender, the applicants agent, was also present at the meeting to outline the proposals. He explained that much of the development, which was objected to, was permitted development. He also suggested that some elements of the extension could also be permitted development.

It was explained that in respect of the granny annex, it was not a separate dwelling and there were strong personal reasons why the development was required. Following lengthy negotiations, the scale of the development had been reduced and held to be compatible with planning policy and guidance.

Advice had been taken from Natural England regarding ecological issues and it was considered that the proposed development would not have the impact alleged by the objectors.

The Committee was informed that there had also been a statement submitted, signed by the vast majority of the residents of Thorpe Larches, in support of the application.

It was noted that a response had been received from Sedgefield Town Council, expressing concerns regarding the proposed development in relation to the scale of the development, the issue of permitted development and also any proposals for future development of the site.

In response it was explained that each application was considered on its merits.

RESOLVED : That the report be received and the recommendation contained therein adopted.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North 01388 816166 ext 4237 email:enorth@sedgefield.gov.uk