

REPORT TO THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	29 August 2012		
Application Number	N/12/01348/FUL		
Site Address	Land at 12 The Close, Gastard, Wiltshire SN13 9PX		
Proposal	Erection of Detached Dwelling, Conservatory, Carport/Workshop, Parking and Amenity Space		
Applicant	Westlea Housing Association Ltd		
Town/Parish Council	Corsham Town Council		
Electoral Division	Corsham Without and Box Hill	Unitary Member	Councillor Tonge
Grid Ref	388304 1681164		
Type of application	Full		
Case Officer	Chris Marsh	01249 706657	chris.marsh@wiltshire.gov.uk

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been called in by Councillor Tonge in order to consider the impact of the proposal on the surrounding area and on neighbour amenity.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

The application has attracted an objection from Corsham Town Council on the grounds that the proposal constitutes overdevelopment of the site, resulting in the loss of neighbour amenity.

2. Main Issues

The main issues in considering the application are:

- Principle of development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on residential amenity
- Impact on highway safety
- S106 contributions

3. Site Description

The site is located within the framework boundary for the village of Gastard and comprises a large section of garden that has been separated from the curtilage of no.12 The Close, a semi-detached property at the end of a cul-de-sac. The orientation of the site is onto Silver Street, a main route through the village, alongside which the former garden of no.12 extends, bounded by a traditional stone wall. The northwest boundary is currently hedgerow and the border with no.11 a wire fence.

Directly opposite and northwest of the site are a number of listed and non-listed cottages, all of which contribute to the character of the local area. These are largely finished in natural stone, which has weathered down, and of a modest two-storey scale set back from the road. The mixture of styles and scales is characteristic of the village.

4. Relevant Planning History		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
N/07/02242/FUL	Erection of Two Dwellings	Withdrawn

5. Proposal

The proposal comprises the erection of a new four-bedroom detached property on the site, including a new access onto Silver Street and a detached garage/workshop building to the immediate Southeast of the dwelling. The building is to be two storeys in scale, with partial dormer windows in the upper level, with a ridge height of 7.1m and eaves at 3.8m. The dormers adopt a lintel detail referencing properties opposite so as to break up the front elevation. To the rear of the property, a hipped-roof conservatory is proposed, providing access onto a patio within the rear garden, which is to be laid to lawn with hedged boundaries.

In terms of its siting, the building stands clear of the boundaries of adjacent properties, and is set back from the highway sufficiently to provide separate pedestrian access to the front door through a break in the boundary wall. At the Eastern corner of the site, a larger section of wall is to be cleared to provide access to the parking/turning area and detached single garage and workshop building. The garage/workshop is of timber construction, with a plain clay tile half-hipped roof over, featuring an open 'carport' type frontage.

Details of the external finishes of the building are yet to be refined, and these matters would be agreed by condition. However the expectation is to use double roman roof tiles and reconstituted natural stone in a style in keeping with those of the surrounding historic properties. The parking/turning area is to be surfaced in consolidated material for the first 2m, with mixed grade compacted gravel behind, providing a porous surface adjacent to the small front lawn, which runs the width of the building.

6. Consultations

Corsham Town Council – objects as *'the proposal would be overdevelopment of the site and detrimental to the streetscene'*

Highways – no objection, subject to conditions

Affordable Housing – confirmed requirement for S106 contribution of £26,000

Public Open Space – confirmed requirement for S106 contribution of £4,375

Wiltshire Biological Records Centre – confirmed recording of bats within 400m of site

Wessex Water – no objection, subject to satisfactory connection to utilities

7. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice, press advert and neighbour consultation.

9 letters of objection were received

Summary of key relevant points raised:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Loss of neighbour amenity
- Access detrimental to highway safety
- Insufficient parking and turning space

A comment of 'no objection' was received from Corsham Civic Society, however it was noted that the dwelling should be in keeping with the character of the village.

8. Planning Considerations

Principle of development

The site is located within the framework boundary for Gastard, where there is a presumption in favour of new residential development under Policy H3 of the adopted Local Plan. A previous scheme for two semi-detached dwellings on this site was withdrawn (07/02242/FUL refers) and it is considered that this would have amounted to unacceptable development, given the constraints of the site.

With regard to the reduction in the amenity space associated with no.12 with the partition of the rear garden, it should be noted that this could be undertaken in any case without planning permission and indeed this separation of what is essentially a building plot has already occurred with the erection of a fence at the Southeast boundary of the application site.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

This historic part of Gastard is characterised by its mix of styles and varied density of residential properties, which form a complex built fabric around the site. The design of the proposed dwelling references features found on surrounding properties and will readily engage in particular with the cottages directly opposite to form a more comprehensive street scene to this part of Silver Street.

Whilst the materials proposed for the outbuilding are something of a departure from those seen in the immediate vicinity, these will emphasise the ancillary nature of the building to the effect of maintaining the legibility of the overall street scene. As such, the proposal accords with Policies C3 and H3 of the adopted Local Plan.

Impact on residential amenity

The proposal allows for a separation of just over 9m between the single first floor window of the proposed dwelling on its Southeast elevation and the site boundary, with a further distance of 4m to the rear of no.12 The Close. Likewise a separation of 7.3m is maintained between the rear build line and the Southwest boundary, which borders the garden of no.11, and a distance of 25m from no.7 Silver Street, to the Northwest. Given the scale of the building, it is therefore considered that the dwelling will not have an overbearing effect on neighbouring properties or compromise the level of daylight or sunlight available to these.

The issue of potential overlooking has been raised in respect of the rear first floor windows to the Southwest elevation of the property, and their potential impact on the residential amenity of no.11 and even no.10 The Close. As the main pair of the aforementioned windows are to provide light to bathrooms, the obscure glazing of these can be ensured by condition, preventing overlooking entirely. The remaining central window is situated over a stairwell, so that direct viewing from inside the dwelling would be difficult to achieve. It is considered that an alternative rooflight over the stairwell would render the scheme less in keeping with the character and appearance of the area. It is considered that the proposal complies with Policy C3 of the Local Plan in terms of amenity.

Impact on highway safety

Details of access, parking and turning arrangements for the proposed dwelling have been agreed by the Highways Officer and no objection has been raised in respect of these. The configuration of the site provides for sufficient visibility onto the highway and adequate turning space for forward access and egress to and from the site by private vehicles. Three parking spaces are provided on site, including the single garage building, in line with County-wide parking standards.

It is not envisaged that the new access onto Silver Street will compromise the safety of this road. Objections make reference to previous incidents on the nearby bend. However it is not considered that the new access will exacerbate what is evidently a pre-existing issue, and it is in this context in which the proposal must be assessed, and so complies with Policies C3 and H3 in this respect.

S106 contributions

In accordance with Policy H6 of the adopted Local Plan, the erection of a new four-bedroom dwelling in this location would, under normal circumstances, trigger a requirement for a Section 106 contribution of £26,000 toward the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the village. A further contribution of £4,375 will be sought toward the provision of public open space, the target site being Gastard Playing Field, as set out in Policy CF3 of the adopted Local Plan.

The applicant has submitted an open-book type financial report to demonstrate that the scheme would not be viable if the above requirements for contributions are carried through in full. This has been considered by the Council's Housing Officer, whose view is as follows:

"In line with North Wiltshire's Affordable Housing Supplementary Document 2008, the Council acknowledges that developers frequently incur other costs in bringing forward development opportunities. The level of affordable housing is therefore dependent on the level of these costs, and is assessed very much on a site by site basis after considering the site conditions and the economics of provision. Following an open book assessment of Land at 12 The Close, Gastard, application no 12/01348/FUL, it has been demonstrated by the applicant that the requirement to provide the affordable housing contribution of £26,000 makes the scheme unviable."

It is therefore concluded that the usual contributions would be a significant impediment to development, irrespective of the negative residual value of the plot in any case. It is therefore the Officer's view that permission should be granted without requirement for a Section 106 Agreement.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and will not amount to overdevelopment of what is, in reality, a generous site within an established village location. Owing variously to its siting, orientation and fenestration, the proposed dwelling will not result in the loss of residential amenity to neighbouring properties, maintaining a sufficient separation as to avoid overbearing and conform to the existing built pattern of its setting. The access and parking arrangements adhere to Countywide standards and, although it is accepted that certain highway risks may already exist, the proposal is unlikely to have any significant effect on the adjacent road.

9. Recommendation

That planning permission is granted for the following reason:

The proposed development, by reason of its siting, orientation, scale, massing and design, will not harm the character or appearance of the site or its setting. The proposal will not incur detriment to residential amenity or highway safety and as such accords with Policies C3 and H3 of the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011.

Subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 No development shall commence on site until details and samples of the materials to be used for the external walls and roofs have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

- 3 No part of the development hereby permitted shall be first occupied until the access, turning area and parking spaces have been completed in accordance with the details shown on the approved plans. The areas shall be maintained for those purposes at all times thereafter.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety.

- 4 No development shall commence on site until visibility splays have been provided between the edge of the carriageway and a line extending from a point 2.4m metres back from the edge of the carriageway, measured along the centre line of the access, to the points on the edge of the carriageway 43 metres to the North and 43 metres to the South from the centre of the access in accordance with the approved plans. Such splays shall thereafter be permanently maintained free from obstruction to vision above a height of 600mm above the level of the adjacent carriageway.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety.

- 5 The office/workshop hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling subject of this application.

REASON: The additional accommodation is sited in a position where the Local Planning Authority, having regard to the reasonable standards of residential amenity, access, and planning policies pertaining to the area, would not permit a wholly separate dwelling.

- 6 Before the development hereby permitted is first occupied the larger two windows in the Southwest elevation shall be glazed with obscure glass only and the windows shall be maintained with obscure glazing at all times thereafter.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and privacy.

- 7 The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the submitted plans and documents listed below. No variation from the approved plans should be made without the prior approval of the local planning authority. Amendments may require the submission of a further application.

06-102 P3 - Proposed Site Layout Plan

06-102 P4 - Proposed Plans and Elevations - 4 Bed Dwelling

06-102 P5 - Proposed Plans and Elevations - Carport

06-102 P6 - Proposed Streetscape Elevations

Received 11 May 2012

REASON: To ensure that the development is implemented as approved.

