



Planning Committee

Batchley & Brockhill Ward

2nd February 2010

2009/249/FUL ERECTION OF 1 NO. THREE BEDROOMED END TERRACED DWELLING TOGETHER WITH ASSOCIATED PARKING LAND AT 31 WHEATCROFT CLOSE, BROCKHILL
APPLICANT: MR A WILKINS
EXPIRY DATE: 11TH JANUARY 2010

The author of this report is Steven Edden, Planning Officer, who can be contacted on extension 3206 (e-mail: steve.edden@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

Site Description

(See additional papers for Site Plan)

The site comprises garden land belonging to, and situated to the side of, number 31 Wheatcroft Close. Number 31 is one of a terrace of four dwellings formed of red brick construction under a concrete tiled roof. The land which would accommodate the new dwelling is flat, level ground. The Western boundary of the site comprises a sound attenuation embankment constructed by the original developer, on top of which is an existing 1800 mm high close board fence. Heights are such that the fence exceeds the height of the first floor eaves line to No.31.

Brockhill Drive lies beyond the sound attenuation bund to the West. A detached dwelling, no.15 Wheatcroft Close lies to the South of the site. To the North lie a row of properties in Wheatcroft Close whose rear gardens slope steeply and face towards Brockhill Drive to the West.

The area, which is wholly residential, is characterised by a mixture of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings, all of which were constructed in the years 2001/2002/2003. Parking, within this area is generally within the curtilage of each property.

Proposal Description

This is a full application for the erection of a single, three bedroomed, terraced dwelling which would be attached to the side (Western facing) elevation to the existing terraced dwelling, number 31 Wheatcroft Close. Materials which would be used in the construction of the dwelling would be red brick (walls) under a concrete interlocking tiled roof, all of which would match those materials used in the construction of number 31. Also to match that of number 31 would be the proposed use of stone cills with arched brickwork above window heads. Access to the dwelling would be via the existing tarmac access. 2 no. car parking spaces, together with a turning area set in gravel would be created to serve the proposed new dwelling. In addition, a new single car parking space to serve the existing dwelling would be located immediately in front of number 31.

Relevant Key Policies

All planning applications must be considered in terms of the planning policy framework and all other relevant material considerations (as set out in the legislative framework). The planning policies noted below can be found on the following websites:

www.communities.gov.uk
www.wmra.gov.uk
www.worcestershire.gov.uk
www.redditchbc.gov.uk

National Planning Policy

PPS1 Delivering sustainable development
PPS3 Housing
PPG13 Transport.

Regional Spatial Strategy

CF2 Housing beyond Major Urban Areas
CF3 Level and Distribution of New Housing Development
CF5 The reuse of land and buildings for housing
CF6 Making efficient use of land
T2 Reducing the need to travel
T7 Car parking standards and management.

Worcestershire County Structure Plan

SD.3 Use of previously developed land
SD.4 Minimising the need to travel
T.4 Car parking.

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

CS.7 The sustainable location of development
B(HSG).6 Development within or adjacent to the curtilage of an existing dwelling
B(BE).13 Qualities of good design
C(T).12 Parking Standards.

SPDs

Encouraging Good Design.

Relevant Site Planning History

2009/124	Erection of 1 no. three bedroomed end terraced dwelling	Refused 12.8.09
----------	---	-----------------

Public Consultation Responses

Responses in favour

1 letter received. Comments summarised as follows:

- This re-submission of planning application 2009/124 now gives greater clarity regarding the parking access / egress
- Provided the embankment area is maintained, the application can be supported.

Responses against

9 letters received in objection to the proposals. Comments summarised as follows:

- Over-development of the site.
- Proposed development is not in-keeping with its surroundings.
- The proposed removal of part of a planted area to the front of the property would be inconsistent with and out of character with the surroundings.
- The use of gravel as a surface treatment would be inconsistent with the general character of the area.
- The proposals would be contrary to Policy B(BE).13 of the Local Plan.
- Direct overlooking and loss of privacy.
- Daylight currently reaching our property will be greatly reduced.
- The retaining wall would be oppressive and unattractive in appearance.
- Too much development in a tightly constrained space.
- Inadequate parking being provided for the new dwelling taking into account likely visitors to the property.
- The turning area to be provided is of inadequate size to allow proper turning to take place.
- Bund should be adequately protected in order to ensure that wild flowers / grasses may be able to continue to grow freely.
- Owners of number 31 have parked their cars in spaces assigned for numbers 29 and 30 showing that parking in the area is already a problem. This will become worse.
- Danger of 'clipping' and general damage to cars given the parking arrangement.
- A greater number of vehicles 'spilling out' onto the public highway will mean that it will become more difficult for emergency vehicles to access this area.
- Concerns regarding increase in flooding in the area if an additional dwelling is allowed to be constructed.
- New dwelling would block the 'open view' onto the sound attenuation bund.

- The noise during the construction period will be intrusive, greatly impacting upon amenity.
- Construction vehicles will block off the shared access to our properties.
- If this was feasible, why didn't the developers erect a house in this area originally?

The final four comments above are not considered to be material planning considerations in the determination of this application.

A petition containing 99 signatures has been received in objection to the planning application. Reasons for the objections are given as; lack of manoeuvring space within the site; the design of the development being out of keeping with the area; the proposal being a danger to pedestrians and an overdevelopment of the site.

Consultee Responses

County Highway Network Control

No objection subject to conditions concerning access, turning and parking.

Continues by stating that the proposal provides sufficient off-street parking provision to serve both the existing and new dwelling in accordance with the relevant parking standards.

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions regarding construction times and control of contamination.

Severn Trent Water

No objection. Drainage details to be subject to agreement with Severn Trent.

Background

Members may recall that a very similar proposed development was submitted in 2009 (application 2009/124 refers). This application proposed the erection of a single, three bedroomed end terraced dwelling and was refused planning permission (against the advice of your officers), following its presentation at the Planning Committee of 11th August 2009. The refusal reasons for application 2009/124 (three in total) are laid out in full below:

1. *The proposed development, by reason of its additional ridge height above the existing terrace, its footprint stepping back at the rear and*

its closer proximity to the bund and Brockhill Drive relative to others in Wheatcroft Close is considered to be out of keeping with the character and pattern of development in the area and as such is contrary to Policies B(HSG)6 and B(BE)13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

2. *The proposed ingress and egress to parking areas is considered to be inadequate and as such would be likely to result in a danger to highway safety and conflict between vehicle users in the communal parking area to the front of the existing and proposed properties. As such the proposal is considered to be contrary to PPG13 which seeks to ensure safe and adequate manoeuvring spaces for vehicles.*
3. *The proposed development, by reason of its siting and the resultant loss of garden area to no.31 would result in an overdevelopment of the site that would be visually intrusive within the streetscene, and thus is contrary to Policy B(BE)13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.*

Rather than appealing to the Planning Inspectorate against the refusal of planning permission for application 2009/124, the applicant has decided to submit a new application in an attempt to address the concerns raised by Members.

Amendments to scheme

The changes between refused application 2009/124, and the current application are listed as follows:

Reduction in ridge height of proposed dwelling

The overall height of the new dwelling has been lowered such that it is now 'in-line' with, and no higher than the existing ridge height to number 31 Wheatcroft Close. The proposed height to ridge is now 7.6 metres. Under application 2009/124, this was 7.8 metres.

Overall reduction in massing

The lowering of the proposed height of the dwelling has resulted in a marginal reduction in the overall footprint of the dwelling. The proposed two storey gable elevation (facing the bund) would now measure 7.7 metres across. Under application 2009/124, this dimension was 8.4 metres.

Greater vehicle manoeuvring space within the curtilage of the proposed dwelling

Two car parking spaces were identified on the site plan for application 2009/124. Tarmac surfacing was proposed. Between the car parking spaces and the front of the property, a planted / landscaped area was

also proposed. On discussing application 2009/124, Members voiced concerns that the lack of a turning space within this area would pose a danger to highway safety (refusal reason 2 above refers). PART of this proposed planted area is to be removed under the current scheme in order to provide a turning area such that vehicles would be able to enter AND exit the application site in a forward gear. The parking and turning area is proposed to be gravelled, rather than in tarmac as before.

Assessment of Proposal

The key issues for consideration are as follows:-

Principle

The site currently forms part of the garden curtilage associated with 31 Wheatcroft Close, a residential area. The principle of residential development in such a location is considered to be acceptable given that the land would be classified as previously developed or 'brownfield' land within the urban area of Redditch.

Density

Developing the site for one additional dwelling would represent a density of approximately 33 dwellings per hectare (dph). Such a density is in line with Central Government Guidance contained within PPS3 which advises that a density of 30 dph should be used as a national indicative minimum, unless the characteristics of a particular area for example mean that a lower density can be justified.

Design and Layout

The dwelling has been designed in such a way that it follows the line of this existing terraced development which starts at the largest and widest of the dwellings forming part of this existing 4no. house row (number 28). The width, height and design of the dwelling is considered to respect the character of development in its immediate surroundings, and in particular the existing terraced row. Rear garden areas serving both number 31 and the proposed new dwelling would meet the Council's minimum rear garden spacing standards, with the new dwelling's garden in fact exceeding the size of many gardens serving existing properties in the vicinity. Your Officers are satisfied that in this respect, the proposal would not represent an over-development of the site and that the proposal would comply with Policy B(HSG).6 of the Local Plan. This policy requires that schemes involving the construction of a new dwelling or dwellings within or adjacent to the curtilage of an existing dwelling shall:

- i) Not harm the character and appearance of the area ; and

- ii) Allow sufficient and conveniently located space about the new and existing dwellings to ensure that an adequate level of residential amenity is provided for both new and existing occupiers.

The reduction in the bulk of the proposed dwelling over the previous scheme means that the property would achieve a maximum rear garden length of 11.5 metres.

Highways and Access

The tarmaced surfaced private drive which forms part of the application site, currently serves 5 properties (numbers 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32 Wheatcroft Close). Number 28, which protrudes forward of the main terrace, benefits from its own single garage, with a further car parking space in front of the garage. This provision more than meets maximum car parking standards as laid out in the Local Plans Appendix H. In addition, your officers believe that it would be possible to park a car in the area immediately in front of a wooden gate (which exists in a position in line with the front elevation of number 28), without 'blocking in' other users of the shared driveway. Your officers are satisfied that occupiers of this property would not be inconvenienced by the nature of the proposed new dwelling proposal since the provision of 2/3 car parking spaces for a property of this size is more than adequate considering that it is a three bedroomed dwelling.

Your Officers would refer members to Appendix H of the Local Plan which sets out in table form (based on maximum standards) the number of car parking spaces which should be provided for new residential developments. This clearly states that for 1 and 2 bedroomed dwellings a maximum of 1 car parking space should be provided. 3 bedroomed properties should provide a maximum of 2 no. car parking spaces per property. Plans submitted as part of this application show that both number 30 and 31 are two bedroomed. Although not annotated, number 29 contains the same floorspace as numbers 30 and 31, and it is therefore assumed that number 29 is also two bedroomed. To accord with maximum car parking standards as laid out in Appendix H, three car parking spaces only need to be provided. The proposed development, being a three bedroomed dwelling would need to provide 2 no. car parking spaces in order to comply with maximum car parking standards. Two spaces are proposed to serve the new development, together with one new space, serving number 31. These, added to existing provision mean that 6 spaces in total would be provided, to serve numbers 29, 30, 31 and the new dwelling, where the adopted Local Plans maximum standards only require that 5 spaces would be needed to serve these properties. Outside the application site, but within the 'courtyard' area, a further two car parking spaces exist, which serve number 32 Wheatcroft Close. This provision also accords with maximum parking standards. The proposals are therefore considered to be wholly acceptable having regard those maximum car parking standards.

The applicant's proposed choice of compacted gravel as a surfacing treatment is considered to be acceptable in principle since, being a 'porous' material, it would represent a sustainable means of draining the site. Details of the proposed gravel's colour/diameter could be agreed through a landscaping condition to be attached to any consent.

The site plan submitted with the application clearly shows that vehicles serving the proposed new dwelling would be able to turn within the application site, exiting in a forward gear.

No objections have been received from County Highways and therefore the proposals would not be considered to prejudice highway safety.

Impact upon residential amenity

Your Officers have assessed the proposal against spacing standards contained within the adopted SPG 'Encouraging Good Design' which states that a minimum distance of 22 metres should be achieved between proposed (rear facing) habitable room windows, and rear facing habitable room windows serving existing properties. The '45 degree' ruling which the SPG uses as a guide to assess any 'overbearing' or 'overshadowing' effect has also been examined. Your Officers are satisfied that no loss of light, privacy nor any other loss of amenity to occupiers of nearby properties would result from the proposal.

Sustainability

The site lies within the urban area of Redditch, and is therefore considered to be in a sustainable location. The design of the overall floor area has been kept to a minimum with very little wasted circulation space to minimise the overall building material used. Should members be minded to approve the application it is recommended that a condition be attached to any approval requiring that the dwelling be built to minimum Level 3 requirement set out under Code for Sustainable Homes.

Other matters

An existing sound attenuation bund exists at the Western boundary to the site. The height, and function of the bund would not be affected by the erection of the new dwelling, and it is noted that Environmental Health Officers have raised no 'in principle' objections to the proposals. An existing timber garden fence would be removed to accommodate the dwelling and a brickwork retaining wall would be erected at a position 1 metre distant from the outside gable wall to the proposed dwelling. A retaining wall, in this position, which would measure 1.4 metres above ground level is unlikely to have any detrimental impact upon the visual amenities of the area subject to the imposition of conditions which would require details of the facing brick to be used in its construction to be submitted for the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority, before work on site commences.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered to comply with the planning policy framework and would not cause harm to amenity or safety. As such, the application is recommended for approval.

Recommendation

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions and informatives as summarised below:

1. Development to commence within three years.
2. Details of materials (walls and roofs) to be submitted.
3. Landscape scheme including details of boundary treatment to be submitted.
4. Landscape scheme including details of boundary treatment to be implemented in accordance with approved details.
5. Limited working hours during construction period.
6. Dwelling to be built to a minimum Level 3 requirement set out under Code for Sustainable Homes.
7. Access, turning and parking.
8. Land contamination (standard conditions).
9. Development to be carried out in accordance with plans submitted with application.

Informatives

1. Drainage details to be in agreement with Severn Trent Water.
2. Highway Note 4 – Private apparatus within the highway.
3. Highway Note 5 – No authorisation for applicant to carry out works within the publicly maintained highway.