



**Horsham
District
Council**

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

TO: Planning Committee South

BY: Head of Development

DATE: 20 February 2018

DEVELOPMENT: Erection of a two-storey four bedroom dwelling with detached garage, associated hardstanding and alterations to access

SITE: Firtops Grove Lane West Chiltington Pulborough West Sussex RH20 2RD

WARD: Chanctonbury

APPLICATION: DC/17/1499

APPLICANT: **Name:** Mr & Mrs P Barker **Address:** c/o Agent

REASON FOR INCLUSION ON THE AGENDA: Councillors requested the case be deferred to consider design and impact

RECOMMENDATION: To grant planning permission

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The application was first reported to the December 2017 Committee meeting, whereby it was resolved to defer the application to allow the development to be reconsidered in terms of its potential impact on the amenities of Firwood Cottage and to achieve a design which is considered to be more in keeping with the Wells Cottages style prevalent in the immediate setting.
- 1.2 A copy of the original Committee Report is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.3 Amended drawings have been received which show the building and the garage both set down by an additional 0.5m over and above the previously considered drawings. The submitted drawings also now show a more detailed level survey with the proposed site plan overlaid, revealing that the proposed garage and house floor levels would be comparable with the levels at the front along the driveway to Firtops, and that the new dwelling would be set into the ground at the rear by approximately 1m.
- 1.4 A further site visit has been carried out to re-assess the visual context of the proposed development site in terms of its character and design, and to re-visit the proposed siting of the new dwelling within its context and in relation to the neighbouring properties, particularly Firwood Cottage.

Separation / Ground Levels

- 1.5 The site visit assessed the context of the neighbouring property Firwood Cottage in relation to the proposed scheme, and it was noted that the area immediately to the east of this dwelling is used primarily as the sitting out area / patio, as well as being set around 1m below the adjacent site levels of Firtops, immediately at the site boundary to the eastern side of the plot. A further rise in ground levels was noted in the south-eastern corner, where ground levels increased by an estimated 1.7m above the patio area
- 1.6 The number and nature of windows were also noted to Firwood Cottage, which has a modest floor plan with rooms benefitting from dual aspect outlooks. In the case of the room alongside the patio, there are also north and south-facing windows. At first-floor, the east (side) facing window serves an en-suite to the main bedroom.
- 1.7 The proposed setting out dimensions have also been checked whilst on site, and the resulting off-set and angle of the proposed development would lead to the proposed development being set some 8m back from the edge of the existing driveway that serves Firtops. This would result in the proposed garage being set towards the rear corner of Firwood Cottage, with an off-set distance of some 14m at the closest point between walls. The details as submitted are therefore confirmed as being accurate. It is also noted that the proposed site plans show the retention of a series of timber sleeper steps along the western boundary, which also assist in 'siting' the proposed development within the plot.
- 1.8 The proposed development layout sets the garage to the north-western side of the new dwelling, allowing the development bulk to follow the site's topography. The main two-storey house would have the first-floor accommodation set within the half-hipped roof-slope, further diminishing the overall bulk of the development.
- 1.9 The distances between the two-storey mass of the main house and the neighbouring dwelling to the west at Firwood Cottage is therefore confirmed at some 22m, as is the distance of some 18m between the new dwelling and the front wall of the host dwelling at Firtops.

Amenity Impact

- 1.10 As noted already, the adjacent property at Firwood Cottage includes rooms with dual aspects, where rooms facing onto the eastern application site boundary also benefit from an alternative outlook direction, with the exception of the first-floor bathroom window.
- 1.11 Applying common principles regarding daylight, outlook and separation, taken from the Council's Supplementary Design Guide for House Extensions (May 2008), it is clear that the proposal maintains the advised minimum distance of 21m back-to-back separation, or where first-floor habitable windows face each other, as well as the minimum 10.5m distance between habitable window and a blank gable end at two-storeys.
- 1.12 Furthermore, the proposal does not breach another common daylight principle, called the '25 degree rule', when measured against the centerline of the facing ground-floor habitable window to Firwood Cottage.
- 1.13 It is also noted that the relationship between Firwood Cottage and the proposed new development, including the patio area would be off-set, with the bulk of the proposed development set principally towards the rear of the building lines at Firwood Cottage.
- 1.14 Having assessed the site context and the proposed plans against some spot dimensions taken on site, Officers therefore consider that there are no robust reasons to refuse the proposal on amenity grounds, given the site context and resulting development siting in

relation to adjacent properties, including the resulting off-set between the proposed development and the building lines at Firwood Cottage.

- 1.15 It is noted that current Permitted Development Rights would restrict potential additional first-floor flank (and roof-level) windows to the main house, and garage, in that they would be restricted to being obscured, as well as fixed shut below a height of 1.7m. However, this does not currently extend to the garage at ground level where new windows could potentially be added post-development, at the side. Officers note that the pyramidal roof form would provide limited head height within, and also note that any future proposal to add a mezzanine level within the garage would require planning consent. However, it would be possible to secure a planning condition to ensure that no new side-facing windows are added to the north-western flank wall or roof-slope are added without prior consideration by the LPA.

Design

- 1.16 Having re-visited the site, Officers consider that the design, architectural features and overall style of the proposed new dwelling would complement the immediate context along Grove Lane.
- 1.17 Both of the two immediately adjacent dwellings to the site, comprising the host dwelling Firtops and the western neighbor at Firwood Cottage are of white painted brick. Both are designated as original 'Wells Houses', with Firwood Cottage still retaining its original thatched roof, and Firtops having replaced this with a tiled roof-slope.
- 1.18 Grove Lane winds its sinuous way past variously sized properties and hugs the topography, dropping steeply on the eastern side where it joins Threals Lane with a sharp turn from the southern approach direction. The overall topography, plot layouts and boundary treatments, many of which have become established over the passage of years, results in some of the houses being near invisible from the lane whilst others can only be glimpsed through hedgerows.
- 1.19 Where other houses are visible along Grove Lane and the western end of Bower Lane, they are of white or light painted brick, apparently a typical 'Wells House' feature, with half-hipped roof-slopes, some thatched and some tiled. Whilst there are some full two-storey houses, notably Plashetts and Quilters others primarily include low eaves, inset dormers and/ or eye-brow windows.
- 1.20 The application site seeks to echo these localised architectural features by using a half-hipped roof design with wall dormers, resulting in a relatively modest property bulk which would have an overall ridge height that is comparable to the adjacent properties. Officers consider that the use of appropriate external materials would lead to the development being commensurate with its surrounding context.
- 1.21 In addition to a planning condition which would require approval of external materials prior to development above slab level, Officers are currently awaiting further details to provide an indication on the external materials of the proposed new dwelling, and have sought to agree the use of timber cladding to the detached garage, which would echo the use of timber on other detached garages along Grove Lane. Any further details will be reported to Members at the meeting.
- 1.22 West Chiltington Parish have produced a draft Neighbourhood Plan which includes a section on the Wells Houses. The Neighbourhood Plan has not yet gone through the examination process. As such, the plan cannot be afforded any weight at this time.

Notwithstanding this, the proposal is considered to preserve the setting and character of the adjacent Wells House.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 Following the receipt of amended plans, which now drop the proposed development further into the site ground levels by an additional 0.5m, and following a second visit to the site and the neighbouring property (Firwood Cottage), the proposal is acknowledged to lead to some impact to the adjacent amenities of the occupants at Firwood Cottage. However, despite this neighbouring property being set at a lower level than the proposed development, the off-set angle and separation distances being proposed would alleviate the immediate and harmful effects, so that the patio area to the eastern side would not become unduly overshadowed or overlooked by way of the resulting development.
- 2.2 The potential use of timber cladding to the garage should also assist in the garage being 'rooted' into its wooded setting as some of the other detached garages in the vicinity are also timber clad.
- 2.3 The proposal, taking account of the amended and additional details which have been received, would lead to a form of development that relates well to the wider localised design character of the area, and would respect the overall spaciousness of the Grove Lane context and the adjacent Wells Cottages.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-

1 A list of the approved plans.

- 2 **Standard Time Condition:** The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 3 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for, but not be limited to:

- i. the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- ii. loading and unloading of plant and materials
- iii. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- iv. the erection and maintenance of security hoarding, where appropriate
- v. the provision of wheel washing facilities if necessary
- vi. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- vii. a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works

Reason: As this matter is fundamental in order to consider the potential impacts on the amenity of neighbouring occupants during construction and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 4 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall commence until precise details of the existing and proposed finished floor levels of the development in relation to nearby datum points adjoining the application site have been submitted

to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to control the development in detail in the interests of amenity and visual impact and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 5 **Pre-Commencement Condition:** No development shall commence until a drainage strategy detailing the proposed means of foul and surface water disposal has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to ensure that the development is properly drained and to comply with Policy 38 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 6 **Pre-Commencement (Slab Level) Condition:** No development above ground floor slab level of any part of the development hereby permitted shall take place until a schedule of materials and finishes and colours to be used for external walls, windows and roofs of the approved building(s) has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing and all materials used in the construction of the development hereby permitted shall conform to those approved.

Reason: As this matter is fundamental to enable the Local Planning Authority to control the development in detail in the interests of amenity by endeavouring to achieve a building of visual quality in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 7 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** Prior to the first occupation (or use) of any part of the development hereby permitted, full details of the hard and soft landscaping works shall be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscape scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details within the first planting season following the first occupation of any part of the development. Any plants, which within a period of 5 years, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that is sympathetic to the landscape and townscape character and built form of the surroundings, and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 8 **Pre-Occupation Condition:** Prior to the first occupation (or use) of any part of the development hereby permitted, the parking turning and access facilities shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details as shown on plan 2840/700 and shall be thereafter retained as such.

Reason: To ensure adequate parking, turning and access facilities are available to serve the development in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 9 **Regulatory Condition:** The garage(s) hereby permitted shall be used only as private domestic garages for the parking of vehicles incidental to the use of the properties as dwellings and for no other purposes.

Reason: To ensure adequate off-street provision of parking in the interests of amenity and highway safety, and in accordance with Policy 40 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

- 10 **Regulatory Condition:** Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 or Orders amending or revoking and re-enacting the same, no windows or other openings (other than those shown on the plans hereby approved) shall be formed in the north-eastern flank wall or roof-slope of the garage of the development without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

Reason: To protect the amenities of adjoining residential properties at Firswod Cottage from loss of privacy and in accordance with Policy 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (2015).

Background Papers: DC/17/1499