

SIDMOUTH SIDFORD
(Sidmouth)

08/0869/RES

23.05.2008

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Robinson
Location: Land adjacent to 129 Sidford Road, Sidford, Sidmouth
Proposal: Erection of dwelling and provision of new shared vehicular access

Consultations

Devon County Council - County Highway Authority

No objection in principle, but amended plans are required.

It would appear the Highway Authority recommended refusal of this development at outline stage, yet consent was granted on appeal.

I understand subsequent discussions and negotiations with the County Council have led to an agreement whereby the applicant would provide a 2.0 metre wide footway across the site frontage and then the County Council would seek to implement an extension to this facility in order to link up to a nearby bus stop.

The scheme as a whole has yet to be designed. While it would clearly be unreasonable to raise a highway objection to this development at this stage, it would be desirable to have the ability to impose a highway condition to secure the provision of the footway so that the County Council can control and approve the design of the footway. The following Grampian style condition would be appropriate:

“The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until a 2.0m wide footway has been constructed across the entire site frontage in accordance with a design and specification which shall have been previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority, and properly implemented to the satisfaction of the said Authorities.

Reason: To provide and safeguard adequate vehicular visibility at the site entrance and to provide safe pedestrian facilities for the occupiers of the premises.

Note to Applicant

The applicant is advised of the need to enter into a legal agreement with the Highway Authority to secure the highway works in respect of the above condition. The applicant is advised to submit details on this matter at least three months prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved. “

The applicant would then need to enter into a legal agreement with the Highway Authority to secure the design, construction and funding of the footway fronting the site.

With regards to the other points of detail, the visibility splays should be based on co-ordinates of 2.4m x 60m. It is noted that the sight lines run through the parapet walls either side of the access. To achieve acceptable vision splays the wall must not exceed 600mm in height. In addition, ideally the access should be widened to 5.0m to allow two cars to pass each other particularly if the inter-visibility between a vehicle entering the site and one that is exiting is poor. In any event I would wish to see confirmation on the plans that the first 6.0m of drive (as measured from the carriageway edge) would be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone or gravel); that the gradient of the drive would not exceed 1:10, and that measures would be introduced to the rear of the footway to prevent surface water from discharging out onto the public highway.

Environmental Health

I have no comments to make.

Sidmouth Town Council

APPROVE.

Ward Member

Councillor G. Troman - Objects

1. Overdevelopment of garden site;
2. Detached house with 3 bedrooms and 3 en-suite bathrooms etc,
3. Would support smaller development

In the event that this application comes to Committee I would reserve my position until I am in full possession of all the relevant facts and arguments for and against.

Representations

OBJECTION

Received from two neighbouring households, raising the following points:

- objection was raised to the outline planning permission on highway grounds
- new access point not visible from vehicles travelling eastwards
- new access point opposite Drakes Avenue junction and close to bus stops, = more congestion and danger
- would result in 2 “keep clear” areas, adding further to congestion
- footway provision along frontage won't help
- plot is too small for a 3 bed house
- no rear garden
- side garden only, fronting onto Sidford Road (unsafe for children)
- east and south aspects of existing and proposed houses would appear unplanned and unstructured
- loss of trees (particularly a fine silver birch)
- adverse effect on southerly vista and on privacy (although fenestration on north elevation has been minimised)
- if approved, north elevation windows must be obscure glazed, and remain so
- pd rights to insert more windows should be removed

Relevant Planning History

04/1915 Dwelling Refused 21.09.2004 (Appeal allowed 04.03.2005)

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy:

PPS 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS 3 - Housing

PPG 4 – Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms

PPG 13 – Transport

The Development Plan:

Devon Structure Plan 2001 – 2016

ST1 – Sustainable Development
ST3 – Self-Sufficiency of Devon’s Communities
ST4 – Infrastructure Provision
ST15 – Area Centres
ST18a – Mix and Type of Housing
CO6 – Quality of New Development
CO11 – Conserving Energy Resources
TR1 – Devon Travel Strategy
TR2 – Co-ordinating Land Use/Travel Planning
TR5 – Hierarchy of Modes
TR7 – Walking and Cycling
TR10 – Strategic Road Network and Roadside Service Areas

East Devon Local Plan 1995 – 2011

S4 – Development within Built up Area Boundaries
S7 – Infrastructure Related to New Development
D1 – Design and Local Distinctiveness
D2 – Sustainable Construction
D4 – Landscape Requirements
EN21 – Surface Run-off Implications of New Development
H1 – Residential Land Provision
RE3 – Open Space Provision in New Housing Development
TA1 – Accessibility of New Development
TA7 – Adequacy of Road Network and Site Access
TA9 – Parking Provision in New Development

Site Location and Description

This wedge-shaped plot of garden land lies within the built up area of Sidford, amid other residential development. The site has a 36 metre road frontage, and a maximum depth from carriageway of 19 metres. The land rises from Sidford Road, the rear boundary being marked by a hedge and break of slope, above which stands the front garden of other residential property set back from Sidford Road.

A gated driveway meets the highway at the north east end of the site, serving the existing dwelling (no 129) which sits to the west of the site. This existing house is of modern two storey design, with shallow, asymmetrically arranged roof planes.

Two trees stand within the site – a silver birch and a rowan. The road edge boundary comprises a rubble stone wall and mature hedging.

The Proposed Development

Approval of reserved matters is sought for a two-storey three-bedroomed “upside-down” house, following the grant of outline planning permission for a dwelling (by the Planning Inspectorate on appeal) in March 2005. The application for this ARM was submitted two weeks prior to the expiry period for such submission.

The design shows an asymmetrically-roofed building, of shallow pitch, incorporating eaves-breaking windows, a curved-topped turret, and a part-cantilevered upper floor. Materials indicated are concrete interlocking tiles, curved copper roofing, stained timber panelling and render, with solar panels on the road-facing roof plane.

A new 3m wide access point at the western end of the site (and central to the existing and proposed dwellings) is shown. The existing access would be closed, and the adjoining boundary wall and hedge planting would be continued to the site end.

Consideration and Assessment

The main planning issues to be considered for this proposal are:

- The principle of an additional dwelling in this location;
- The impact of the design and layout of the development on its context;
- The impact of the development on neighbouring residences/uses;
- Transport and access matters, and
- Sustainability issues.

Additional Dwelling

The principle of a new dwelling on this site has been established by the grant of planning permission (on appeal) in 2005. The site lies in the built up area of Sidmouth, within a residential area. The site is well served by pedestrian links and by public transport. The pattern of development in the area is rather ad hoc on this side of the highway, but comprises principally detached houses in reasonably-sized gardens, with occasional pairs of dwellings. Across Sidford Road the rehabilitation/nursing home (Green Close) forms a far larger element in the street scene and terraced housing further to the north east changes the grain of development in the area again. With the development of an additional home on this plot, the resultant housing density for the locality would be appropriate to its built-up area status. This is considered to be an acceptable location for a new dwelling from a strategic viewpoint, subject to the satisfaction of other relevant planning policy.

Design and Layout

The design of the building is felt not to be acceptable. The combination of materials and irregular features is over-complicated and lacks a clear signature for the architectural style. There is no objection to the construction of a non-traditional home on the site – the existing dwelling is of this genre – but the variety of elements in the proposed dwelling do not sit comfortably together within the house design or with the existing dwelling.

The loss of the two mature trees on the site and the opening up of the hedge fronting Sidford Road for the new access would make the proposed development a significant structure within the public view, in comparison with the enclosure of the existing garden area. No replacement tree planting is detailed to replenish the important natural elements that the present site contributes to the character of the area.

The new building would be constructed within 1.5 m of the centre of the hedge bounding the rear of the site, and concern is expressed over the likely survival of this green screen, should the house be constructed.

The council's normal requirement for a contribution towards the provision of additional or improved public recreational space applies to this proposal, especially as the area for outdoor play within the site indicated is very limited.

Impact on Neighbours' Amenity

The orientation and fenestration of the building has been carefully orchestrated so that overlooking of other homes and garden areas would be avoided: high level windows and obscure glazing in rear-facing windows preclude views into adjoining private amenity areas.

Traffic movements to and from the proposed and existing dwellings through the new access point would create less disturbance to nearby residences than the continued use of the access at the far north eastern end, which adjoins the access to four other properties.

Transport and Access Matters

The proposal shows a single parking space and an on-site turning head, and a second parking space beneath the cantilevered section of the house, although manoeuvring into this space would appear very difficult. The suggested amendments to the scheme from the Highway Authority have not been sought, as the design of the proposal warrants its refusal, but it is acknowledged that changes to the scheme as detailed could reasonably overcome highway objections.

The site enjoys good pedestrian links with retail and community facilities in Sidford itself, and adequate space is available within the site for the storage of at least two cycles. Regular bus services to a number of close and longer range destinations stop on their route through Sidford, providing good links for residents to work, school, commercial, leisure and other destinations.

Sustainability

This site is considered to be appropriate for a new dwelling, as it comprises brownfield land within a built-up area well served by local services and good public transport. Government advice in PPS1 makes it clear, however, that good design is integral to sustainability, and the appearance of the building in this instance does not achieve a standard to satisfy this criterion.

As with any new build project this scheme represents the chance to use resource-efficient materials and construction methods, and to incorporate micro-renewable energy generating installations, to minimise its carbon footprint and most efficiently manage water resources. The south-facing main aspect of the building and the installation of solar panels seek to maximise the heat-absorption/retention properties of the building.

Conclusion

The design of the dwelling is not satisfactory, and the impact that the development would have on the street scene is unacceptable.

Recommendation

Refuse for the following reasons:

1. By reason of the variety and combination of building elements and materials comprised within the proposed development, and the lack of screening of the new building as a result of the unmitigated loss of tree and hedging within and around the site, the proposed development would create a prominent, unattractive and inharmonious feature within the street scene, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the locality. The proposal would therefore conflict with the terms and objectives of national and local planning policy and guidance, as set out in PPS1, Policy CO6 (Quality of New Development) of the Devon Structure Plan 2001 – 2016 and Policies S4 (Development Within Built-up Area Boundaries), D1 (Design and Local Distinctiveness) and D4 (Landscape Requirements) of the East Devon Local Plan 195 – 2011.

List of Background Papers

Application file, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.