MC/13/3121

Date Received: 27 November, 2013

Location: Land Rear Of 48 Cambridge Road Strood Kent, ME2 3HW

Proposal: Demolition of existing two storey workshop/ancillary office building and construction of a two-bedroomed detached dwelling with associated garden/drying area and refuse store

Applicant: Allen Wilson Shopfitters & Builders Ltd

Agent: Mr R Day GDM Architects The Masters House College Road Maidstone Kent ME15 6YO

Ward Strood North

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 18 June, 2014.

Recommendation -Refusal

1 The proposed development by virtue of its height, scale, roof design and materials to be used would result in a cramped and visually imposing form of development that would be out of character with the surrounding streetscape and detrimental to visual amenities of the area in general where seen from the highway and neighbouring properties contrary to the objectives of policy BNE1 and Paragraph 5.5.22 of the pre-amble to policy H5 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

2 The proposed development would result in a dominant and unneighbourly form of development by virtue of its scale and height in particular from the roof design proposed where seen from neighbouring properties and would due to layout have an adverse impact on the amenity of future occupiers due to the overlooking of the proposed garden from existing rear windows of neighbouring properties and from the highway to the front due to the open plan design. The proposal would also represent a cramped form of development in terms of the small second bedroom size and size of garden to be provided and overall would be in conflict with the objectives of Policy BNE2 of the Medway Local Plan 2003 and the adopted Medway Housing Standards (Interim) 2011.
Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of the existing two-storey workshop/ancillary office building and construction of a 2-bedroomed detached dwelling with associated garden/drying area. The site currently contains a detached building, which the applicants have described as a 2-storey building but in effect is a single storey building utilising the roof area as storage.

The building would be positioned up to the pavement edge and measure 10.05 metres approx in width by 7.5 metres approx (max in depth). The dwelling would be of chalet bungalow appearance measuring approximately 2.7 metres approx to the eaves and 5.8 metres to the ridge with dormer windows proposed to the front and rear. At ground floor level, a living room/dining room, hallway, toilet and kitchen are proposed with 2 bedrooms, landing, boiler closet and bathroom above at first floor level. Private amenity space is shown to the side (northeast) of the dwelling, which would measure 3 metres approx by 5 metres approx.

Pedestrian access would be provided to the front and rear of the site (affording access for the future residents and maintaining access to neighbouring rear gardens via alleyway running to the southwest side of the property). The plans also show the retention of private amenity space for 48 Cambridge Road. No off street parking is proposed.

The design was originally shown as a 3 bedroomed property but has been changed to a 2 bedroom unit following the Local Planning Authority raising concerns in regard to the proposal as originally submitted.

Site Area/Density

Site area: 0.009 hectares
Site density: 111 dph

Relevant Planning History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC/13/1746</td>
<td>Demolition of existing two-storey workshop/ancillary office building and construction of a two-storey building comprising of one 1-bedroomed and one 2-bedroomed flats with associated garden/drying area and refuse store. Withdrawn 27 August 2013.</td>
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Representations

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour notification letters to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties.

7 letters were initially received raising the following objections to the originally proposed 3 bed unit as follows:

- 2-storey property is inappropriate for the site;
• Existing building is not 2-storey as per the description;
• This application proposes a building of the same height and area as the previous scheme;
• Loss of light to 57, 59 and 61 Brompton Lane;
• Loss of privacy to 57, 59 and 61 Brompton Lane;
• Increase in noise and disturbance;
• Lack of parking provision in the area would be made worse;
• Density of the development is greater than other modern schemes in the area;
• Lack of front garden would be at odds with other properties in the street

One of the local residents, following discussion with other neighbours, informally advises that the flat fronted terrace in Cambridge Road was built in 1906. The house at 48 Cambridge was built around 1898 and the structure in question was built at the same time for use as a dairy. The original opening for the stable doors can still be seen at the front along with the hay loft openings in the apexes on the front and rear of the roof. Even the original antique hinge brackets which helped swing the straw into the loft for the livestock kept there are still there. The dairy was constructed using specially made half bricks. The area with no pavement was the direct access of road to the dairy.

Following re-consultation on amended plans to the design, 6 further letters of representation were received from neighbours expressing the following concerns:

• inadequate parking to serve the development;
• parking within vicinity is at a premium;
• the development is not two storey but single storey with storage over;
• out of character with surrounding development and not set back from the road;
• use of obscure glass would be a fire safety hazard and means of opening would cause loss of privacy;
• adverse impact through loss of sunlight;
• noise pollution;
• conversion of the existing building would be better suited for the site; and
• adverse impact on quality of life for local residents.

All other matters raised not listed above are non-material

Cllr Mrs. Etheridge has also objected to the application (both originally and as amended) for the above reasons including the adverse impact from loss of site lines, inappropriate use of materials and the development being dominant and out of character with the surrounding area. Cllr Mrs Etheridge has requested that: i) the application be referred to planning committee for a decision; Members defer consideration of the application to enable a Members site meeting prior to any decision being made; and that no decision be made until after 22 June 2014 due to other commitments.

Development Plan Policies

The Development plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan). The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing
of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and are considered to conform.

The Medway Housing Design Standards 2011 (interim) are a material planning consideration.

Planning Appraisal

Principles of Development

The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Strood in a predominantly residential area. This site is relatively close to the town centre of Strood and as such there is no objection to the principle of the proposal or the high density nature of the development close to the town centre. Policy H4 of the Local Plan sets out four criteria were residential development in the urban area is acceptable. These include the use of a vacant or derelict site or the change of use or redevelopment of existing buildings no longer required for non residential use. The submitted design and access statement advises that the site is currently vacant and unused for any purpose. Additionally it advises that the proposed use will bring a redundant brown field site back into use, thus extinguishing a non conforming use class within a predominantly residential area. Bearing in mind the above and having undertaken a site visit, it is considered that the re-development of this site would be acceptable in broad principal as it would comply with criteria H4(i) of the Local Plan. This being the case, the proposal falls to be considered on matters related to the density of the development, the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the streetscene and the surrounding area in general, the impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers and the future of the development itself, and highway matters

Policy H5 In terms of the density of the proposed development, Policy H5 of the Local Plan (High Density Housing) (preamble) states that new housing development will generally be expected to be in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighbourhood and high-density development must meet a high standard of both design and quality if it is to make a positive contribution to the appearance of the area.

Street Scene and Design

The layout of Cambridge Road and the surrounding streets generally has terraced or semi-detached properties arranged in narrow deep plots. The pattern of development within the vicinity is very much of two storey terraced houses set back from the road with a vertical emphasis created by the fenestration detail and land levels, with the exception of the existing building on site that appears as a subservient building to no 48 by reason of siting and scale. Bay windows are a feature at ground floor level. The site is currently occupied by a dual gable ended building that is vacant and historically the site has been a low-key commercial operation. It would appear that the building has had previous commercial use with the loft area used for the storage of materials. The site is unique with a twin gable to the front built hard up to the back edge of the pavement.
The application site differs from this layout in terms of its scale and height with the gable roof form and the proposed dwelling has no design features that reflect the immediate built form. The proportions and size of the fenestration is at odds with the terrace of properties immediately to the southwest and the proposed dormers and their contrasting materials combined with the gable roof form increase the mass of the building.

The proposed unit has been designed in place of the subservient building within the street scene and the proposed unit will present itself to the street as a new building with greater and detrimental presence with the main residential outlook at ground floor level being into the patio area; immediately onto the street and for the first floor bedrooms, into Cambridge road through dormer windows. The design of the proposed dwelling does not pick up upon the character of the existing area with its vertical emphasis of existing windows. Instead the proposal is of a very bland design with a definite horizontal emphasis, which would highlight it within the street scene as an unattractive dwelling with poor unrelated detailing to the surrounding streetscene or the original building.

Amenity Considerations

In terms of the amenities of the future occupiers of the proposed development, the property would have a minimum floor area for a two bedroomed three person unit of 82m2. The adopted Medway Housing Interim standard for such a dwelling is 77m2. However, the unit appears to provide a small level of accommodation with equally small amenity area. In terms of the adopted standards, the proposal for a two bed three person unit would fail to meet the Medway Housing Design Standards for the smaller bedroom. The garden size would be very cramped with a depth of less than 7m and it is likely that the occupiers of the property using the garden space to the rear would feel enclosed as a result of the close proximity and height of the rear elevation and the boundary treatment. In addition, due to the layout of the ground floor and siting of windows close to the highway, the future occupants would feel uncomfortable in particular in the summer months from the presence of passersby through means of looking into the property.

In addition, the neighbouring first floor windows would directly overlook this garden space and such angles of view would leave any occupant feeling uncomfortable when using the garden. Bin storage is not shown and would need to be accommodated. The kitchen units as shown would be too close restricting circulation / access but could be altered to enable a minimum width of 1.2m being secured between the units.

The unit is located to the south western side of the adjacent property, 48 Cambridge road, and will cause overshadowing to neighbouring gardens of greater significance to the existing situation and having regard to height, siting and orientation also, objection is raised where the development would appear cramped and dominant from neighbouring gardens. There would, however, be no loss of privacy to neighbouring properties whereby the rear first floor window serving the bathroom can be controlled by condition and be mechanically ventilated at the same time.
Contamination

Due to the site having a former use as a workshop, should planning permission be forthcoming, a desk top study would need to be submitted, as the sensitive end uses includes a garden. A condition would need to be imposed to assess the nature and extent of contamination on site and, in this instance, it is considered that this could be controlled by condition if planning consent is granted.

Highways

The Councils interim parking standards require the provision of 1.5 off road parking spaces for a 2-bedroom dwelling. This application proposes no parking and so falls below the standard. The proposal does not result in a loss of existing parking spaces for residential units and the building has been used as a commercial function in the past with no off street parking provision.

The new dwelling does not have any on site parking but it is possible that a person might choose to live here due to its close location to the town centre and available public transport provision. There are no parking controls on street in the vicinity and due to the sites wide frontage, parking is readily available with adverse competition for spaces at peak times. Weight is also given to potential parking that could be generated by the existing lawful use which could recommence without reference to the Local Planning Authority. On balance the lack of parking provision is considered to be acceptable in this instance given the potential re-use of the building and very close location to the town centre.

Local Finance Considerations

There are none considered relevant to this application.

Conclusion

The development fails to accord with the objectives of Policies BNE1 and BNE2 and paragraph 5.5.22 of the preamble to policy H5 of the Medway Local Plan 2003 as set out above.

Members are advised that this application would normally fall to be determined under Officers delegated powers but has been reported to Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Mrs Etheridge on the basis of the number of representations received and due to pre-application advise given to the applicant.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of
Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here
http://planning.medway.gov.uk/dconline/AcolNetCGI.gov