

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT CULTURE & SPORT
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 2 April 2008

ITEM NO.

Ward: Thames
App No.: 07/01566/FUL
Address: 182 Kidmore Road and land to the rear of Nos.178 to 196 Kidmore Road, Caversham
Proposal: Demolition and replacement of No.182 and erection of five additional detached houses on land to the rear.
Applicant: Groom Estates
Date received: 30 November 2007
Minor Application: 8 week target decision date: 5 February 2008

RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Head of Planning and Building Control to (i) **GRANT** permission subject to completion of a s106 legal agreement, but to (ii) **REFUSE** should the legal agreement not be completed by 16 April 2008 (unless the Head of Planning and Building Control agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).

The legal agreement to secure the following:

- A financial contribution of **£20,000 towards Transport (RUAP)**. Payment to be index linked from the date of Permission and to be made prior to commencement of development.
- A financial contribution of **£51,346 towards Education**. Payment to be index linked from the date of Permission and to be made prior to occupation of development.
- A financial contribution of **£10,000 towards Leisure/Open Space**. Payment to be index linked from the date of Permission and to be made prior to occupation of development.

If such an agreement is entered into, planning permission to include the following conditions:

CONDITIONS TO INCLUDE

Time limit
Materials - details to be approved
Hours of work
No burning of materials
Dwellings not occupied until parking spaces have been provided
Garages to be used only for parking of vehicles
Access to be constructed in accordance with plans to be submitted.
Details of garden sheds to be submitted, and sheds to be provided before occupation.
Landscaping scheme
Landscape implementation and management
Archaeology scheme of investigation
Code of sustainable homes - level 3 compliance.
Full details of solar panels required - to be implemented before occupation
South eastern first floor flank window in plot 5 - obscured glazed
No additional first floor flank windows
Tree protection measures in accordance with approved plan.
Schedule of tree works required

Details of service routing
Construction method statement required.
Details of levels.
Full slope stability analysis required
Drainage details required
No scrub clearance in nesting season (March to August)

INFORMATIVES TO INCLUDE

Development Plan Policies
Plans
Compliance with approved plans & details
Ecology
s106 Agreement
Damage to highway
Building regulations - fire fighting access

1. INTRODUCTION

The application site comprises the curtilage area of No.182 Kidmore Road (which increases in width so to extend behind the rear gardens of Nos.184, 180 & 178 Kidmore Road) and the rear garden area of No.194 Kidmore Road (located adjacent to No.184) which increases in width so to extend behind the rear garden of No.196 Kidmore Road. The site has a total area of some 0.3 hectares.

Ground levels fall from the rear and flank site boundaries, that are approximately level with the retained garden area of No.182 and those of neighbouring properties, to a lower level in the centre of the site, creating a large bowl.

Along the north eastern side of Kidmore Road the neighbouring properties to the north west are a bungalow (No.184) and distinctive red-brick chalet form semi-detached houses. To the south west are a pair of 1950's appearance semi-detached houses, a detached bungalow and then a number of small scale chalet bungalows with a uniform appearance. Opposite the site is the Grosvenor Public House.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the erection of five detached houses at the rear of the site and the replacement of the existing bungalow with a single two storey detached house.

To the rear, the five houses would be built across the width of the site, fronting south west towards the garden areas of the retained Kidmore Road properties. The houses would have a staggered roofline made from abutting mono-pitch roof forms of different heights. The buildings would incorporate large front and rear windows and finished in a mix of brick, render and timber cladding. Each house would have a rear garden depth of between 9.5m and 12m with landscape planting at the front. Provision for cycle storage would be provided in the rear garden sheds. The group of TPO Hornbeam trees would be retained in front of the rear houses.

Access to the site would be via a new driveway from Kidmore Road. This would curve away from the garden area of No.180 Kidmore Road and would benefit from planting on either side.

At the front of the site, the replacement house would have an orthodox two storey height with a simple pitched roof form over. The house would have an attached single storey garage on its

north western side and a conservatory to the rear. The property would be set back some 12m from the front curtilage boundary and would utilise the existing access.

A bin store would be provided at the front of the site off the new driveway.

Submitted plans and documents

Site location plan

Survey

Elevation drawings

Plan drawings

Site sections

Design and Access Statement

Protected Species Assessment

Bat Survey

Geotechnical Report

Arboricultural Report

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Land to rear of 182 Kidmore Road

07/00886/FUL Eight flats within two 2-storey buildings. Refused (20/09/07) by reason that:

1. The size and scale of building would be unduly dominant when viewed from surrounding area.
2. The use of the access driveway would harm the residential amenities of adjacent properties.
3. The width of the access road is inadequate to accommodate the development.
4. The applicant had failed to demonstrate that the development would meet an adequate level of sustainability.

Appeal dismissed (18/02/08) by reason that the use of the access driveway would harm the residential amenities of adjacent properties and the width of the access road is inadequate to accommodate the development. The Inspector did not support the Council's reason for refusal relating to the impact of the development on the character of the area.

4. CONSULTATIONS

(a) Statutory consultation

None

(b) Non statutory consultation

Transport Strategy

Kidmore Road is classified as the C101 and is a distributor road, which links villages to the north of Caversham, with Caversham Heights, Caversham Centre and on to links to Central Reading. In the vicinity of the site the road is 5.5 metres wide, with a 1.5 metre wide footways. Bus stops served by premier route 9, which has a 15 minute daytime frequency, are within 300 metres walk of the site. The proposals are for the erection of 5 additional houses at the rear of 182 Kidmore Road, which will be accessed by a new road between 182 and 180 Kidmore Road.

The proposed 5 additional dwellings will be expected to generate 30-40 vehicular movements per day, with 5 in each of the peak hours. This is not a material increase and is within the daily

fluctuations of traffic flows. In accordance with Department for Transport guidance, given the small size of the site, a transport statement is not required.

Access to the site for the 5 dwellings at the rear will be via a 4.1 metre wide access road, which complies to the requirements of the Manual for Streets for small private drives serving developments of 5 dwellings or under.

The access has visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 90 metres left and 2.4 metres by 68 metres right. The minimum acceptable on to a “C” road such as Kidmore Road is 2.4 metres by 60 metres and therefore the visibility splays are acceptable

With regards to parking, PPS3 Housing recommends that parking provision is based on the expected car ownership in the local area of the site. Census data for the Thames Ward shows that average car ownership is 1.5 vehicles per dwelling and therefore the provision required for this site will be 12 parking spaces, which have been provided.

The garage sizes are only 2.6 metres by 5.5 metres, which are only large enough to accommodate a car and below the recommended size of 3 metres by 6 metres as stated within the Manual for Streets, which is the minimum size required to park a car and a bike.

Manual for Streets states that residents should carry their waste no more than 30 metres to any storage point and operatives should not carry waste more than 15 metres from the storage area to the refuse vehicle. While the latter is complied with the carrying distance for the residents varies between 50 and 70 metres, which is unacceptable. The size of the bin storage area also does not seem large enough to accommodate the waste (normal bins and recycling bins) that will be generated by 6 detached dwellings.

In accordance with Section 3 (Transport) of the Council’s Supplementary Planning Guidance on planning obligations, September 2004, developments will be expected to contribute to wider and strategic transport improvements in relation to roads, public transport, and facilities for cycling and pedestrians. The contribution will be $5 \times £4,000 = £20,000$

Ecology

Native scrubs and trees should be planted up in the hedgerows and any communal areas of the site that are contiguous with the surrounding gardens. Bird and bat boxes should be erected a minimum of 4m off the ground on buildings and established trees. Bat bricks should be incorporated into the build of the properties especially in areas where there is a line of trees or hedgerow adjacent to the properties. The Protected Species Site Assessment dated 2007 does not include an ecological data search results. No vegetation clearance works should be undertaken in the bird-nesting season (March - August inclusive) without the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Trees and Landscape

There is a TPO on two individual trees and a group of trees at No. 182 - Horse chestnut on frontage, Monkey puzzle at rear and group of Hornbeams. I can confirm that the principle of the development is acceptable in relation to trees. If approval is given, conditions will be required for the access road specifications, tree protection measures, schedule of tree works to be submitted, and hard & soft landscaping.

Building Control

No objection. Access road should comply with Building Regulation requirements for use by fire fighting appliances. *Officer comment: an informative to this effect is recommended as part of the planning permission; Building Control could then ensure this as part of the Building Regulations.*

Education

A contribution of £51,346 is sought.

Leisure

A contribution of £10,000 is sought

(c) Public/local consultation and comments received

Nineteen letters of objection have been received, these raise the following comments:

1. The development would be harmful to the existing and established character of the area.
 2. The design of the houses is not in keeping with other houses in the area. A more restrained style should be proposed.
 3. The density is too great. Large gardens are characteristic of the area.
 4. The character of the area is being changed for the worse.
 5. The development will overlook and overshadow properties in Hunters Chase, Ammanford and those retained on Kidmore Road.
 6. The quiet enjoyment of surrounding gardens would be lost.
 7. More details of boundary treatment are required.
 8. The loss of the bungalow would reduce housing choice would people with limited mobility.
 9. The replacement dwelling is too large.
 10. Solar panels should be increased in size.
 11. Drainage should not increase the risk of localised flooding.
 12. The development would increase traffic congestion.
 13. Access sightlines are inadequate.
 14. The access would be dangerous.
 15. The access driveway is too narrow.
 16. There is no visitor parking.
 17. An increase in lighting could harm amenities and wildlife.
 18. Trees on the site would be lost.
 19. Assurances should be made that the adjacent woodland would be protected.
 20. Any working hours should be controlled.
 21. The development would place more pressure on local schools.
 22. The development could cause a potential landslip and instability of the steep chalk bank.
 23. A slope stability report is required to assess suitability of the development.
- Little respect is shown to the environment.
There would be light pollution from the houses.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

(a) National Planning Policy and Guidance

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable development

PPS3 Housing

PPG13 Transport

PPG14 Development on Unstable Land

(b) Berkshire Structure Plan 2001 - 2016

DP1 Spatial Strategy

DP5 Quality of Urban and Suburban Areas

H3 Location of Housing Development

H6 Residential density and dwelling mix

(c) Reading Borough Local Plan 1991 - 2006

HSG5 Residential Design Standards

HSG9 Location of Residential Development;

(d) Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008)

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS9 Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities
- CS15 Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
- CS24 Car/Cycle parking
- CS38 Trees, hedges and woodlands

(e) Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

- SPG - 'Space around Dwellings' (adopted 1994)
- SPG - 'Planning Obligations under s.106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990' (adopted July 2004, amendments adopted September 2004)
- SPD - Sustainable Design and Construction (adopted March 2007)

6. APPRAISAL

Policy principle

The application site is located within the urban settlement area of Reading Borough, at a distance of approximately 1.6 km to the district centre of Caversham with its retail area, other community services and amenities. The site comprises the rear garden area of No.182 & 194 Kidmore Road, currently has a residential use and is considered by PPS3 to be previously developed land suitable, in principle, for development.

PPS3 advocates the most efficient use of land through appropriate densities of residential development. In accordance with PPS3 guidance, Core Strategy Policy CS15 seeks to provide residential densities above 30 dwellings per hectare (dph). The density of the proposed development would be approximately 20dph; however, it is considered that there are certain limiting factors that constrain the density that could be achieved. Firstly, the width of the access to the rear part of the site is limited by the presence of a large TPO Horse Chestnut on the front boundary. This means that the applicant is only able to provide a driveway of 4.1m in width which Transport Strategy are only prepared to consider as being adequate to serve up to five dwellings as a small private driveway. Further, Transport Strategy would not support the intensification of the existing access serving No.182 due to the level of visibility onto Kidmore Road. Restrictions relating to the root protection areas of TPO trees prevent a larger access being formed on the site frontage.

The neighbouring houses on the north eastern side of Kidmore Road have a low density of some 14 dwellings per hectare (dph), and the current density on the application site is just 3dph. In this context, the proposed development certainly makes more efficient use of the land and, with regard to the TPO tree and access restrictions, it is considered that the density of the development is adequate and acceptable.

It is recognised that density as a measure in itself does not indicate whether a proposal is acceptable. Rather, it is the quality of the overall design of the development and its impact on the character and amenities of the area that must be taken into account.

Impact on character of area

PPS3 states that matters that need to be considered when assessing design quality include the extent to which the development is easily accessible and well connected to public transport and community facilities and services; provides good amenity and recreational space; is well

integrated and complements neighbouring buildings; facilitates the efficient use of resources; integrates car parking space with a high quality public realm; creates or enhances a distinctive character; and provides for the biodiversity within residential environments.

Further national design guidance is contained in PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development. In broad terms, PPS1 states that new development must take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area. Where this is not achieved, a proposal should not be accepted.

Local Plan Policies HSG5 and CUD14, and Core Strategy Policy CS7 provide borough wide requirements on the design of new residential development. These Policies require that development must have a high quality of design that maintains and improves the character of the local area, and incorporates positive urban design objectives which enhance the appearance and usability of the place. In addition, development should provide a safe, secure and accessible environment with adequate open amenity and landscaping space.

The proposed houses to the rear of the site have a design that incorporates staggered mono-pitched roofs with full height (floor to eaves) windows in the front and rear elevations. The houses would be finished in a mixture of brick, render and timber boarding. The design of these houses differs from the form of other houses along Kidmore Road. However, it is considered that the surrounding existing housing stock do not set a style of building that should necessarily be replicated and the site, set behind the street scene, is capable of creating its own distinct identity and character.

The proposed houses to the rear are all two storey with the upper floor set within the eaves of each building. The houses have a maximum height of 7.4m (Plots 1-3 & 5) and 7.9m (plot 4), but have relatively low (4.3-4.7m) eaves and stepped roof levels. It is considered that the mass and scale of the houses are appropriate for their 'backland' siting and would not appear overly dominant as viewed from the rear garden areas of neighbouring properties. Whilst there would be some filling of the bowl in the centre of the site, the houses on this land would be significantly lower than the properties fronting onto Kidmore Road.

The siting of the development at the rear of the site responds to the TPO Hornbeam trees. The houses (plots 3-5) in the south eastern part of the site are clustered around these trees so, it is considered, to form an attractive residential environment of distinctive landscaped quality.

The Hornbeam trees would also form a focal point in views into the site from Kidmore Road and wide verges (between 2-5m) would flank either side of the main access into the site. It is considered that this would provide a verdant setting for the development and allows the backland development to visually integrate with the existing street scene.

The above accords with the views of the Inspector who considered the appeal for the previous development (07/00886 - eight flats in two buildings) proposed on the site. The appeal was dismissed on grounds of amenity and access; however, the Inspector's view was that "the proposed buildings would not have a significant impact on the street scene". He reasoned that despite their departure from the existing pattern of development, the two blocks of flats would not appear unduly dominant in public views and their design would not be inappropriate to the surrounding area. The Inspector concluded that the proposal would not be unacceptably harmful to the character and appearance of the locality.

This current proposed development (07/01566/FUL) would have a greater amount of landscaping than the previous proposal and the dwellings have a significantly lesser height, mass and bulk than the flatted buildings. As the Inspector considered that the previous development (07/00886/FUL) would adequately integrate into the surrounding townscape, it is reasoned that

this new development would also be acceptable in terms of its impact on the character of the area.

Each of the proposed five houses to the rear would have a rear garden depth of between 9.5m and 12m. This depth is less than the current long rear gardens of the houses fronting Kidmore Road; but, in comparison with the houses recently built to the north east in Hunter Chase, this depth is equitable. Further, each house has a more generous garden width of between 11 & 12m. It is considered that adequate amenity space for each family sized house (in excess of 100sqm) would be provided. In addition, each house has a generous sized front garden (plots 1-3) or is opposite the Hornbeam trees (plots 4 & 5) that provide a level amenity space.

The replacement house at the front of the site would have a similar siting to the existing bungalow. It would however have a narrower footprint in order to allow for more space and landscaping around the proposed access driveway. The house would have a simple two storey form and would be of a more traditional design that is considered to be in keeping with the mature residential street scene of Kidmore Road. Whilst the replacement house would be taller than the existing bungalow, the scale and mass of the proposed house would be similar to other properties along Kidmore Road, including the pair of semi-detached adjacent to the south east. As such, it is considered that the replacement house would maintain the character and street scene of the area.

It is considered that the design of the development is acceptable and would comply with Policies CS7, HSG5 and CUD14, and PPS3.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policies HSG5 and HSG9 state that residential proposals should not be permitted if they have a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.

A minimum distance of 14m would be maintained between the front elevation windows of the rear houses and the rear garden boundaries of the houses that front onto Kidmore Road. The distance from the proposed buildings to the built form of these houses increases to between 34m and 38m. At such distances, it is considered that the development would neither materially overlook the private garden areas of these houses nor would appear unduly overbearing in appearance from their rear outlook. As such, it is considered that the residential amenities of these occupants would be adequately maintained.

To the rear of the site the land drops very steeply towards the houses fronting onto Hunters Chase. This change in level is of such a magnitude and so abrupt that these houses do not directly relate to the application site. It is considered that any views from the development would be over the tops of the roofs and from the houses in Hunters Chase unduly obtrusive views of the development would not be afforded. It is considered that the residential amenities of the properties in Hunters Chase would not be materially harmed. Objection in this regard was not previously raised in the refusal of application 07/00866/FUL or the Inspector's resulting decision.

The proposed access driveway is located adjacent to No.180 and the replacement house at No.182 Kidmore Road. Whilst the rear garden area of No.180 is small, narrowing to a width of 5m at its end, the access road curves away from this property and a substantial buffer area (3-8m wide) of landscaping would be provided. This is in distinct contrast to the development for eight flats refused under 07/00886/FUL which proposed the access alongside the full depth of No.180's garden. As such, it is considered that the proposal would adequately maintain the residential amenities of No.182.

Transport

Transport Strategy confirms that the increase in traffic from the development would not be material and would be within the daily fluctuations of traffic flows.

Access to the rear of the site would be via a 4.1m wide driveway and Transport Strategy confirm that this complies with Manual for Streets and is acceptable. Likewise, the access would have adequate visibility splays onto Kidmore Road.

PPS3 recommends that parking provision is based on the expected car ownership in the local area of the site. Census data for the Thames Ward shows that average car ownership is 1.5 vehicles per dwelling. A minimum of two spaces per dwelling, including integral garages, would be provided on the site; this is considered adequate.

The applicant would provide cycle storage sheds in the rear garden of each of the houses at the rear of the site. This would address the inadequate size of the garages to accommodate cycles.

It is considered that adequate car and cycle parking would be provided and the development complied with Core Strategy Policy CS24.

Refuse Storage

A bin store would be provided at the front of the site some 9m from the highway. This is an acceptable carrying distance for waste collection operatives. There would be a greater carrying distance for occupants of the development (approximately 50m); however, this is considered unavoidable. The alternative would be to make access and turning provision for a large refuse vehicles within the site which would be unacceptable in visual/urban design terms and in respect of the impact on TPO trees. Transport Strategy has confirmed that Council refuse vehicles are much larger than other types of delivery vehicles.

Trees and Landscape

There is a large TPO Horse Chestnut tree on the front boundary of the site and other TPO trees, Hornbeams and a Monkey Puzzle, within the site. The Tree and Landscape Officer (Planning Support) confirms that the principle of the development is acceptable in relation to its impact on these trees. Further details will be required from the application to ensure that the development is constructed in an appropriate manner to safeguard the retained trees. In this regard, details of the bank retention on the north western side of the access driveway and a schedule of tree works are required. Tree protection measures should be in accordance with those shown on the site-location plan (7859-07-2 rev B). These can be secured through condition.

A planting and landscaping scheme can be secured through condition.

Ecology

One of the design objectives of PPS3 is to provide for biodiversity within residential environments. Local Plan Policy NE6 states that development shall retain, as appropriate, wildlife habitats, and Policy NE7 states that wherever possible new development should introduce nature conservation measures which pay positive regard to the site and its surroundings.

It is recommended that any landscaping scheme incorporates native scrubs and trees, that bird and bat boxes should be erected on the established trees, and that there is no scrub clearance in nesting season (March - August). These can be secured through condition.

Land stability

There is a steep chalk slope (some 10m in height) to the rear (north east) of the site where at the bottom are residential properties in Hunters Chase. The stability of this slope is a concern to local residents and is a material planning consideration.

PPG14 relates to development on unstable land. Its purpose is to ensure that the physical constraints of the land are taken into account in the planning process and to allow remedial, preventative or precautionary measures of building to come forward so that land is not sterilised unnecessarily. PPG14 details that it is the developer who is responsible for determining whether land is suitable for a particular purpose. The responsibility and subsequent liability for safe development and secure occupancy also rests with the developer. Nevertheless, where the LPA has reason to believe that the site could potentially be unstable, it should ensure that matters relating to the physical capability of the land, the possible effects of the development on the stability of adjoining land, and the effects of any remedial measure proposed, are properly addressed.

The applicant has commissioned a report from a Geotechnical Consulting Engineer. This report considers that the proposed houses are a sufficient distance (9-12m) from the top of the slope to avoid any loading that would affect the bank. The report notes that the visual evidence of the slope shows no defect of deterioration and is adequate for the purpose of the construction. The report concludes that providing sympathetic and sensible engineering is employed, construction of the development is viable. However, as a matter of prudence, the report advises that a full slope stability analysis should be carried out prior to development.

It is therefore recommended that a Grampian style condition be imposed that requires such analysis to be carried out to the satisfaction of the LPA and that the development shall incorporate all measures shown in the assessment to be necessary. This approach is consistent with the advice of PPG14 (para.41) that states that such a condition can be used where the information available is sufficient to resolve the main issues regarding stability but insufficient to resolve specific details.

Sustainable Design and Construction

Core Strategy Policy CS1 requires that all new housing, of less than ten dwellings, must meet a minimum Eco-Homes standard of 'Very Good' (Eco-Homes Standards have now replaced by the Code for Sustainable Homes and an Eco-Homes 'Very Good' is considered to approximately equate to a Code Level 3). The Code for Sustainable Homes is a mechanism of achieving a high standard of sustainable design and construction, including measuring the levels of energy and water consumption. The Council has adopted a SPD on 'Sustainable Design and Construction' (Adopted March 2007) which provides further guidance and detail in respect of Policy CS1.

The applicant has provided a Code for Sustainable Homes pre-assessment estimator which predicts that the dwellings would achieve a Code Level 3. This meets the Council's current requirements. The end Code Level of the development can be controlled by condition. It is considered that Core Strategy Policy CS1 would be complied with.

Infrastructure contributions

Contributions have been calculated in accordance with the adopted SPG 'Planning Obligations under s.106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990'. For the proposed five new dwellings (excluding the one for one replacement at the front of the site), the following amounts are sought:

RUAP	£20,000	on commencement
Leisure	£10,000	on occupation
Education	£51,546	on occupation

The applicant has agreed to these contribution amounts. Should the Committee resolve to grant planning permission, a legal agreement to secure these contributions would be completed.

Conclusion

The development would maintain the character and amenities of the area.

The development would not have an unacceptable impact on the existing trees.
Adequate access and parking would be provided.
The development could be built without affecting land stability

Plans

7859-07-01	Survey
7859-07-02 C	Site-location plan
7859-07-03 B	Replacement dwelling plan
7859-07-04 C	Replacement dwelling elevation
7859-07-05 A	Plot 1 & 3 plans
7859-07-06 A	Plot 1 & 3 elevations
7859-07-07 A	Plot 2 plans
7859-07-08 A	Plot 2 elevations
7859-07-09 A	Plot 4 plans
7859-07-10 A	Plot 4 elevations
7859-07-11 A	Plot 5 plans
7859-07-12 A	Plot 5 elevations
7859-07-13 A	Bin-cycle storage / plot 5 garage
7859-07-14	Site sections
7859-07-15B	Street scene
7859-07-16	Existing plans

Case Officer: Andrew Somerville