

PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (CHILBOLTON AVENUE, WINCHESTER) SUB COMMITTEE

13 OCTOBER 2003

Attendance:

Councillors:

Busher (Chairman) (P)

Baxter (P)

Beveridge (P)

Davies (P)

Hatch (P)

Nunn (P)

Pearce

Pearson (P)

Sutton (P)

Others in attendance:

Councillor Love

Hampshire County Councillor Dickens (for the site visit only)

Officers in attendance:

Mr J Hearn – Team Manager (Planning)

Mrs J Pinnock – Planning Officer

Mr S Dunbar-Dempsey – Landscape Architect

Mr B Draper – Arboricultural Officer

Mr N Baldwin – Housing Officer

Mr N Culhane – Engineer

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1. **PLANNING APPLICATION FOR 53 DWELLINGS ON LAND TO REAR OF 8-22 CHILBOLTON AVENUE, WINCHESTER**
(Report PDC358 refers)

Members of the Sub Committee visited the application site prior to the meeting in the Guildhall, Winchester to familiarise themselves with the issues involved.

Members observed on the site visit number 10 Chilbolton Avenue that would be demolished to provide space for a new access to the development from Chilbolton Avenue. A new replacement house would be constructed adjacent to the new entrance as replacement for the property demolished. With respect to the replacement house, Mr Hearn stated that the character of the street frontage to Chilbolton Avenue was one of large houses with gaps in between, and this was achieved by having a single storey element to the sides of the properties. However, the proposed replacement house was a large two storey dwelling which would be close to number 8 Chilbolton Avenue and would appear quite cramped. Elevations were displayed to Members and Mr Hearn commented that the replacement dwelling provided an opportunity to obtain a dwelling of more architectural merit.

Mr Culhane explained that responsibility for the standards for the new entrance onto Chilbolton Avenue rested with Hampshire County Council. To achieve an entrance to the required standard a visibility splay of 4.5 metres by 120 metres was required. From the evidence submitted, the County were not satisfied that the splays could be achieved due to the mature trees that fronted Chilbolton Avenue effecting sight lines. The applicant Linden Homes Limited, would need to provide a solution for this situation.

Members proceeded to view the rear gardens of numbers 8 to 22 Chilbolton Avenue where the route of the proposed internal access road had been marked out on site. The position of the housing units was explained to Members. It was observed that the site had a change in levels, falling away from Chilbolton Avenue towards Greenhill Road. The rear gardens were well treed and contained many specimen shrubs. A blanket Tree Preservation Order had been placed on the site as a safe guard prior to negotiating the trees to be removed. From the rear garden of number 22 Chilbolton Avenue it was explained that a number of mature trees on the boundary of Greenhill Road would be removed and that at this point four storey dwellings would be constructed with balconies to face towards number 24 Chilbolton Avenue, which was presently used as a nursing home.

Members also observed that from the rear boundary of Orchard House, Sarum Road, that there would be a 10 metre gap to the new development. This housing would be in two separate blocks of four and three, three storey units with high roofs and balconies with integral garage beneath. It was the officers' opinion that these properties were too close to Orchard House and would lead to overlooking and would be overbearing.

Members also viewed the application site from the rear gardens of 148, 150, 154 and 162 Greenhill Road. From the garden of 162 Greenhill Close it was explained that this property would back onto a four storey gable, which would be partially screened to a mature treed hedge, but that it was of a deciduous nature and would be bare in the winter when the reduction in light from the evening sun would be at its most significant. It was the officers' opinion that a development of this height in this position would be overbearing. This situation was repeated for other properties in Greenhill Road. At the position of numbers 148 and 150 Greenhill Road, although there was slightly more depth to the rear gardens, it was proposed at this point of the boundary of the new development to remove the mature trees which would lead to further exposure of the four storey blocks.

During the site visit, it was also explained to Members that the opportunity existed to place a pedestrian footpath between numbers 154 and 156 Greenhill Road to provide access to the proposed new development, which would save a significant time for pedestrians and cyclists accessing West Down and Western Schools from the new development. Without a pedestrian access it was estimated that from Chilbolton Avenue the distance to be walked would be approximately 520 metres and from the furthest point of the internal access road this could be nearer 750 metres. The access road that could be utilised had planning permission to serve two modest semi detached dwellings to be constructed on the site of the present garage block and therefore in the view of the Engineer, vehicle movements would be minimal for the balance of gain that could be achieved in creating a pedestrian and cycle access.

At the meeting at the Guildhall, Winchester the Chairman welcomed to the meeting representatives of the applicant, Linden Homes Limited, Councillor Love as a Ward Member, and approximately 30 members of the public.

Councillors Beveridge and Davies declared a personal interest (but not prejudicial) as they were members of the City of Winchester Trust that had commented on this application and they remained in the meeting and participated throughout.

Mr Hearn presented the scheme to the meeting and explained that it would contain sixteen units of affordable housing with the remaining thirty seven units being for private sale.

The Officers supported the contemporary approach proposed by the applicant and the materials to be used were slate to the roof, with elevations to incorporate zinc and cedar boarding.

Mr Hearn also explained to the Sub Committee the Tree Retention Plan. The trees proposed to be lost included a number of ornamental trees, which would normally not present a problem, but some of these provided protection to neighbours and to lose these was unsatisfactory. Further work on the arboricultural aspects of the application was required.

Mr Culhane explained the highway considerations of the application. He stated that the City Council had responsibility for the internal highway arrangements and that for the access to Chilbolton Avenue and wider issues, Hampshire County Council acted as the highway authority. However, he had spoken to Hampshire County Councillor Dickens during the earlier site visit and she had provided an outline of the issues to take into consideration. As previously mentioned a visibility splay of 4.5 metres by 120 metres was required at the access point into Chilbolton Avenue, but it had not been demonstrated by the applicant that this could be achieved. There were also wider traffic implications to be considered including the impact at the junction of Romsey Road and Chilbolton Avenue, which would require improvements, and also at the Chilbolton Avenue Stockbridge Road junction. Another consideration was the access with Sarum Road where a simple T junction had been shown but a ghost island with a pedestrian refuge and right turn lane would be preferable. However, this was difficult to achieve but could be done in consultation with the Police and a wide load route. Contributions from the applicant for off site highway improvement works would be required. There were a number of highway issues to be addressed, which had led to highway reasons for refusal in respect of the application.

Mr Culhane continued that there were a number of issues on the internal highways arrangements that needed to be addressed, but these could be resolved. The scheme proposed 1.5 car parking spaces per dwelling, which was in keeping with County standards, with five occasional visitor car parking spaces also being provided on the access road.

The Sub Committee noted that there was also a number of other potential development proposals for the Chilbolton Avenue area. It would be preferable if a comprehensive highway study was obtained with all potential developers making financial contributions to bring about a comprehensive highway improvement scheme to the area.

Mr Baldwin stated that there had been a meeting with the applicant on the mix of dwellings for affordable housing and that these would be reconsidered in the light of these discussions.

With respect to open space, Mr Dunbar-Dempsey explained that there was a requirement for 1000sq metres of play space, but the present scheme resulted in a

slight short fall, which could be overcome through negotiation. The short fall was between 100 and 200 sq. metres.

In response to Members' questions, Mr Hearn explained issues relating to policy EN1 and the effect the proposals on the character of the area. He explained that there would be an impact of the introduction of 53 dwellings through their height and the loss of trees. Balanced against this was the fact that the proposal would be in a private garden which was an appropriate route for development and at the right height and with the correct trees being retained, the proposed development would not impact on the public realm and therefore would not affect the character of the area. It did not set a precedent, as each scheme needed to be looked at on its own merit. The proposals were self contained as the nursing home at number 24 Chilbolton Avenue was classified as a facility and service and could not be demolished.

A number of Members questioned whether a mini development brief for the whole Chilbolton Avenue area was required in view of the development pressure in the area. Mr Hearn stated that a great deal of analysis work on the suitability of the site for the present development proposal would be required and this could form the basis of informing officers of the potential for development in the area.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Love, a Ward Member stated that the report set out the neighbours' concerns, including his own comments. He asked the Sub Committee to take into consideration the amenities of those living in Greenhill Road, and particularly the treatment of the hedges and trees bordering the development site. He also stated that the proposals, with their high buildings and steep roofs were out of character for the area and therefore not in accordance with planning policy.

For the applicant, Linden Homes Limited, their Agent, Mr M Hawthorn stated that there had been dialogue over the application with the planning officers for eighteen months. However, a meeting in the previous week had raised a number of new issues and it was the applicant's desire that the application be deferred so that these could be addressed. Clear guidance on landscaping and highway issues had now been received and needed to be addressed.

The Chairman invited comments from the members of the public on the application. These comments are comprehensively set out in the report and those raised at the meeting are summarised below.

Neighbouring residents spoke of their concerns at the impact of PPG3 and the effect of the character of the area; the impact of additional vehicles on Chilbolton Avenue and its junction with Stockbridge Road and Romsey Road, together with the Sarum Road cross roads; and the effect on the privacy of residents of Greenhill Road.

Additional points related to the inappropriate appearance and design of the proposed properties due to their excessive height with roof balconies leading to the potential of overlooking. Also of concern was the high density and lack of play areas and small gardens and the potential conflict between young children and cars within the development. It was also thought that the provision for car parking on the site would be inadequate and also that there would be traffic congestion at the entrance to Chilbolton Avenue.

It was also commented that the development would be out of character and that the architecture was inappropriate with the use of materials being industrial in nature and not appropriate to a residential environment. The loss of trees and of green space

and the impact on wild life were also of concern. An additional point was the impact on long views as the site was prominent when viewed across Winchester. The present two storey houses were concealed, but the proposed four storey high dwellings when combined with the loss of trees would create an adverse visual impact on long distance views.

Residents of Greenhill Road also spoke of their concerns of the effect on the environment, the loss of enjoyment of amenity, the loss of sunlight, potential for over looking and loss of privacy. There was also concern of the potential for increase of noise nuisance.

There was also a comment that the proposals did not meet the requirements in PPG3 in that the proposals did not improve the quality of life or the attractiveness of the local area. The density of 44.3 dwellings per hectare was too great in a leafy suburb. It was also thought that the site was not sustainable in terms of the government's definition.

A resident also spoke of her concerns of the conflict of pedestrians and vehicular traffic using the proposed access from 154 and 156 Greenhill Road, through the garage compound (which now have planning permission for two semi detached bungalows) and the proposed development.

There was additional concern at the time it would take vehicles to be able to access Chilbolton Avenue at peak times and the inadequacy of car park provision within the development.

In conclusion of the public comments, there was recognition of the wider development pressure within the local area and perhaps the need for a more comprehensive approach to planning for development within the area.

In response, representatives for the applicant stated that the use of land within the urban areas was in accordance with government's guidance and that they would be happy to address the issues as raised by local residents and the Sub Committee.

Also in reply to points raised, Mr Hearn stated that the provision of a footpath link to Greenhill Road would be the subject of a safety audit and although it would save new residents a lot of time in accessing, for example local schools, it would not take place if the safety audit proved it to be unsafe.

Mr Culhane stated that many of the highway points raised were issues for consideration by Hampshire County Council and would be addressed by a traffic impact study and also by the safer routes to schools policies.

In discussing the wider issues of development in the local area, Mr Hearn stated that following recent public consultation on changes to PPG3, pre-inquiry amendments to the revised policies of the Winchester District Local Plan were being considered. However, in terms of assessing the site under consideration, it should be assessed on its merits by present policies.

In assessing the application, members of the Sub Committee were of the opinion that the proposed height of the new dwellings, the potential for overlooking, the proposed density of development and issues of car parking together with the boundary treatment to Greenhill Road were out of character with the local area and that the application should be refused as set out in the officers' recommendations.

The Sub Committee commented that the house types were unimaginative and that the impact on trees and landscaping within the site could be improved by the retention of the taller trees for the protection of long views. A revised scheme was required which addressed these issues to allow the proposed dwellings to fit in well with the surrounding area.

In conclusion the Sub Committee agreed to refuse the application as set out.

RECOMMENDED:

THAT PLANNING PERMISSION BE REFUSED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:-

- 1. The proposed development is contrary to policies UB1, UB3, T4, T5, T6, H8, R2, of the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review, proposals H.7, EN.1, EN.5, EN.7, EN.8, EN.9, EN.12, RT.3, RT.6, T.9, T.10, T.11, W.1, W.27, W.29, of the Winchester District Local Plan and proposals H.5, RD06.17, DP.1, DP.3, DP.5, DP.6, RT.3, T.1, T.2, T.3, T.4, T.5, T.8, W.1, W.6 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review (Revised Deposit 2003), in that:**
- 2. it is out of character with surrounding existing development in terms of the height and massing of the buildings and will have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area;**
- 3. it will result in the loss of trees and vegetation which are of amenity value which will have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area;**
- 4. it will result in the loss of trees and vegetation which provide amenity value to neighbouring residents and which would provide potential screening from any new development on the application site;**
- 5. it will result in an development which will be overbearing, overshadowing and would create overlooking of neighbouring residential properties;**
- 6. inadequate sight lines and radii are provided at the junction of the new access road and Chilbolton Avenue;**
- 7. it does not make adequate provision for on-site and off-site public open space;**
- 8. the position and massing of the replacement house at number 10 Chilbolton Avenue and its associated garage would adversely impact in visual terms on the character of the street scene along Chilbolton Avenue;**
- 9. it does not make adequate provision for affordable housing;**
- 10. it fails to provide a satisfactory footpath link to the adjacent site (land to the rear of 152 – 154 Greenhill Road) and a pedestrian link at the end of the cul de sac to Chilbolton Avenue;**
- 11. the proposed layout is unsatisfactory in highway design terms for the following reasons and will cause danger and inconvenience to highway users and to pedestrians:**

- the access to the replacement house at number 10 Chilbolton Avenue is in an unacceptable position;
 - the new access road in from Chilbolton Avenue is not of a satisfactory width and design;
 - the design of the internal roads and parking areas have a number of deficiencies;
12. Any other reasons of completion of consultations with the highway Authority.

The meeting commenced at 11.00am until 1.00pm on site and then recommenced at 2.00pm and concluded at 4.05pm in the Guildhall, Winchester.

Chairman