

# Forest Heath District Council

**DEVELOPMENT  
CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**1 APRIL 2015**

**DEV/FH/15/013**

**Report of the Head of Planning and Growth**

**PLANNING APPLICATION DC/14/2244/FUL – 4 DOVE CLOSE, LAKENHEATH**

## **Synopsis:**

Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and associated matters.

## **Recommendation:**

**It is recommended that the Committee determine the attached application and associated matters.**

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

Case Officer: Sarah Drane  
Tel. No: 01638 719432

# Committee Report

**Date:** 25 November      **Expiry Date:** 20 January 2015  
**Registered:** 2014

**Case Officer:** Sarah Drane      **Recommendation:** Approve

**Parish:** Lakenheath      **Ward:** Lakenheath

**Proposal:** Planning Application DC/14/2244/FUL – Construction of a 1 ½ storey dwelling with car parking

**Site:** 4 Dove Close, Lakenheath

**Applicant:** Dunroamin Developments (Mr J Simmonds)

## **Background:**

**This application is referred to committee following consideration by the Delegation Panel. Lakenheath Parish Council object to the application, raising concerns about impact on the Conservation area and loss of open space.**

## **Proposal:**

1. Planning permission is sought for the construction of a 1 ½ storey dwelling and associated car parking. As originally submitted the proposed dwelling measured 8.2m to the ridge, with dormer windows to the front and rear accommodating 3 bedrooms. Parking is shown at the front of the site.
2. The application has been amended since submission to reduce the scale of the proposed dwelling. Still 1 ½ storey, but reduced to 6.3m to the ridge. There are no first floor rear facing windows. The form of the dwelling has been simplified, but still accommodates 3 bedrooms with parking at the front. The materials proposed are brick under a pantile roof.

## **Application Supporting Material:**

3. Information submitted with the application as follows:
  - Existing and proposed plans
  - Design & Access statement
  - Land contamination questionnaire
  - Environment report

### **Site Details:**

4. The site falls within the settlement boundary of Lakenheath and also the Conservation Area. The site is situated off Dove Close, a relatively newly constructed development of 3 houses to the rear of 6 Wings Road served off a private drive, to the east of the application site. To the north are bungalows accessed off Cross Lane Close. To the west are 2 storey dwellings fronting Back Street. To the south is a former care home.

### **Planning History:**

5. The site has a pertinent planning history including three previous applications for residential development. The first of these, under reference **F/2006/0572/OUT** sought permission for the erection of four dwellings. Only indicative plans were submitted for the layout of this application, including illustrative locations in close proximity to site boundaries and no indication of height, and the application was refused for four reasons. The first reason related to the impact of the illustrative layout upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; the second reason related to the impact upon residential amenity; the third reason related to the impact of the development upon existing trees within the site; and the fourth reason related to the highway related impacts albeit it should be noted that the scheme was proposing a subsequent access to the site, in addition to the retained one for Brandon House, not a single joint access and it was the interrelationship between the two accesses which was considered problematic.
6. The second application was a full application submitted under reference **F/2009/0147/FUL**. This application was withdrawn prior to determination after officers raised concern regarding the impact of the proposal upon residential amenity.
7. The third application was under reference F/2009/0349/FUL - Resubmission of F/2009/0147/FUL - Erection of 4No detached dwellings, garages and new vehicular access, as amended by plans received 28th July 2009 which Members were minded to refuse and it was dismissed at appeal (non-determination). (See working papers 1 & 2 for the decision and related plan)
8. The most recent application is F/2012/0775/FUL - Erection of 3No. 1½ storey detached dwellings with garages and private access road (Demolition of existing amenity building) - was approved (now built - known as Dove Close).

### **Consultations:**

9. Conservation Officer:

*'The site was the subject of an appeal in 2009 where the inspector considered the area proposed for development to be a verdant and spacious part of the conservation area which made an important*

*contribution to its overall character. I did not have the benefit of seeing the site back in 2009 however today it stands as an unassuming site, cleared of any lush vegetation/mature planting it may have benefitted from back then. As a result, views of the recent development (to the east of the proposed development site) can be seen from Back Street and the churchyard where previously it is assumed the site provided a greener backdrop offering a buffer to the modern development outside the conservation area making a positive contribution to the area. Assuming the removal of whatever planting formerly stood on the site was permitted I do not consider the land as it stands today makes an important contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area to the extent that it should remain undeveloped. Any development must however relate to its immediate surroundings and should not be to the detriment of any views into or out of the conservation area. Development either side of the plot is of single storey and benefits from comparatively spacious settings. The proposed development poses a 1 ½ storey building which largely consumes the width of the site providing parking forward of the front elevation and as a result will fail to respect the typical pattern of development of its immediate surrounding further eroding views into and out of the conservation area. A true and modest single storey development which has little impact on views into or out of the conservation area would better relate to the surrounding development inside the conservation area whilst avoiding further erosion of any views.'*  
(comments on originally submitted plans)

### **Representations:**

#### 10. Lakenheath Parish Council:

Object to the application. The following comments were made in relation to the amended proposals:

*'Despite amendment in footprint this is still a creeping planning application by stealth and as such should not be allowed.'*

*Representations to the original application covered by our letter of 1.12.14 still apply. Namely, the developer has now developed the rear of Brandon House grounds next door. Originally there was an application for 4 dwellings on this and the adjoining site which went to appeal (ref:APP/H3510/A/09/2113872). We would suggest that the contents of the appeal still apply in relation to this current application.*

*The character of the conservation area has in the past been eroded by infill development which was inappropriate because it was not in harmony with the mass, scale, materials and detail of the area. (DM16 (f) applies). This includes the fact that it is out of keeping with the characteristics of the site and surroundings and character of the street scene, larger gardens and wooded back drop. This is in the conservation area. **Buildings should only be provided where necessary for the viability of preserving and enhancing the character of the conservation area.** Open space should remain as open space. DM18 A & C apply here.*

*It is a more cramped form of development out of scale and character with*

*surrounding properties in Cross Lane Close. It will detract from the visual and spatial continuity of the street scene. There is a potential loss of neighbour amenities through overlooking of garden areas and loss of outlook from existing windows. It will affect traffic and parking. Despite change in size it will still be a two car family occupying the house should permission be granted for a build and no provision for visitor parking.*

*The new Ridge line for the proposed dwelling appears higher than those in Cross Lane Close Properties, bungalows. Design at odds with those in Cross Lane Close properties.*

*Wings Road will suffer from further excess of traffic from the current dwellings in Dove Close and with an increase there is a possibility of accidents occurring.*

*Bins. Although there is an area proposed at the top of the drive for bins it is unlikely to be used (it is not used now) and they will be placed on the pavement as they are now as the new houses are occupied. As expected this is causing a blockage of the pavement dangerous to pedestrians on bin day. Particularly parents walking children to our primary school. The developer should be made to move the boundary wall further back in line with the original consent rather than seek to further develop the land.*

11. Objections have also been raised by residents at 3a and 5 Back Street:

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Previous applications on the site have been refused
- Loss of property value
- Any new dwelling should be low impact, conforming to national policy to ensure it complements the 'tranquil area'.

**Policy:** The following policies have been taken into account in the consideration of this application:

12. Joint Development Management Policies (1995)

- Policy DM1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Policy DM2 – Creating places
- Policy DM 17 – Conservation Areas
- Policy DM22 – Residential Design

13. Forest Heath Core Strategy (2010):

- Policy CS1 - Spatial Strategy
- Policy CS3 - Landscape Character and the Historic Environment
- Policy CS5 - Design Quality and Local Distinctiveness

**Other Planning Policy:**

14. National Planning Policy Framework (2012) core principles, paragraphs 56 – 68 (Requiring good design) and Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

## **Officer Comment:**

15. The issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on Conservation Area
- Impact on residential amenity

### Principle of development

16. The site is located within the settlement boundary of Lakenheath where the principle of infill residential development is supported. Lakenheath contains a reasonable range of shops and services and, for the provision of infill development such as this, can be considered as being sustainable in accordance with the NPPF.

17. On this basis the proposal can be considered satisfactory in principle albeit important matters of detail for consideration relate to the impact upon character and appearance of the Conservation Area (in particular given the planning history) and the impact upon the residential amenities of existing and future occupiers.

### Impact on the Conservation Area

18. The appeal decision in relation to the 2009 application (see working papers 1 and 2) is a material consideration. As set out above, the Conservation Officer does not consider that the land as it stands today (with just one TPO tree, rather than the previously greener back drop) makes an important contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area to the extent that it should remain undeveloped. Any development must however relate to its immediate surroundings and should not be to the detriment of any views into or out of the conservation area.

19. The plans have been amended reducing the overall height of the dwelling by nearly 2m and simplifying the rear roof form which is the most visible in views from Back Street. The bay window has also been removed from the front elevation. Not all the Conservation Officer's suggested changes have been made to the front elevation, but on balance the proposals from a design and conservation point of view are now considered acceptable.

### Impact on residential amenity

20. As amended, there are now no windows which overlook adjoining properties. The other consideration is therefore the increased use of the access. When the inspector considered the application in 2009 he concluded that the noise and disturbance resulting from vehicular movements would cause material harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of 5 Cross Lane Close. These comments are noted, but as the 3 dwellings on Dove Close are now constructed and the planting adjacent to the access is now beginning to establish, Officers consider that the use of the access to serve one further dwelling is on balance acceptable and a reason for refusal on this basis would be very difficult to substantiate.

**Conclusion:**

21. In conclusion, the principle and detail of the development is considered on balance to be acceptable and in compliance with relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Recommendation:**

22. It is recommended that planning permission be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit
2. Compliance with approved plans
3. Specified Materials
4. Details of windows and doors to be agreed
5. Secure parking and turning
6. Tree protection during development
7. Restrict construction times

**Documents:**

- Working Paper 1 - F/2009/0349/FUL appeal decision
- Working Paper 2 - F/2009/0349/FUL site layout plan

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

<https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=NFLFMMPD03F00>

Alternatively, hard copies are also available to view at Planning, Planning and Regulatory Services, Forest Heath District Council, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk, IP28 7EY