

2.7 SW/14/0516		Minster	
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Erection of two semi-detached dwellings.			
ADDRESS Land Adjacent Cedar Lodge, Whybornes Chase, Minter, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 2HZ			
RECOMMENDATION Grant with conditions			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION Application site is a sustainable location within the built up area where the provision of new dwellings is in accordance with local and national policy, and the development would not give rise to serious amenity impacts or justifiable reasons for refusal.			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Parish council and local objections.			
WARD Minster Cliffs	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Minster	APPLICANT Mr K French AGENT Nigel Sands	
DECISION DUE DATE 12 June 2014	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 26 May 2014	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE 12 June 2014	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):			
App No	Proposal	Decision	Date
SW/14/0515	Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of replacement house.	Delegated approval	June 2014
Demolition of existing property and erection of replacement dwelling would be in accordance with adopted policies and would not give rise to serious harm to local amenity.			

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 Cedar Lodge is a detached bungalow situated on an unmade road within the built up area. The property benefits from a double-width plot and sits to the south / left-hand-half of the plot close to the site frontage, with the remainder of the site providing a generous garden.
- 1.02 There are some small trees and large shrubs across the site, with those along the northern part of the frontage screening views of the garden from the road. There is also a small greenhouse towards the rear of the plot.
- 1.03 The area is characterised by a mix of bungalows, chalet bungalows and two-storey houses, largely detached, and with generous plot sizes and rear gardens. Land levels slope downwards to the north, with the entrance to Norwood Rise being the lowest point of the depression.

- 1.04 As is common along unmade roads on the Island there is a degree of frontage parking, on a grassed verge, at both Cedar Lodge and a number of neighbouring properties.
- 1.05 The street scene is very mixed here, and very few dwellings look alike in the immediate surroundings. There is also roughly a 50/50 mix of two-storey and single-storey / chalet dwellings, and it should be noted that the existing bungalow, Cedar Lodge, is to be replaced with a two-storey house (as approved under SW/14/0515 (discussed below).

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The application seeks permission for the erection of a pair of two-bed semi-detached houses on the northern half of the site – the southern half of the site being redeveloped to provide a detached house in place of the existing bungalow (further details provided below).
- 2.02 The proposed pair of houses would stand approximately 7.5m high to the ridge, by 11.4m wide, by 9.5m deep (at the deepest point, which includes a single-storey rear projection). External materials include face brick at ground floor and composite weatherboarding at first floor, and the properties will feature projecting bays on the front elevation and undercroft parking. No side windows are proposed, and rear windows will be high level only (and serve the stairwell and bathroom).
- 2.03 Each house will have two bedrooms and bathroom at first floor, and lounge, kitchen and WC at ground floor. First floor windows on the rear elevation serve the stairway and bathroom, and will be high-level only to reduce the potential for overlooking of properties to the rear. The main entrances will be on the side elevations.
- 2.04 Two tandem parking spaces would be provided for each house – one each in a central undercroft parking space, and one to the front of the dwellings.
- 2.05 Front gardens sit to the side of the parking spaces, and rear gardens will measure between 12.5m and 15.5m deep by 6.5m wide. 1.8m high close-boarded fences will be erected along the boundaries of the rear garden, and space for bin storage and washing lines is shown.

3.0 SUMMARY INFORMATION

	Existing	Proposed	Change (+/-)
Site Area (ha)	0.1ha		
Approximate Ridge Height (m)	N/A	7.5m	
Approximate Eaves Height (m)	N/A	5m	
Approximate Depth (m)	N/A	9.5m	
Approximate Width (m)	N/A	11.4m	
No. of Storeys	N/A	2	

Parking Spaces	N/A	4	
No. of Residential Units	0	2	+2

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.01 Policies E1, E19, H2 and T3 of the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan 2008 are relevant, and encourage the provision of well-designed new residential developments within existing built up areas of the Borough, subject to provision of appropriate levels of parking and no serious amenity impacts.

4.02 This is supported by the general thrust of the National Planning Policy Framework, which encourages sustainable development as a priority. The above Local Plan policies are considered to be in compliance with the NPPF.

5.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

5.01 Four letters of objection have been submitted by local residents, raising the following summarised issues:

- Loss of privacy;
- Loss of light / overshadowing;
- Semi-detached houses are out of character with the existing street scene;
- Noise, disturbance and damage to the unmade road from extra traffic and construction vehicles;
- The removal of the existing boundary fence may result in encroachment onto neighbouring property;
- Additional cars parking on highway, and increased traffic congestion and highway safety concerns;
- Would make the nearby public open space (The Glen) feel “crammed in;”
- Loss of trees and shrubs on site; and
- Errors on the application form.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.01 Minster Parish Council objects to the application, commenting:

- i. The application contains anomalies with insufficient information provided identifying the buildings to be demolished. There is also concern about statutory requirements related to the removal of trees, bushes and outbuildings.*
- ii. The proposal is not in keeping with the street scene. The road is characterised by detached dwellings in a visually sensitive location.*
- iii. Inadequate parking is a concern.*
- iv. The proposal will impact on the amenities residents of the neighbouring properties might reasonably be expected to enjoy with loss of light and privacy issues. The main side entrance is also intrusive.*
- v. Further concerns that could be resolved by way of inclusion of the following conditions include: (i) concerns about removal of asbestos (garage roof) although not a planning consideration will need to be addressed by Building Regulations. (ii) Any road damage caused by*

the development may need reinstatement / repair. (iii) There are also concerns related to the removal of trees and other landscaping. MPC suggests a condition to repair any damage by way of a replacement scheme.”

- 6.02 The Head of Service Delivery has no objection subject to a standard condition in regards to hours of work.
- 6.03 The applicant has provided an email responding to some of the above points, which is noted at 8.03 and 8.16 below.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

- 7.01 Application reference SW/14/0515 granted planning permission under delegated powers for demolition of the existing bungalow (Cedar Lodge) and erection of a replacement two-storey house. That new dwelling would be immediately to the north of the dwellings applied for under this application, and the existing site divided in two.

8.0 APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

- 8.01 The application site is within the defined built up area of Minster and has good access to local shops, services and amenities. Further provision is available at Sheerness, which can be accessed via local public transport links or a shorty drive.
- 8.02 I therefore consider this to be a sustainable location for residential development and consider the proposal acceptable in principle, in accordance with the above adopted local and national policies.

Visual Impact

- 8.02 Whilst I note local objections I consider the proposed dwellings to be of an acceptable scale and design, and believe that they would sit comfortably within the street scene. The amended drawing (received 8 October) has refined the design of the properties and added features of interest – such as the projecting – front gables that will, in my opinion, introduce positive design into the street scene.
- 8.03 Whilst detached dwellings are in the majority, there are almost no two dwellings that look alike – the street scene is incredibly varied in terms of house types (houses, bungalows and chalet bungalows) and designs, and there is no over-riding character that can be identified. In this regard I believe that a pair of semi-detached houses would not appear incongruous, or harmful to the already wildly varied character of Whybornes Chase. This is also noted by the applicant within his email response. I am firmly of the opinion that refusal of permission on such grounds would be indefensible at appeal.

- 8.04 The proposed building would be situated approximately 1m from the side boundaries of the plot, as shown on the drawings. The Council's adopted SPG on householder extensions advises that first floor development should normally be set a minimum of 2m in from side boundaries to avoid a terracing effect. I am not seriously concerned by this, however, as the huge variation in house types and designs in this area, as well as the considerable change in levels along Whybornes Chase, leaves substantial spaces between properties.
- 8.05 Santorini to the south is set approximately 500mm above the level of the proposed building, and its roof ridge will stand approximately 1m higher than that of the new dwellings. This difference, together with the (relatively) low hipped roof on the proposed building, will retain a large and open gap between the two properties. The same is true of the plot to the south (recently granted permission for demolition of the existing bungalow and erection of a two-storey house under SW/14/0515), which is also set 500mm below the level of the current application site, and the roof of the approved dwelling also pitches away from the common boundary.
- 8.06 I have recommended a standard materials condition, which will ensure that the external finish of the dwellings is of a high standard and that the development contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.

Residential Amenity

- 8.07 The proposed dwellings would provide a good standard of amenity for future occupants, having acceptably-sized internal rooms and generous gardens. I have no serious concerns in this regard.
- 8.08 Whilst I note local objections I also have no over-riding concerns in regards to the impact of the development upon neighbouring residents.
- 8.09 Land levels slope downwards so that Santorini (to the south) is at a higher level than the proposed dwellings. That property also has few windows on the flank elevation (two small windows at first floor level) which are unlikely to be seriously affected due to their northern orientation and the gap of approximately 2.7m between existing and proposed flank walls. The lower ridge height of the proposed semis (due to sloping land levels) will also help to maintain light to those windows.
- 8.10 I note the parish council's concerns in regard to the side entrance and potential loss of privacy, but have no serious concerns as any mutual views will be obstructed by boundary fences and changes in land levels.
- 8.11 The amenity of occupants of the new dwelling to the north of the application site (permitted under SW/14/0515, as above), is unlikely to be seriously compromised due to its position and orientation in relation to the proposed semis. The pair of semis proposed here can't be constructed without prior

demolition of the existing bungalow, and I therefore have few concerns in regard to amenity of that property.

- 8.12 I firmly believe that there will no serious amenity impacts upon those properties on the opposite side of Whybornes Chase due to the distances between existing and proposed dwellings.

Highways

- 8.13 The proposed dwellings each feature parking in accordance with current adopted Kent Parking Standards. Tandem is normally discouraged, but in this location, on an unmade road with less parking pressure than elsewhere in the Borough, and with potentially slower traffic movements (due to the uneven surface), I do not believe that this would give rise to any serious issues of highway safety or amenity.

Landscaping

- 8.14 I note that the Parish Council has raised the removal of trees and landscaping as an issue, but during my site visit I did not notice any substantial trees, or any vegetation worthy of formal protection. From discussions with a neighbour I understand that some larger trees were cut down prior to submission of this application, but this would not have required formal consent.
- 8.15 The inclusion of standard landscaping conditions will ensure that the site is replanted to a suitable standard after construction works have finished, and help to soften the impact of the development.

Other Matters

- 8.16 I note the parish council's comment that there is insufficient information but I am satisfied with the level of detail included with the application, and note that it is similar to that provided on numerous other applications determined by this Council. I would also draw to their attention that footprint of the building to be demolished is clearly shown on drawing 13/2476/2.
- 8.17 Whilst I also note local concerns in respect to damage to the road by construction vehicles, this would be a private matter outside of planning control. In this regard, however, the applicant has confirmed (in his email response) that they would *"be willing to add next time funds are needed."*

9.0 CONCLUSION

- 9.01 Taking the above into account I believe this to be a well-considered proposal for residential development within a sustainable location, which would not give rise to serious local amenity concerns or harm to the character or appearance of the area, subject to the conditions noted below.

- 10.0 RECOMMENDATION – GRANT** subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Grounds: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. No development shall take place until details of all external materials to be used on the development hereby permitted, including paving and surfacing materials, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Grounds: In the interest of visual amenity.

3. No development shall take place until details have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing, which set out what measures have been taken to ensure that the development incorporates sustainable construction techniques such as water conservation and recycling, renewable energy production including the inclusion of solar thermal or solar photo voltaic installations, and energy efficiency. Upon approval, the details shall be incorporated into the development as approved.

Grounds: In the interest of promoting energy efficiency and sustainable development.

4. No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include existing trees, shrubs and other features, planting schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and numbers where appropriate, means of enclosure, hard surfacing materials, and an implementation programme.

Grounds: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

5. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with the programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Grounds: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

6. Upon completion of the approved landscaping scheme, any trees or shrubs that are removed, dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within five years of planting shall be replaced with trees or shrubs of such size and species as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, and within whatever planting season is agreed.

Grounds: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

7. No construction work in connection with the development shall take place on any Sunday or Bank Holiday, nor on any other day except between the following times: Monday to Friday 0730 - 1800 hours, Saturdays 0830 - 1300 hours unless in association with an emergency or with the prior written approval of the District Planning Authority.

Grounds: In the interests of residential amenity.

8. The car parking spaces shown on drawings 13/2477/1 and 2, received 17 April and 8 October 2014, shall be kept available for the parking of vehicles and no permanent development, whether permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order) or not, shall be carried out on the land or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access thereto.

Grounds: Development without adequate provision for the parking or garaging of cars is likely to lead to car parking inconvenient to other road users and in a manner detrimental to highway safety and amenity.

9. No additional windows, doors, voids or other openings shall be inserted, placed or formed at any time in the north or south facing first floor walls or roof slopes of the dwellings hereby permitted, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Grounds: To prevent the overlooking of adjoining properties and to safeguard the privacy of their occupiers.

10. Development shall not take place other than in accordance with drawings 13/2476/2, received 17 April 2014, and 13/2476/1A, received 8 October 2014.

Grounds: For the avoidance of doubt.

The Council's approach to this application:

In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

Offering pre-application advice.

Where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome.

As appropriate, updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

In this instance the application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.

The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.