

Application No: 10/4597N

Location: 58 South Crofts Nantwich CW5 5SG

Proposal: Conservation Area Consent for Demolition of Existing Property and Erection of Replacement Dwelling

Applicant: Mr & Mrs K Nord

Expiry Date: 23rd February 2011

Ward: Nantwich

Date Report Prepared: 4th March 2011

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES:

- **Policy and Principle of Development;**
- **Design/Character and Appearance; and**
- **Protected Species**

REFERRAL

This application was originally to be dealt with under delegated powers. However, Councillor Moran has requested that it and application 10/4955N be referred to Committee for the following reason – *‘bulk and size of dwelling and garage out of character with streetscene in conservation area’*.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises a rectangular shaped plot measuring approximately 40m deep by 22m wide (which equates to an area of 880m²) and is located wholly within the settlement boundary of Nantwich and the Nantwich Conservation Area. The application site contains a two storey semidetached property constructed out of facing brick under a slate roof. The building is vacant and appears to have been for some considerable time. Located around the periphery of the site are a number of trees some of which are protected by TPO's. The application site is accessed directly off South Crofts. In addition within the application site is a small scale domestic cross sectional concrete garage and timber shed. The site is enclosed on three sides by existing built development and South Crofts to the north.

The surrounding properties have been constructed over approximately the last 30 to 200 years and provide a real eclectic mix of architectural styles, forms and differing scales of dwellings. Located to the east of the application site is a row of 2 storey terraced properties constructed in the Victorian Era. These properties are located in much smaller plots and are much closer to South Crofts. Located to the rear of the site is another residential property which is set within an extensive plot (slightly smaller than the applicants'). The adjoining property (no. 59 the other part of the semi) has undergone extensive refurbishment and has quite a large footprint.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application seeks Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the existing dwelling. An accompanying full planning application for a replacement dwelling (10/4955N) has also been submitted.

RELEVANT HISTORY

10/4617N – Conservation Area Consent for the Demolition and Rebuilding of Existing Dwelling with Further New Extensions and Alterations and Detached Garage Block – Withdrawn – 7th January 2011

10/4597N – Demolition and Rebuilding of Existing Dwelling with Further New Extension and Alterations and Detached Garage – Withdrawn – 21st December 2010

7/13676 – Double Garage, Studio and Conservatory – Approved – 18th December 1986

POLICIES

National Policy

PPS5 – Planning and the Historic Environment

Local Plan Policy - Borough of Crewe & Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011

BE.7 – Conservation Areas

CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Conservation Officer: No objections

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

No objections subject to the following comments: While the Council understand the need for refurbishment and regeneration of time-expired buildings, nevertheless it considers it extremely important that any demolition and new build should reflect the structure and character of the existing building and its surroundings. The Council request that the Conservation Officer specify and require materials which are in keeping with the existing structure and which are of the highest quality and finish. The Council would also ask that particular regard is given to adjoining properties and the effect on flora and fauna likely to be affected by the proposal.

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

Representations have been received in relation to the full planning application (10/4955N). No comments have specifically been made regarding the demolition of the existing dwelling house.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement

- The property has been much altered from its original Georgian appearance. In particular, sub-standard building techniques and poor quality additions have severely weakened the property;
- The proposals being submitted seek to demolish the existing dwelling and replace it with a new dwelling. Rebuilding the structure becomes the most viable option, considering the dwelling's condition;
- The application has been subjected to extensive negotiations with the Council;
- The replacement dwelling now proposed has the advantage of placing the accommodation more central to the plot, and allows the proposals to be clearly seen as a building of its present time;
- The original property had been built to the rear of the original plot of land, and therefore does not allow for any extension to the rear without impacting upon an existing protected tree. Any extension to the rear would also impact upon the adjoining property light and enjoyment of their private rear amenity space;
- The previous proposal discussed with the Planning Department allowed for the demolition of the current building and the erecting of a new dwelling more central to the existing space. The new proposal still allows for this aim, but creating a new dwelling of a scale and size appropriate for its setting;
- The planning policy for a Conservation Area stipulates that any proposal should not harm the character, appearance or setting of the Conservation Area. Previous discussions with the Planning Department allowed for the demolition proposed, and the erection of a new dwelling more central to the site. This application proposes a new dwelling of a scale and size appropriate to its setting so accords with planning policy. The submitted proposal has no detrimental impact upon the streetscene or Conservation Area.

Structural Report (Produced by Hughes and Crawford dated April 2010)

- The property was visited on 2nd March 2010 and the 28th April 2010, to carry out a purely visual inspection. We did not carry out any opening up works or investigations to uncover any otherwise hidden or buried elements. Only a very limited inspection of the roof space was possible;
- The property has suffered from extensive foundation movement, major lateral movement, slab settlement and roof spread and in our opinion there is evidence that the movement is progressive. The basic structure is of poor condition and extensive remedial measures would be necessary to put right the defects and to then upgrade to comply with current British Standards and Building Regulations, starting from underpinning of the foundations, rebuilding of the whole front

elevation wall to replacement first and ground floors, roof and new underground drainage;

- From a Health and Safety viewpoint, the risks associated with extensive excavations/underpinning/rebuilding of an already weakened structure should be avoided if at all possible;
- From a financial viewpoint, the costs associated with the remedial measures and recommendations noted above, in our opinion, would not make economic sense;
- From a structural viewpoint, in order to provide a dwelling that would be structurally sound and robust, in our opinion, the existing property has reached the end of its useful life and should ideally be demolished and rebuilt using modern day materials and in accordance with current British Standards and Building Regulations.

Heritage Statement

- The proposal repeats the existing scale with the roof pitch, eaves and ridge level, all as the existing. It incorporates Victorian sliding sash windows as recommended, and repeats all the proportions of the adjoining dwellings, windows and opening head and cill details;
- Demolished materials, including the roof tiles and facing bricks are to be salvaged and re-used where possible or new materials to match will be specified. The building will incorporate high insulation values and energy efficient heating. It will provide a new sustainable home that protects the urban environment;
- As the roof pitch and overall height is as existing, the volume will be of a similar proportion to the existing. The proposed scale, mass and height of the proposals are identical to the existing, so that they are in keeping with the adjoining property;
- The location of the replacement dwelling does not impact upon the existing trees which are protected and retained. The proposal now sits more comfortably within the existing grounds and allows the south facing elevations to be developed to enjoy the south facing aspect. A private rear garden has now been created by the proposals.

Protected Species Survey (Produced by Ecologically Bats dated November 2010)

- The Building, Grounds and Emergence Survey were all completed on 27th July 2010
- The ridge tiles were all present and secure. Gaps were identified under the ridge and pitch tiles where mortar was missing, but the areas at the gable ends and around the chimney stack were well sealed;
- The external walls of brick were in good condition, and the render was in good condition. No suitable crevices were identified;
- No gaps were identified under the eaves;
- Potential roosting areas were identified – Gaps under pitch tiles and lead flashing, In stonework
- No evidence of bats or bat activity was found in the external search;
- No evidence of bat droppings or presence of bats was detected during the internal inspection;

- The grounds include an area of mature trees, shrubs and hedgerows along the northeast and eastern boundary which have the potential as foraging areas. No holes were identified within the hedgerows. The garage and shed were inspected and no evidence of bat activity was found in association with these structures. No suitable roosting sites were identified in these structures;
- A single species of bat was recorded during the activity survey. Single bats were recorded foraging across the neighbouring garden, along the roadside hedgerow and in the building site to the rear of the house;
- The results of the survey showed potential roosting sites in the house, under the roof tiles, but no evidence of bat activity in association with these sites;
- It is considered that there would be no conservation impacts based on this data from the proposed demolition of the house however the grounds were used as a commuting route and foraging site and this should be taken into consideration when planning any landscaping or alterations to the current surrounding habitat;
- Based on the results of this survey there are no implications with respect to bats from the proposed demolition and rebuild of 58 South Crofts.

Tree Survey (Produced by Peter Jackson Developments Ltd dated October 2010)

- There are several trees on this site. Only 5 trees are shown on the plans as being close enough to the proposed works. Other trees on the site have been grouped according to their natural association and measurements have been taken from the trees closest to the area of the proposed development to form a cell that complies with the British Standard. Works to the trees may be specified but this report does not confirm that Cheshire East Borough Council has given any form of consent to undertake any works. No works should be undertaken to any trees on or adjacent to the site until the contractor has confirmed that planning permission, listed building or conservation area consent has been granted or that the tree works have been separately approved by an alternative TPO consent where required.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Policy & Principle of Development

Policy BE.7 (Conservation Areas) states that conservation areas will be preserved and enhanced by the following means:

- Development involving the demolition of an unlisted building will not be permitted where the building makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area: unless there is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses, or find viable and compatible alternative uses; and that these efforts have failed. These efforts should embrace financial, structural and technical matters;
- Demolition of an unlisted building meeting the above criterion will only be permitted if detailed proposals for the re-use of the site, including any replacement building or other structure, have been approved.

Design/Character & Appearance

The existing building comprises a circa 1850's semidetached dwelling house that is of no particular architectural merit. It is not a listed building and sits unobtrusively within its site. The proposed works to demolish and re-build this part of the existing semidetached property (with a new detached property) are based on its structurally instable condition.

It is considered that provided its structural condition and that of the other building in this semi-detached property warrants/enables demolition there would be scope for its replacement with a building which would harmonise with its setting and be sympathetic in scale, form and materials to the characteristic built form of the adjacent building and garden space.

Whilst the report on the condition of the structure which accompanies this application recommends various means of addressing the structural problems identified it concludes that it would not make economic sense and therefore the building has reached the end of its useful life and should be demolished.

No details are given on the structural condition of the property forming the other part of this semidetached pair.

Policy BE7 does not support the demolition on structural grounds of a building which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, unless there is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made and failed, and detailed proposals for a replacement building which would not harm the character and appearance or setting of the conservation area has been approved.

It is considered, given the overall condition of the building, the dwellinghouse which is currently in situ, detracts from the Conservation Area. Nevertheless, in line with the objectives of Policy BE7, it would not be desirable to approve the demolition of 58 South Crofts and leave a vacant site in the Conservation Area. Permission should only be granted if there is an acceptable application to replace the building. The application for a proposed replacement dwelling (10/4955N) is discussed in the next report. The proposed new dwelling is considered to be acceptable and therefore the proposal for demolition complies with Policy BE.7.

Protected Species

The application relates to a two storey semidetached residential brick dwelling built in the 1800's. The house constructed out of facing brick under a tile roof and is set within large mature gardens and as such there is potential for the presence of Bats to be affected by the proposal.

Circular 06/2005 paragraph 99 states that 'it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision'.

The applicants have submitted a protected species survey as part of their application, which concludes that the survey found no evidence of bats. The Council's ecologist has been consulted regarding the application and he has no objection to the proposal. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development complies with policy NE.9 (Protected Species).

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

The proposed demolition of the existing dwellinghouse which is in a very poor structural condition and makes no positive contribution to the Conservation Area is considered to be appropriate. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy BE.7 (Conservation Areas) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

- 1. Standard Time Limit**
- 2. Plans**
- 3. The dwelling shall not be demolished before a contract for the carrying out of the works for the construction of the new dwelling approved under application ref: 10/4955N has been made in accordance with the proposals which have received planning permission. The Local Planning Authority shall be advised as to the completion of such a contract prior to any demolition taking place. The written approval of the phasing and timing of works involved shall be secured before any part of the demolition hereby approved first commences. All works shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved timetable, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Location Plan: Cheshire East Council Licence No. 100049045

