

**Application No:** 09/0465M  
**Location:** THE HILL COTTAGE, PARKFIELD ROAD, KNUTSFORD,  
CHESHIRE, WA16 8NP  
**Proposal:** CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT- DEMOLITION OF EXISTING  
DWELLING  
  
**For** MR JAMES CLARKE  
  
**Registered** 09-Mar-2009  
**Policy Item** No  
**Grid Reference** 375870 377611

**Date Report Prepared: 17 April 2009**

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:** Approve subject to conditions

#### **MAIN ISSUES**

- Whether the existing building is of any historic or architectural merit and whether it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- Whether a suitable scheme for the re-development of the site has been submitted

#### **REASON FOR REPORT**

Councillor Fairhurst, the former Ward Member, has requested that this item be dealt with by Committee due to concerns regarding the impact of the proposal on the Conservation Area.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site lies to the south of Parkfield Road within a low density housing area. The site currently contains a 1½ storey detached residential property which fronts towards an existing block of residential flats (The Hill) located to the west of the site. Vehicular access to the property is shared with the flats with the access located between the two sites. A vacant strip of land is located to the east, with a detached residential property (Bay Tree House) located beyond that. Planning permission has recently been granted for the erection of a detached dwelling on land to the rear of Bay Tree House with vehicular access along the vacant strip of land. The existing property has a garden area to the front, adjacent to Parkfield Road, and an area of hardstanding to the side giving access to a garage. The site contains a number of trees and areas of planting meaning that views of the existing property are fairly limited, particularly during the summer months.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

Conservation Area Consent is being sought for the demolition of an existing building located within the Legh Road Conservation Area. A parallel application for the re-development of the site is located elsewhere on this agenda (09/0457M). Evidence suggests that the building dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and that it was originally ancillary to The Hill, an adjacent larger building that was demolished in the 1980's and replaced by flats. It is believed that the building may have originally been used as a lodge/coach house and that it was converted to residential use in the 1930's.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

Numerous applications have been made for a replacement dwelling on the site and are detailed below. The current applications are the fifth recent attempt to secure planning permission for the replacement of the existing dwelling on the site. The most recent applications were;

08/2659P

Conservation Area Consent

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING (CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT)

THE HILL COTTAGE, PARKFIELD ROAD, KNUTSFORD, CHESHIRE, WA16 8NP

refused 20090218

08/2658P

Full Planning

REPLACEMENT DWELLING

THE HILL COTTAGE, PARKFIELD ROAD, KNUTSFORD, CHESHIRE, WA16 8NP

refused 20090218

These were refused by Committee following concerns regarding the scale of the proposed development and its impact on the Conservation Area.

## **POLICIES**

### **Regional Spatial Strategy**

EM1 – Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets

DP7 – Promote Environmental Quality

### **Local Plan Policy**

BE2 – Historic Fabric

BE3 – Conservation Areas

BE4 – Conservation Area Consent

BE13 – Legh Road Conservation Area

## **Other Material Considerations**

PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment  
Legh Road Conservation Area Appraisal

## **CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)**

None.

## **VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL**

**Knutsford Town Council:** recommends refusal as demolition, particularly in the absence of an acceptable replacement scheme, would detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would be contrary to Policy BE4.

## **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

None.

## **APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

A Conservation Area Assessment, a Design & Access Statement and a Planning & Historical Assessment have been submitted in support of the application. Full copies of these documents can be viewed on the application file.

In summary the Planning & Historical Assessment concludes that the proposed demolition and the redevelopment of the site have been fully appraised against PPG15. From the analysis and previous assessments of Hill Cottage there appears to be no historical reason to retain the building. It has also been shown that the building is not in character with or an enhancement to the Conservation Area. The existing building sits uncomfortably in its surroundings and its main outlook is onto the adjacent apartment block. The proposed redevelopment significantly betters the orientation of the dwelling which betters the relationship with the apartment block. The relocation of the access to the site from Parkfield Road is more in keeping with the area together with having the principal elevation fronting Parkfield Road. The Visual Impact Assessment shows that the proposed dwelling will have minimal impact on the streetscene and the size, scale and massing is more in keeping with Parkfield Road. The choice of materials and detailing are sympathetic to the area and the building will make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. Hill Cottage due to the numerous alterations from its original design, has had its form, function and character completely changed. These alterations have created an unattractive out of date dwelling that has little or no redeeming features. This is an opportunity to

improve the area and create a dwelling that will provide high quality family accommodation that will preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principal of Development**

Advice contained within PPG15 and Local Plan Policy BE4 allow for the demolition of unlisted buildings within Conservation Areas provided that the building to be demolished does not make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. PPG15 states that the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution.

### **Policy**

Local Plan policies BE2 to BE4 deal with historic fabric and Conservation Areas and reflects the advice contained within PPG15. Policy BE2 states that the Council will seek to preserve, enhance and interpret the historic fabric of the environment and will not normally permit development which would adversely affect it. Policy BE3 states that within a Conservation Area development will only be permitted which preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Policy BE4 relates to Conservation Area Consent and states that such consent will not be granted for the demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

Paragraphs 4.25 – 4.29 of PPG15 deal with conservation area control over demolition and state that account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole. The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Where a building is considered to make a positive contribution then proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. Where a building makes little or no such contribution, the local planning authority will need to have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. Consent for demolition should not be given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment.

In this case the building in question is of some historical interest given that it dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and given its previous use and connection with The Hill (now demolished). In terms of its architectural interest, this is more limited due to the significant amount of alterations that have been carried out in the past. It is considered that these alterations have undermined the architectural merit of the building and this probably explains why the building is not listed as a building of townscape merit in the Conservation Area Appraisal. With regard to the contribution that the building makes to the

character and appearance of the Conservation Area, it is located on a narrow plot with the building being perpendicular to Parkfield Road. Substantial landscaping exists along the front of the site meaning that views of the building are fairly limited from wider public vantage points. However, glimpses are obtained of parts of the building, particularly of the north elevation and the ventilation turret on the roof. The applicant's state that the conversion/refurbishment of the existing building would not be feasible due to its poor condition and impractical layout and that the amount of alterations required would result in very little of the original building being retained. Officers are however not convinced that the existing building could not be suitably altered and in any event, even if this were the case then a suitable replacement scheme would need to be submitted.

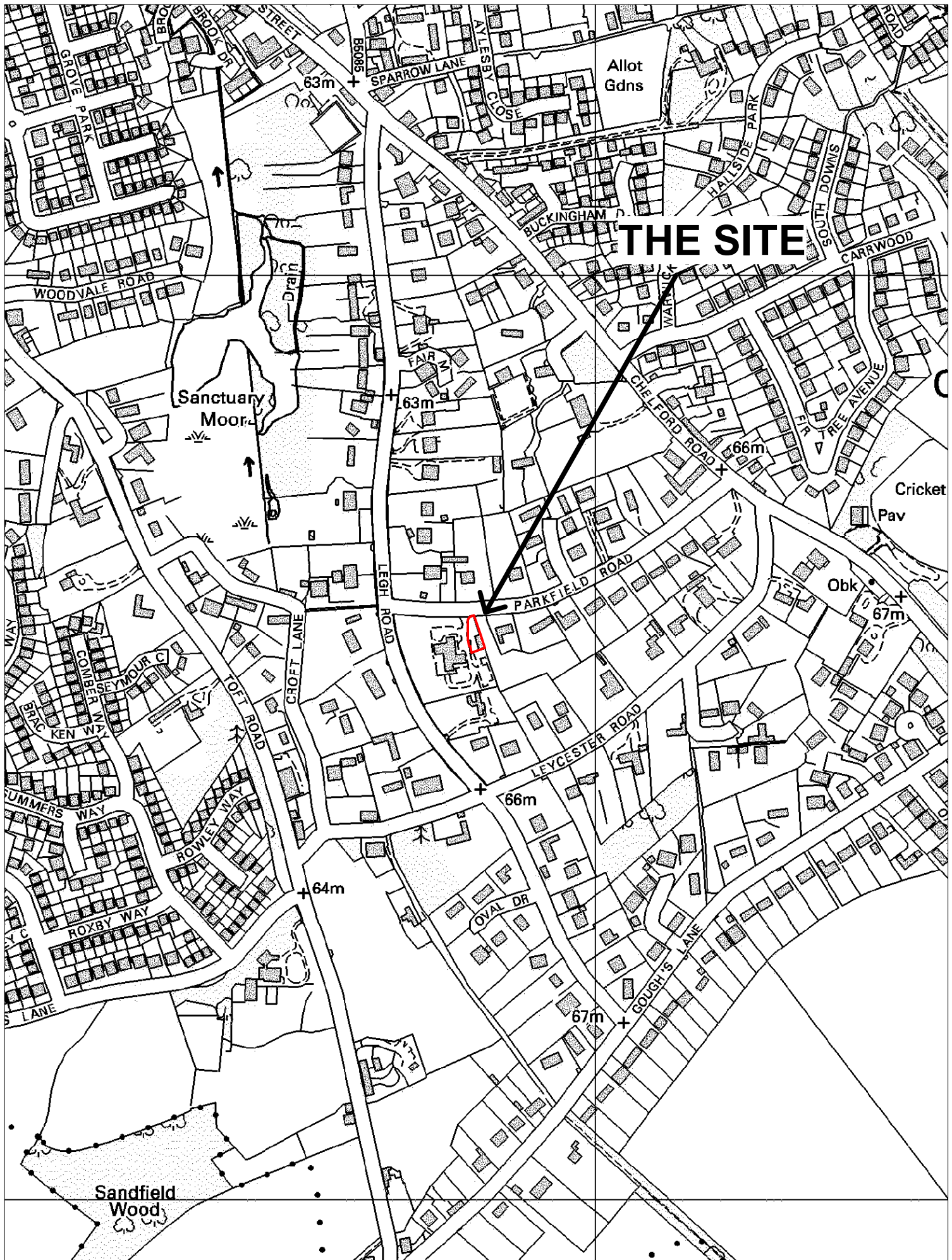
Whilst it is considered that the existing building makes a contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, this is considered limited given the buildings position within the site and given existing landscaping. An acceptable replacement dwelling scheme has now been submitted and therefore no objections are raised to the demolition of the existing building. Whilst the formal views of the Conservation Officer are awaited, no objections were raised to the previous application to demolish the existing building as the Conservation Officer considered that the fact that it has been heavily altered in the past and is not identified as a building of townscape merit in the Conservation Area Appraisal means that attempts to retain it would probably prove to be unsuccessful.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION**

The existing building makes a limited contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and an acceptable scheme for the redevelopment of the site has now been received. No objections are therefore raised to the proposed demolition.

## **SUBJECT TO**

The views of outstanding consultees, the expiry of the publicity period on 13 May 2009 and the receipt of any further representations.



09/0465M - THE HILL COTTAGE, PARKFIELD ROAD, KNUTSFORD

N.G.R. - 375,870 - 377,610

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Application for **Conservation Area Consent**

**RECOMMENDATION : Approve subject to following conditions**

1. A03CA - Standard Time Limit
2. A02CA - Demolition as precursor of redevelopment