

Application Number: F/YR12/0917/F
Minor
Parish/Ward: Parson Drove/ Wisbech St Mary
Date Received: 20 November 2012
Expiry Date: 18 January 2013
Applicant: Roddons Housing Association
Agent: Fenland District Council

Proposal: Formation of a shared access and parking bays for use of existing dwellings

Location: 93 - 103 Main Road, Parson Drove, Cambridgeshire

Site Area/Density: 0.29 ha

Reason before Committee: The proposal is before the Planning Committee as the agent is Fenland District Council

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

This application seeks full planning permission for works to form a shared access and parking bays for existing properties at 93 to 103 Main Road, Parson Drove. The site lies within the established settlement of Parson Drove.

The application is to be assessed in line with Policy E8 of the Local Plan and Policy CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy together with the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies support new development which contributes to the sustainability of that settlement and does not harm the character of the area.

Key issues relate to:

- Policy assessment
- Character of area
- Design
- Impact on trees, street scene and amenity space.

The development proposed is within the settlement of Parson Drove along what is predominantly a residential road. The development will provide an access off the main road and parking spaces to the front of a row of 6 attached bungalows. Planning permission is required as an access will be formed onto a classified road (Main Road, Parson Drove).

A key issue relates to the character and form of the area and the resultant impact of the development on the street scene; due mainly by the removal of part of the existing garden frontage and highway verge and the introduction of an access and car parking approximately 135m² in area.

To overcome the urban, hard landscaped look of the proposed development, the applicant has proposed additional landscaping, introducing a variety of new shrubs around the parking area and will grade the land around the perimeter of the area in order to reduce its impact.

The recommendation is to approve the proposal as the benefit of the proposal will significantly outweigh the partial loss of soft landscaping to the frontage of the properties.

2. HISTORY

No previous planning history

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: Seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

3.2 Draft Fenland Core Strategy:

CS14: Delivering High Quality Environments

3.3 Fenland District Wide Local Plan:

E8: Landscape and amenity protection

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Parish/Town Council:

Commented as follows;

'The Parish Council support the principle of providing off road parking facilities. However they are concerned over the steep incline of the application design and would prefer a revised design with two accesses, one at each end of the parking bays and with less if an incline.'

4.2 County Highways (CCC):

- The access shall be a minimum width of 5.0m.
- The gradient of the vehicular access shall not exceed 1:12 measured from the back of the footway.
- Prior to the commencement of the first use the vehicular access where it crosses the public highway shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification.
- Prior to the commencement of the first use, the parking spaces together with manoeuvring space shall be laid out, levelled, surfaced and demarcated in accordance with the submitted plan.

- 4.3 **Arboricultural Officer (FDC):** There is a large mature sycamore to the front subject of a TPO (TPO03/2001). It is likely that proposed works are within the RPA of the tree. We would require a method statement to cover any works/proposed level changes within the root protection area (RPA).
- 4.5 **North Level District IDB:** No comments received.
- 4.7 **Local Residents:** No comments received

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The application site lies along Main Road within the established settlement of Parson Drove and consists of 6 attached bungalows with garden land to the front and rear. The garden land to the front is landscaped with a mixture of laid lawn and shrubs. To the east of the site lies a TPO tree.

6. **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

6.1 History of the site

There is no planning history relating to the site.

6.2 Policy assessment

Policy E8 of the current Fenland District Wide Local Plan 1993 is still relevant to this application together with policies contained within the emerging Core Strategy.

Policy E8 seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that the design is compatible with their surroundings in terms of townscape/landscape character, scale and architectural detail.

Policy CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy seeks to ensure that high quality environments are delivered and protected throughout the district. It sets out criteria including making a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of the area, requiring development to be of a scale that is in keeping with the shape and form of the settlement pattern and ensuring that it does not adversely impact on the street scene or the landscape character of the surrounding area.

The NPPF seeks to deliver sustainable development that will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and respond to local character whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation. It also states that decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

6.3 Character of Area

The site is located on Main Road, Parson Drove which accommodates a mixture of housing types on both sides and on the opposite side of the road. Housing along this road is characterised predominantly by front, off-road vehicular access.

The properties within the site consist of 6 attached bungalows. The properties are set back approximately 17m from the highway and all but one property relies on the main road or a nearby housing estate for vehicular parking. Therefore, all but one of the properties are accessed by footpaths at either end of the site. The frontage is characterised by a mixture of laid lawn, planted shrubs and small trees. A TPO tree is situated to the east of the site.

There are no other examples of this type of grouped dwelling along Main Road and, therefore, this setting is unique to this section of road in Parson Drove.

6.4 Design

The proposal is for a 5 metre wide access to be created leading on to a 135m² hardstanding approximately 17m wide by 8m depth, with parking bays for use by occupants and visitors to the 6 dwellings. Due to Main Road being higher than the application site, the access is required to be on a gradient. The land identified for the parking area lies at its lowest point approximately 0.6m below the level of the highway. The access width and gradient proposed accords with the limits as advised by Cambridgeshire Highways during pre-application discussion and is, therefore, deemed to be acceptable in functional design terms.

Due to sloping and uneven ground levels leading from the highway to the dwellings, it is necessary to build up a section of land to accommodate the parking area and access road. This will result in the parking area and access appearing higher than the existing, adjoining ground levels by approximately 600mm at its highest point. Therefore, it will be necessary to grade the land up to meet with the development. This graded land is proposed to be planted with shrubs both sides of the parking area and grassed across the front perimeter and access sides.

The parking area is to be surfaced with block weave permeable pavements to allow for drainage and concrete bollards are proposed around the perimeter edge leading to the properties as a safety barrier. In addition, the size of the parking area will enable residents and visitors to park, turn and exit in forward gear.

6.5 Impact on trees and street scene and amenity space

The south east corner of the proposal will encroach on the root protection area of the nearby TPO tree. The Council's Arboricultural Officer is satisfied with the method statement provided by the applicant which overcomes any risk posed to the tree and its roots.

A section of existing hedgerow will need to be removed to accommodate the hardstanding and access. To compensate for the necessary loss of this hedgerow, the applicant has agreed to plant a variety of plant species around the hardstanding. This will assist in reducing the urban look to the development.

Each property within the application site benefits from generous rear gardens. In addition the proposed landscape and overall design will create a communal amenity space for residents. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal will greatly reduce amenity space for residents.

6.6 Other matters

The applicant advises that the residents have requested this proposal as they require much needed off road parking as their current parking arrangement is

unsuitable (see para 6.3). The residents have been consulted on the plan and no objections have been received either from immediate residents or from neighbouring properties.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The partial loss of landscaped front garden is a concern as the row of properties within the site is considered to be characterised by its landscaped frontage. However, the applicant has aimed to address this with the submitted landscape scheme which is considered to reduce the urban impact of the development against the semi-rural character of the existing site and street scene. In addition the proposal is not deemed to seriously harm the amenity of occupants who can continue to enjoy the benefit of substantial rear gardens and elements of the remaining landscaped front garden areas.

Whilst the introduction of a substantial urban-looking hard standing would transform the unique semi-rural frontage of the site along Main Road, the adverse impact of doing so would not outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies. Therefore, and in accordance with the main thrust of the NPPF and with Policy E8 of the Local Plan and CS14 of the emerging Core Strategy, this proposal is recommended for approval.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Grant

1. **The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**

Reason - To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. **All hard and soft landscape works including any management and maintenance plan details, shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. All planting seeding or turfing and soil preparation comprised in the above details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development, or in agreed phases whichever is the sooner, and any plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation. All landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the guidance contained in British Standards, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason - To ensure proper implementation of the agreed landscape details in the interest of the amenity value of the development.

3. **The access shall be a minimum width of 5.0m as shown on drawing No. R059/05 A dated 24 January 2013.**

Reason – In the interests of highway safety

4. The gradient of the vehicular access shall not exceed 1:12 measured from the back of the footway.

Reason – In the interests of highway safety

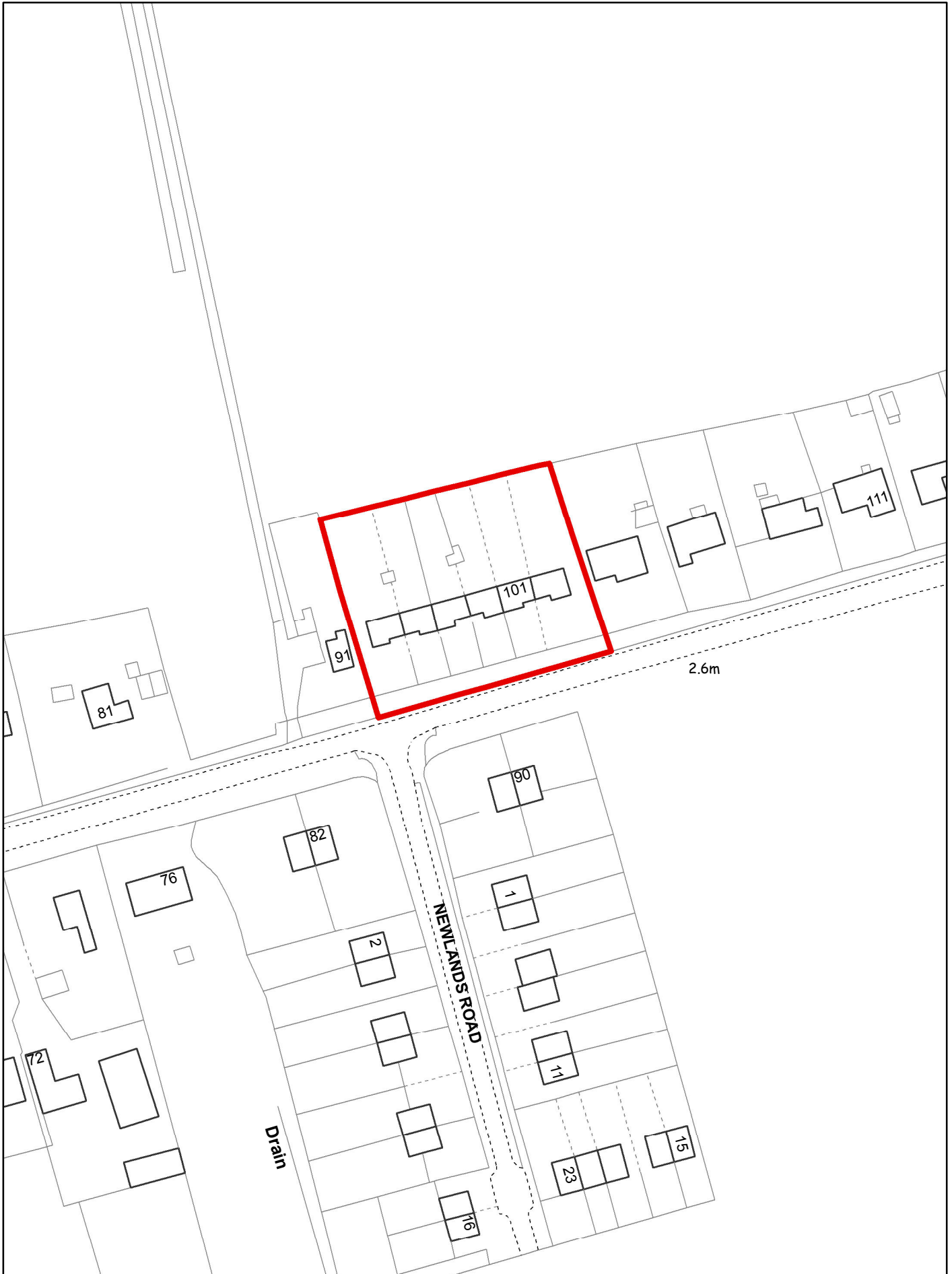
5. Prior to the commencement of the first use the vehicular access where it crosses the public highway shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification.

Reason – In the interests of highway safety

6. Prior to the commencement of the first use, the parking spaces together with manoeuvring space shall be laid out, levelled and surfaced in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason – In the interests of highway safety

7. Approved Plans



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