

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/23/94860

Site Address: Land at 15 & 17, Lower New Road, West End, Eastleigh, SO30 3FJ

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings (2No. three-bed) on land to rear and side of 15 & 17 Lower New Road, provision of off-road parking served via new highway access off Lower New Road.

Preamble: The scheme currently under consideration is an amended version of that originally submitted. Details of the changes made are set out in detail below.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☐	No ☒
- Within the urban edge and established residential area		

Planning History?	Yes ☐	No ☒
None relating to the proposed development site. However, planning approval for single storey extensions and creation of new accesses for Nos. 15 & 17 was granted in January 2023 under ref: H/22/94249 as part of extensive refurbishment works.		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	Two representations were received to the originally submitted proposals, including one from the Parish Centre, raising the following concerns and issues: - New access and highway safety concerns - Parking and servicing One further comment was received when neighbours were reconsulted on the amended scheme now under consideration. This highlighted that the introduction of new access points and dropped kerbs at the end of Lower New Road would reduce availability of on-street parking and could result in vehicles travelling faster along the road.		
West End Parish Council:	Highway safety concerns relating to the proposed new vehicular access onto Chapel Road, as well as the size and scale of the dwellings proposed and potential overdevelopment of the plot.		
Hampshire Highways:	No objection to amended access positions on Lower New Road. However, separate consent for the new dropped kerbs will be required from Hampshire Highways. Conditions recommended for access to be constructed and parking provided before dwellings are brought into use.		
Ecology:	Given that the site has been extensively cleared to deal with Japanese Knott Weed, there is limited to no biodiversity habitat remaining. Conditions recommended for details of ecological enhancement features to be agreed and implemented, together with drainage proposals.		
Natural England:	Objection on grounds of development's impact upon the New Forest SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites.		

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 04/01/2023 – see separate photographs		

Policy: National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1 and S2; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM6, DM11, DM14, DM23, DM29 & DM30. Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Character Area Appraisals, Trees and Development.

Assessment: Site & Context: The site is a triangular plot of land which used to form the garden of No.17 Lower New Road, which is immediately to the south of the site. The site 'fronts' the northern end of Lower New Road on its western side and backs onto Chapel Road to the rear north-western boundary. The site itself is relatively flat and level, although the natural topography rises in a south-westerly direction. The site is surrounded on all sides by generally two storey residential development consisting of predominantly semi-detached dwellings of varying ages are architectural styles. Opposite the site is a run of terraced dwellings dating from around 1900, which appear to have been built around the same time as the immediate neighbouring properties to the south of the site – Nos. 15 & 17. These, together with all other dwellings on the western side of the street are a pair of red brick, hipped roof semi-detached dwellings, which are currently undergoing extensive refurbishment following years of neglect. The remaining semi-detached pairs maintain much of their original character and are quite hansom period properties which contribute to the attractive character and appearance of the street. Proposal: The amended application proposes the construction of a pair of three bedroom two storey hipped roof semi-detached dwellings, with new access from Lower New Road, together with parking and external amenity space. This is a revised version of the originally proposed three and four bedroom semi-detached dwellings with parking and vehicular access from Chapel Road to the rear of the site, which would have removed a considerable amount of garden from Nos.15 & 17. Policy & Principle: The application site lies within the urban edge in a well-established residential area close to West End high street, making it a very sustainable site. Development of the plot is therefore acceptable in principle, with any formal planning approval being based upon the exact details of that proposed and its impact upon neighbouring properties and the wider character of the area. The most relevant policy in this instance is DM1 of the adopted Local Plan, which requires all new development to be of a high quality, to take appropriate account of the site constraints and its context, as well as ensuring limited impact upon neighbouring uses and occupiers.

Layout, Form, Scale, Design, Street Scene & Area Character:

Following initial concerns with regards to the scale of the proposed dwellings, the minimal useable amenity space, location of parking provision and appearance of the dwellings, the scheme has been amended to that now under consideration.

In terms of layout, whilst still quite sizable dwellings, particularly for three bedroom properties, their position on the site and resulting plots are much more akin to the character of this side of the street. Equally, their roof form, height, width and external appearance, whilst not identical to the original neighbouring Victorian/Edwardian semi-detached villas, is much more sympathetic through replication of window proportions, inclusion of hexagonal bay windows and period style canopy over the main entrances. Other features such as stone lintels and brick detailing are also included and lifts the design quality of scheme.

These design and aesthetic improvements will help the development to better relate to the existing character and visual amenity of the street, which is particularly strong on its western side. Whilst not an identical copy of the existing dwellings, meaning that it will be clearly a new development, it nonetheless should sit quite comfortably within the existing street scene once landscaping, etc. has established.

In these regards therefore, the amended scheme is considered to be far more acceptable and achieves the balance between making best use of an urban site in a sustainable location, whilst still respecting the features which provide the street with its attractive character. As such, the development is considered to accord with the requirements of Policy DM1, together with the 'Quality Places' and 'Character Area Appraisals' SPDs.

Residential Amenity:Existing Neighbours:

There will be no unacceptable impact in terms of loss of privacy, light or outlook upon any neighbouring properties due to the orientation, proximity and relationship of the pair of dwellings proposed. The most affected property would be No.17, which has a ground floor bay window to the side elevation which serves a dining room, and a bedroom window at first floor. The outlook and levels of light to these windows will be impacted to a reasonable degree due to the position of the proposed dwellings. However, as the ground floor window only serves a secondary habitable room, which also benefits from borrowed light from the rear, the loss would not be detrimental. No adverse light loss would result to the first floor bedroom window, and while outlook would not be great, it would not be so bad as to be detrimental to the amenity of the occupiers. It is also the case that No.17 is one of the existing dwellings undergoing extensive refurbishment, meaning that it currently has no occupiers and that any new occupiers will be aware of the situation.

Future Occupiers:

For future occupiers, there will be no issues of loss of light, privacy or outlook, with all rooms receiving good levels of all three. The internal floor areas of both dwellings will exceed the minimum requirements of Policy DM30 and easy level access can be provided to meet the requirements of DM29. The external useable garden space of the southernmost plot is slightly under the minimum 60% of floor area requirement within the 'Quality Places' SPD. However, this is not to any unacceptable extent and would still provide a west facing garden over ten metres in depth and of a not dissimilar size to existing properties on this side of the street. The amenity space for the northernmost plot is split into two areas, which together exceed the 60% requirement. Both areas are useable and have accommodation opening directly onto them.

Overall, in terms of amenity for both existing and future occupiers, the proposed development is considered to accord with the requirements of Policy DM1 and the 'Quality Places' SPD.

Parking & Highway Matters:

The originally submitted proposed a three bedroom and four bedroom dwelling with a shared parking area to the rear, accessed from Chapel Road. This would have resulted in

a sizable proportion of the gardens for Nos.15 & 17 having to be taken away and leaving insufficient space for useable gardens to serve the proposed dwellings. It would also have introduced an undesirable feature into this section of the Chapel Road street scene, to the detriment of the visual amenity of the locality.

As such, the scheme was amended, both dwellings now being three bedroom, resulting in a lower parking requirement, and allowing parking and access to be accommodated from Lower New Road, as is characteristic of the street.

Both dwellings have two off-road parking spaces to their frontage, which meets the requirements of the 'Residential Parking Standards' SPD. This does limit scope for soft landscaping, however, with an appropriate surface finish and soft landscaping provided where possible, this will not have any detrimental impact upon the street scene.

Some concern has been raised that extending the dropped kerb to provide access will reduce available on-street parking and could result in higher vehicle speeds. Whilst it is acknowledged on-street provision would be reduced, this will actually help properties opposite who have difficulty entering and exiting their driveways due to the narrow width of the street. With regards to vehicle speeds, whilst this may be the case, this is a residential area where general vehicle speeds are low. It is also in close proximity to the end of the street, where traffic should be slowing down or just turning in. As such it is not considered that the additional dropped kerbs would result in any additional highway safety issues. This has been confirmed in the response from Hampshire Highways.

As such, it is considered that the requirements of Policies DM1, DM13 and DM14 have been met.

Trees & Nature Conservation:

The site itself is absent of any trees or shrubbery. This was due to the need to deal with a significant Japanese Knotweed problem across the site, which required its complete clearance and removal of topsoil. There is however, one modest tree which lies just outside the site on highway land at the junction of Lower New Road and Chapel Road. This has been retained and the proposed new development should have no further impact upon it.

The need to extensively clear the site has unfortunately removed any habitat that was present. However, dealing with the Knotweed, which is an invasive species was considered to be the priority. Notwithstanding the cleared site, there is scope to provide wildlife friendly planting and landscaping, as well as features such as bat and bird bricks which can be incorporated into the structure of the proposed dwellings. A condition requiring details of the proposed enhancement measures to be agreed is recommended.

Habitats Regulations:

The objection raised by Natural England is noted. However, it is the view of the Council, as Competent Authority, that suitable mitigation can be provided in relation to increased recreational pressure resulting from the development upon the New Forest SPAs. A mitigation scheme has been set up by the Council which the applicant has confirmed they will be using and to which they have provided contributions. A condition preventing any development from commencing for 21 days following consent being granted is also recommended to accord with the requirements of Section 281(6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Flooding & Drainage:

Whilst Lower New Road lies inside the Environment Agency's surface water flooding zone for 1:100 and 1:1000 year events, the site itself falls just outside. It is not considered therefore that the proposed new dwellings would be at any greater risk of flooding, or would cause increased risk to existing development, particularly if sustainable surface water drainage is incorporated. Details of this can be secured by condition.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environment Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

No specific details on what sustainability measures are proposed for the development have been provided. However, there is scope for measures such as PV panels, EV charging points, etc. to be incorporated into the development.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications

Conclusion:

Recommendation:	PERMIT ☒	REFUSE ☐
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For the reasons set out above, the application is considered to be acceptable and as such is recommended for approval subject to conditions relating to the following:

- Approved drawings;
- Commencement within three years;
- No commencement within 21 days;
- Provision of CEMP;
- Working hours;
- No burning;

- Details of materials and finishes;
- Drainage details;
- Landscaping details and implementation;
- Ecological enhancements;
- Securing of mitigation towards water quality;
- Provision of dropped kerbs prior to occupation;
- Provision of parking prior to occupation;
- Provision of bin & cycle storage; and
- Removal of PD rights for extensions.