

Agenda Item: 6.2

07/04999/P 31/03/2008 Coulsdon West

Application for full planning permission

Agent:
Flora & Associates
43 Tamworth Road
Croydon
Surrey
CRO 1XU

Applicant:
St Swithun's Church
Grovelands Road
Purley
Surrey
CR8 4LB

Location: R/O St. Swithun's Church, and, 97-99 Downlands Road, Purley, CR8

Description: Erection of three bedroom detached house and car port at rear fronting Grovelands Road; formation of vehicular access onto Grovelands Road and provision of associated parking

Drawing No(s): 537.30, 31, 32, 00, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 (rec.31/03/08)

Recommendation: **Refuse Permission**

Reason(s) for refusal :-

1. The trees on this site are subject to Tree Preservation Order No.17 of 2007. The siting of the proposed building would require the removal of, or result in the loss of a number of visually important, preserved trees. The loss of these trees would be detrimental to the character of the area and the proposal is therefore contrary to Policies SP8, UD2, UD14 and NC4 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (the Croydon Plan)
2. The development would be detrimental to the amenities of the occupiers of the adjoining properties and those of future occupiers of the proposed house, by reason of loss of privacy, visual intrusion and unsatisfactory living environments and would thereby conflict with Policy UD8 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan).

Ward: Coulsdon West
Lead Officer: Head of Planning Control

PLANNING COMMITTEE
19th June 2008

07/04999/P
Rear of St. Swithun's Church, Grovelands Road and 97-99 Downlands Road, Purley, CR8

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report concerns an application for full planning permission for a development comprising the erection of a three bedroom detached house and car port fronting Grovelands Road; the formation of a new vehicular access onto Grovelands Road and the provision of associated parking. The application is on the agenda for the Planning Committee following a referral from Councillor David Osland.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that full planning permission be refused for the reasons set out in the agenda.
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3. BACKGROUND

(a) Site Description

- 3.1 The application site comprises a wooded area of land which currently forms the rear gardens of 97 and 99 Downlands Road and some of the amenity space to the rear of St Swithun's Church hall. The area is very much wooded in appearance with the land steeply rising from east to west by about 3.8m. The site does not appear to have been actively managed over recent years. Tree Preservation Order No.17, 2007 was placed on the site, which protects 11 trees.
- 3.2 Weall Close, an unmade private road runs along the north-western boundary of the site, with a 0.5m drop to the application site. Grovelands Road runs along the northern boundary.
- 3.3 The houses in the area are primarily detached dwellings of a traditional style with mainly rendered and part brick elevations and tiled, hipped roofs. Other than the church and its hall, the area is residential in character, although a small parade of shops and other uses fronts the Brighton Road towards the east.

(b) Relevant Planning History

- 3.4 07/237/P: Planning permission refused March 2007 for the erection of a detached four bedroom house. Refused on the grounds of being detrimental to the area character due to loss of protected trees and the likely impact upon the amenity of adjoining occupiers.
- 3.5 07/2313/P: Planning permission refused Aug 2007 for the erection of a detached four bedroom house. Refused on the same grounds as above.

(c) Proposal

- 3.6 As before, the proposal is for full planning permission for the erection of a new detached four bedroom house, formation of a vehicular access onto Grovelands Road and provision of associated parking in the form of a car port.
- 3.7 The plot would have an average depth of 35m with an angled frontage width onto Grovelands Road of about 17m (the width through the middle of the site would be about 12.5m). The building would be setback from the frontage at most by about 15m or at least by 5.3m. A distance of about 2.1m would be retained to the western boundary with the utility room protrusion to the opposite side abutting the eastern boundary. The footprint of the building would measure at most 16.5m deep and 10.3m wide (with variations due to the shape of the building). The rear garden would measure about 8m deep.
- 3.8 The design approach is innovative and described as being developed on an ecological basis (essentially an eco-house). The building would feature a mix of straight and curved elevations with large amounts of glazing. Bedroom accommodation would be contained on the lower floor with living accommodation above. Stock brick elevations are proposed, with a plain tiled, hipped roof, with elements of solar and voltaic panels.

4. PLANNING POLICIES

- 4.1 The relevant policies of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (the Croydon Plan) are UD1-UD3, UD6-UD9, UD12-UD15, RO6, RO12, NC4, EP2-EP4, EP5, EP6, EP16, T2, T3, T8, T11, H2, H5 and H14.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The owners/occupiers of 17 adjoining/neighbouring properties were consulted in writing of the application. 7 representations have been received, objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:
- Additional parking pressures;
 - Loss of wooded area;
 - Potential loss of and impact upon trees;
 - Effect upon wildlife in woodland;
 - Loss of outlook;
 - Out of keeping with street scene;
 - Noise and disturbance;
 - Access problems to Weall Close;
 - Concerns about foundations of Weall Close.
- 5.2 Councillor David Osland has referred the application to the Planning Committee, should the recommendation be to refuse permission, for the following reasons:

- The need for the development overcomes the objections;
- There is strong local support for the development;

6. CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The principal issues are the effect of the proposal upon:

- 1) The local townscape, character of the area and the visual amenities of the street scene in terms of the principle of the development and layout;
- 2) The residential amenities of occupiers of adjoining properties and of future occupiers of the proposed building;
- 3) Parking, access and highway safety;
- 4) Protected trees and associated landscaping and the sylvan character of the area.

6.2 These key issues have been considered in the light of the changes made to the proposals since the previous application.

(a) The local townscape, character of the area and the visual amenities of the street scene in terms of the principle of the development and layout;

6.3 The proposal is considered to be of an innovative design with a significant attempt being made to accommodate a building to fit in with the constraints of the site, i.e. changes in levels and trees. However, these attempts are still not considered to overcome the previous concerns or refusal reasons, or the constraints imposed by the site.

6.4 As before a good attempt has been made at reducing the impact of the building on the street scene, to the extent that the bulk of the building in itself would not adversely impact on the character of the area or street scene. The unique design of the building could therefore be accommodated in street scene terms, and relate satisfactorily to the adjoining hall building. However, it is still considered that the character of the area would be harmed by the loss of trees.

(b) The residential amenities of occupiers of adjoining properties and future occupiers of the proposed dwelling;

6.5 Although changes have been undertaken to reduce the impact on neighbouring properties, the previous concerns have not been fully overcome. Whilst the measures undertaken through the various applications have helped in addressing previous concerns, the information provided is scant, and would, if planning permission were to be granted, require significant landscaping and planting to ensure a satisfactory arrangement. Any landscaping to provide a buffer to

the proposed eastern side boundary would be outside of the application site and cannot therefore be controlled by conditions. The harm to the donor properties would not therefore be satisfactorily overcome.

6.6 As before, the accommodation for the potential occupiers would be unusual and with limited scope for window openings, receiving light and a reasonable outlook, particularly given the need to provide screening to the donor properties. Daylight and sunlight would be limited by the site constraints, particularly levels and mature tall trees, which would impact on the quality of living accommodation. It is likely that the occupiers would place pressure on the remaining trees to be removed which would further damage the character of the area and increase the dominance of the building.

6.7 Amenity space for the occupiers would be limited by the trees on site, and the changes in levels that exist. It is shown that some areas would be levelled to provide some useable space, although this in itself would place pressure on and affect the existing trees.

(c) Parking, access and highway safety;

6.8 The development would provide sufficient parking, and although a vehicle would be unable to enter and exit the site in a forward gear, this is not a ground for refusal given that this is a common situation in the road, where traffic speeds are relatively slow. As such, there are no objections on highway grounds.

(d) Protected trees and associated landscaping and the sylvan character of the area

6.9 The proposal would require the removal of the Sycamore tree identified as TP11 next to the northern corner of the proposed dwelling. This is a preserved tree, forming an integral part of the seven Sycamores preserved in G1, due to its height of approximately 16 metres and its elevated position near the frontage with Grovelands Road. It is clear from the plans and sections that there would be significant excavations and cutting in to the slope required to achieve what is being shown. With that in mind, it is not considered possible to build what is being proposed without the significant loss of the rooting area for TP1, Silver Birch (T1 in TPO), TP2, Beech (T2 in TPO), Sycamore trees TP6 – 8, TP10 (part of G1 in TPO). The loss of the rooting areas would destabilise the trees in question, compact the remaining root zone and therefore starve the trees of the required water and nutrients needed for survival and growth leading to the decline and death, or need for removal of those trees concerned. By the removal of key trees within the group, along with the hedge that has been allowed to grow unchecked into mature trees that divides the north-eastern end of the proposed site between the rear gardens of 97 & 99 there is a heightened chance that those trees that remain, being exposed to different wind loading pressure will become subject

to wind-throw and have to be removed.

- 6.10 There also appears to be insufficient space to adequately protect those trees to be retained and to store the materials to build the proposed dwelling without causing significant harm to specimens shown to be retained.
- 6.11 Beyond the initial concerns the siting of the building would impose, future occupiers of the house are likely to see the density of mature trees in very close proximity to their house as a clear and present threat and require excessive pruning or removal to negate that effect. This would mean a negative impact upon the sylvan character of the area and go against the reasons for protecting this group of trees in the first instance.
- 6.12 It is also considered that if it were possible to build the house and retain the trees identified the canopies of the trees would cast such considerable shade which would be an intolerable burden for future occupiers, leading to a similar conclusion being reached as that in relation to the perceived threat. These circumstances would again lead to future requests to remove the trees.

(d) Conclusion

- 6.13 It is considered that the changes proposed are relatively minor, and that they do not sufficiently address or overcome the previous reasons for refusal. Therefore, it is recommended that full planning permission be refused, for the reasons set out in the agenda.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The potential environmental performance of the house is a supported concept, but not as the cost of other considerations, as detailed in this report.

8. EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Given the land levels of the site and surrounding area, it is not considered that the site would be suitable to be accessible by all users. However, for a single dwelling, it is not considered that a refusal could be warranted on this ground.

Report Author: Natalie Glover

Background Documents: 7 letters of objection
Referral from Councillor David Osland

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