

Parish: Sudbury**Location: Rose Villa, Priory Walk****Proposal: Erection of 4 no. two-and-a-half-storey dwellings (following demolition of existing dwelling). Alterations to existing vehicular access.****Applicant: Newport Developments (UK) Ltd****Case Officer: Gareth Durrant****Date for Determination: 08/07/2008**

THE SITE

1. The site currently supports a two-storey dwelling and is 0.06 hectares in size. The dwelling is of brick construction with a slate roof and is currently vacant. The Priory Walk frontage is to the west of the site. The site is outside but adjacent to the conservation area. To the north is a pair of semi-detached dwellings (2 New Houses and Johanne). There is a listed wall to the east of the site which is associated with No.57 Friars Street to the north, itself a Grade II* listed building. To the south is a three-storey building containing flats and townhouses. This building is one of three new buildings forming the recently constructed Priory Gardens development. There is an existing vehicular access to the site from Priory Walk.

THE PROPOSAL

2. The application proposes the erection of four dwellings in a two-and-a-half storey terraced building. This amount of development represents a density of approximately 67 units per hectare. The terrace fronts on to Priory Walk. The proposed building has a stepped ridge, the lowest (to the north) being 10 metres above ground level and the highest being 11 metres. The external walls of the building would be finished in brick or painted render above a brick plinth, with some boarding detail included. The roof would be finished in slate.
3. The application is accompanied by a design and access statement which can be viewed in advance of the meeting by prior arrangement with the case officer.

RELEVANT HISTORY

4. 2008 - Planning permission refused for the erection of 3 2-storey dwellings and 3 flats (B/07/01154/FUL). The following reasons for refusal were cited;
 - Overdevelopment of the site (in particular the extent of the site required for car parking and the detrimental visual impact upon the character of the area).
 - Proposed buildings being of poor form, design and detailing which fails to respect the character of existing development in the vicinity and being detrimental to the visual amenities and character of the area.
 - Inadequate provision for public open space
5. 2007 – A planning application for the erection of 4 dwellings was withdrawn (B/06/01982/FUL).

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

6. **PPS1** Delivering Sustainable Development.
7. **PPS3** Housing.
8. **PPG15** Planning and the Historic Environment.

PLANNING POLICIES

9. The following Development Plan comprises the East of England Plan, adopted 2008, saved policies in the Suffolk Structure Plan, adopted 2001, and the Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No.2) adopted 2006. The following policies are relevant to this proposal:

East of England Plan, 2008

- **SS1** (Achieving sustainable development)
- **SS2** (Overall spatial strategy)
- **SS4** (Towns other than Key Centres and rural areas)
- **ENV7** (Quality in the Built Environment)

Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No.2)

- **HS01** (Housing development in towns)
- **HS27** (Housing density and house type)
- **HS28** (Infilling)
- **HS30** (Design of new housing)
- **HS32** (Public open space provision – small sites)
- **CN01** (Maintaining local distinctiveness)
- **CN06** (Development affecting the setting of listed buildings)
- **CN08** (Development having an impact upon conservation areas)
- **CN17 & CN18** (Archaeology)

The relevant documents can be viewed via the internet. Please see Page 4 for details.

OBSERVATIONS

10. TC – recommend approval and comment that great care needs to be taken regarding materials used. The proximity of the old Priory wall means that the choice of materials used will make this development look either of good or poor quality.
11. LHA – recommends that any permission granted should include conditions to ensure satisfactory completion of the access, lowering of the front boundary wall for visibility and provision of internal vehicle parking and manoeuvring areas.
12. EA – has provided advisory comments for the benefit of the applicant/developer.
13. EH – Comments awaited.
14. SCC Archaeology – The proposal lies within an area of archaeological importance within the precinct of the Dominican Friary, founded before 1248 and dissolved in 1538. Medieval Friary walls and pottery were recorded in 1969 from the housing development to the south-east of this proposal. A standard condition is recommended to ensure that an adequate record is made of any archaeological features or finds which would otherwise be destroyed by development.

15. Sudbury Society – no objections, and offer the following comments;

- Potentially these houses could be quite attractive but the ‘devil is in the detail’. The final outcome will depend on the quality of the build and the choice of materials. On the latter we urge you to stipulate real slate for the roofs, a good quality warm red brick for No’s 1 and 2 and of course wooden windows and doors throughout. We also believe that the timber cladding should be just that – treated wood (black) rather than imitation wood boarding favoured by the adjacent developer.
- The old Priory wall runs along the back of Rose Villa. It is listed and it will need protection during construction work.
- Archaeological requirements should be taken into account.

REPRESENTATIONS

16. Five letters of objection have been received from the local residents. The issues and objections raised are summarised as follows;

- Overdevelopment of the area
- Impact upon the town infrastructure
- Demolition of a pleasant Victorian cottage
- Erosion of town character
- Will lead to further on-street parking in Priory Walk (making emergency vehicle access difficult)
- Increase in scale in comparison to the existing dwelling
- Overlooking
- Detrimental impact upon the setting of the adjacent grade II* listed building.
- Impact upon structural integrity of the listed wall to the rear.
- This type of property has proved unpopular locally.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

17. The application site is situated within the built up area boundary of Sudbury. Accordingly its redevelopment for (a more intensive) residential development is acceptable in principle. The issues considered central to the determination of this application are;

- layout, design and impact upon the setting of the listed building and conservation area,
- impact upon residential amenity, and
- access, parking and highway safety.

Layout, design and impact upon the setting of the listed building and conservation area

18. The development would be laid out in a linear form with the terraced block fronting Priory Walk; parking is proposed in front of the building with private garden spaces behind the terrace. The height of the building is stepped to reflect the lower two-storey scale of the dwellings to the north of the site and the three storey terrace to the south. An interesting approach has been adopted to the design of the units being of a traditional form with contemporary detailing. The external materials are crucial to the successful integration of this development into the area, particularly to the roof (which will be visible from within the Conservation Area and the grounds of the adjacent grade II* listed building). A mix of brick and render is proposed to the walls of the terrace with slate to the roof. Windows and doors are to be of timber construction. Whilst precise details of materials have not been included within the application (i.e. name and manufacturer) these could be secured by condition. It will be particularly important to secure the use of a natural slate to the roof of the building.
19. If the building is constructed with suitable external materials, it would not have a significant detrimental impact upon the character of the area, nor the conservation area. Furthermore, the scale and form of the development would not have a significant impact upon the setting of the grade II* listed house (57 Friars Street). However, there are a couple of rooflights in the rear roof plane which appear to be unnecessary as they serve en-suite bathroom spaces. These rooflights would be incongruous features in this roof plane and would be particularly visible from the grounds of the grade II* listed building and a request has been made to delete them from the scheme (amended drawings are currently awaited).
20. The surviving elements of the ancient wall in the rear garden of 57 Friars Street are also listed (grade II) and part of this wall also forms the rear (east) boundary of the application site. There are no concerns arising regarding the impact of the development upon the setting of this wall and it will be possible to build the terrace in the position illustrated without detriment to the structural integrity (stability) of the wall. However, this depends greatly upon the management of the construction period and the treatment of the eastern part of the application site during this time. Accordingly, conditions are recommended which would serve to protect an area around the wall during construction work, to agree any changes in ground levels and the method of foundation provision.
21. The development proposal is acceptable with regard to its layout, scale, design and its potential impacts upon the conservation area and the adjacent listed buildings.

Impact upon residential amenity

22. The scale and siting of the proposed building is not such that it would dominate over or lead to the loss of light to important windows or garden spaces of adjacent dwellings. There are windows above ground floor level in the rear elevation of the proposed building which face towards the bottom of the garden of 57 Friars Street and the rear garden space of No.8 Cricketers Close to the east. Whilst some views would be afforded across these spaces from the windows, the impact is not considered significant given i) only the bottom part of the garden of No.57 Friars Street would be affected, ii) the distance that would be maintained in-between the rear of the proposed building and the rear of 8 Cricketers Close (approx. 22 metres), iii) existing overlooking of these spaces that already occurs from existing development in the area and iv) that the windows in question (above ground floor level on the rear elevation) serve either bedrooms which are not primary living spaces.

Access, parking and highway safety

23. The vehicular access proposed to serve the development is adequate (subject to compliance with conditions) and the Local Highway Authority has not objected to the application. A total of 6 off-street car parking spaces are proposed to serve the 4 dwellings proposed which equates to 1.5 spaces per dwelling. The adopted Suffolk Advisory Parking Standards require maximum provision of 1.5 spaces (average) per dwelling. In this case, the 1.5 space per dwelling parking provision proposed is adequate and accords with the adopted Standards given the location of the site relative to public transport services and the relatively short distance to the town centre.

Other issues

24. Policy HS32 of the adopted Local Plan requires all applications proposing new dwellings to make provision for public open space. This is either in the form of on-site provision (minimum of 10% of the application site area) or off-site provision in the form of a commuted payment. In this case, given the small size of the site and layout of the development on site public open space provision is not considered appropriate. Accordingly the recommendation below makes provisions to secure a commuted payment. The development proposal is too small to attract an education or affordable housing contribution.

REASONS FOR APPROVAL

25. The proposal for the erection of a terrace of four dwellings and alterations to vehicular access accords with the provisions of policies SS1, SS2, SS4 and ENV7 of the East of England Plan (2008) and policies HS01, HS27, HS28, HS30, CN01, CN08, CN17 and CN18 of the Babergh Local Plan, Alteration No.2 (2006). In particular the scheme constitutes acceptable group development in terms of its layout, design, form, scale, materials and relationship to adjoining development (including listed buildings). There is no highway objection to the proposal and there are insufficient grounds on which to justify refusal in terms of its impact upon residential amenity, character and appearance of the town or the adjacent conservation area. The application makes adequate provision for public open space provision in accordance with Local Plan Policy HS32 and PPG17.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That, subject to the receipt of satisfactory amended plans omitting the two rooflights from the rear elevation of the proposed building, the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to secure a Planning Obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, to provide:-
- Contribution towards Public Open Space provision.
- (2) That, subject to the Planning Obligation in Resolution (1) above being secured, the Chief Planning Control Officer be authorised to grant planning permission subject to conditions, including:
- Samples of external materials.
 - Landscaping & boundary treatments.
 - Protection of the listed wall (protective fencing, no storage, ground levels, method of foundation provision).

- As recommended by LHA.
 - Archaeology
 - Withdrawal of GPDO rights for alterations (which would include the insertion of new openings extensions, outbuildings)
- (3) That, in the event of the Planning Obligation referred to in Resolution (1) above not being secured or the revised plans referred to in Resolution (1) above not being received, the Chief Planning Control Officer be authorised to refuse planning permission for the following reasons:
- Inadequate provision for public open space being contrary to Policy HS32 and PPG17.
 - Poor design and detrimental impact upon the setting of the listed building.