

ACTON – Part side garden of 21 Queensway

Erection of two storey detached dwelling. Alteration to existing vehicular access

Applicant: Mr E Skinner

Case Officer: Chris Tivey

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**This application was subject to a site inspection by a Panel of Members on 12 September 2007.**

SITE

1. The application site comprises a rectangular parcel of land situated immediately to the east of 21 Queensway and which currently forms part of its curtilage. Queensway is largely characterised by semi-detached properties that are well spaced out giving the appearance of an estate which is of a low density.
2. The site area including the area to the front of 21 Queensway where alterations to the access would be carried out measures 0.04ha. No. 21 Queensway is largely untouched with the exception of a conservatory extension to the eastern side (this would be removed as part of the proposal).
3. The site is within the built-up area of Acton wherein the principle of residential development is acceptable, subject to normal planning considerations.

PROPOSAL

4. Planning permission is sought to demolish the existing side conservatory to 21 Queensway and in its place erect a two storey detached property. The planning application is outline in form, with landscaping to be a reserved matter. The house would have three bedrooms and a floor space of approximately 107sqm, with the plot totalling 0.033 hectares. In their Design and Access Statement the applicant states that the house would front onto the cul-de-sac slightly forward of 21 Queensway reflecting the staggered building line. The floor level of the proposed dwelling would be set at the same floor level as the host property.
5. The dwelling would be of a similar scale to the adjacent properties within the cul-de-sac and would measure 6m wide and 9.65m long. The ridge height of the proposed dwelling would be approximately 7.2m and would be no higher than that of 21 Queensway. Materials proposed to the new dwelling would include pantiles to the roof and facing brickwork. The design is quite conventional in its style with a chimney, porch canopy and brick soldier courses giving an element of detail. The new property would have approximately 110sqm of private rear amenity space, leaving 21 Queensway with around 190sqm.

6. The new dwelling and the host property would have two car parking spaces to the frontage with a turning facility to enable vehicles to leave the site in a forward gear. The hardsurfacing would be rolled gravel on a tar spray with the remainder laid to grass.

#### RELEVANT HISTORY

7. 2007- Erection of detached storey dwelling and construction of new vehicular access – Withdrawn (B/07/00746/OUT refers)

#### NATIONAL GUIDANCE

8. **PPS1 (2005) Delivering Sustainable Development**
9. **PPS3 (2006) – Housing**

#### PLANNING POLICIES

10. The following Development Plan policies are relevant to the determination of this proposal.

##### **Suffolk Structure Plan 2001**

- CS3 (New Development)
- ENV3 (Design Standards)
- T9 (Private Car Parking)

##### **Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) 2006**

- HS02 & HS03 (Villages)
- HS28 (Infilling and Groups of Dwellings)
- HS30 (Design)
- HS32 (Public Open Space – Developer Contributions)
- CN01 (Design Standards)
- TP15 (Parking Standards)

#### OBSERVATIONS

11. PC – Object the proposal should not be approved. They refer to the first paragraph of the applicant's Design and Access Statement and the comments that Queensway has been progressively developed over the past 50 years. They state that this completely untrue and apart from small additions to some of the properties (porches, conservatories etc) Queensway remains exactly as it was when it was built. They go on to state that the only development that has been allowed was the erection of a bungalow between nos. 22 and 23 which has been erected on backland and does not intrude upon the street scene. Queensway is a very singular type of development with a unique character of its own. If the present application is approved it would create a precedent for other sub-division of gardens which would completely destroy the unique quality which the estate has. Queensway was constructed at a time when the majority of private households did not own a car, the road is narrow and inadequate for the amount of traffic which currently uses it. If a precedent for the sub-division of gardens is set, then there will be a large increase in traffic which the road will not cope with. The proposed design of the property is out of character with the other

houses which form a unified group. A similar application to develop the garden of no. 2 Barrow Hill was refused in 2005, the Parish Council considers that all reasons given for refusal of that application relate equally to the present application or indeed more so because of the unique character of Queensway. They state that if the application was approved then the materials used should be in keeping with the existing houses in order to preserve the character of the area as much as possible.

12. LHA – no objection subject to the imposition of conditions.
13. Third Party Representations - Five letters of objection have been received and cover the following points:
  - Queensway is a Council estate which has been in place for over half a century and is spacious in character. Allowing planning permission to build this house would set a precedent on similar sites within Queensway.
  - Queensway would become over crowded by houses and would not be in keeping with the current privacy and space that the residents have at present.
  - The road is very narrow and the road cannot take extra traffic.
  - There are no detached houses in Queensway and the proposed dwelling would look out of place.
  - The proposed dwelling would cut out sunlight currently enjoyed by 20 Queensway.
  - The dwelling would give rise to a loss of outlook from the rear conservatory of no. 20 Queensway.

#### ASSESSMENT

14. The principle residential development on the application site is acceptable, the site forms part of the residential curtilage of 21 Queensway and is within the built-up area boundary of the village of Acton.
15. PPS1 and PPS3 advocate the efficient use of previously developed land and in particular within existing settlements. It is acknowledged that the general character of the area comprises relatively well spaced pairs of semi-detached houses, however, taking into account that it does not fall within an area of historic character means that it would probably be difficult to substantiate a reason for refusal based upon the impact that the proposal would have upon the street scene.
16. It is acknowledged that the width of the carriageway is unusually narrow, however no objection has been raised by the Local Highway Authority. Taking into account that parking provision to both the new property and the host property would meet the Council's adopted standards means that it would be difficult to substantiate a reason for refusal on highway safety grounds.

17. The relationship of the proposed dwelling to No. 21 with a 2m gap between facing flank elevations is considered sufficient and is not an uncommon spacing for many residential areas. It is clear that the granting of planning permission for such a dwelling would alter the character and appearance of the cul-de-sac, but this would not be materially harmful to the visual amenities of the area.
18. The proposed dwelling would not give rise to a loss of amenity to the occupiers of the immediate residential properties by way of being overbearing or giving rise to overlooking or over shadowing. At a density of approximately 30 dwellings to the hectare the development is broadly consistent with the threshold advocated by the Government in PPS3.
19. Therefore, in the interests of making efficient use of land within an established built-up area planning permission should be granted.
20. 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 or off-site provision in the form of a commuted payment. Given the relatively small size of the site and layout of the development, an on-site Public Open Space provision is not considered appropriate and accordingly the Recommendation below makes provision to secure a commuted payment.

#### REASONS FOR APPROVAL

21. The erection of a detached two storey dwelling would make more efficient use of a site situated within the built-up area boundary of Acton. The design and scale of the building is appropriate to the street scene and furthermore, the development would not give rise to a material loss of amenity to neighbouring residential properties. The proposal is therefore compliant with Policies HS02, HS03, HS27 and CN01 of the Babergh District Local Plan Alteration Number 2 (2006).

#### RECOMMENDATION

Grant (Planning Permission) subject to condition –

- A. The Solicitor to the Council be authorised to secure a planning obligation under Section 106 of the 1990 Act to ensure:
  - (i) The payment of contributions towards Public Open Space provision.
- B. Upon securing the obligation the Chief Planning Control Officer be authorised to GRANT planning permission subject to the following conditions –
  - Materials
  - As recommended by CHA
  - PD rights removed for insertion of further windows and extensions.
  - Landscaping scheme

Otherwise,

- C. REFUSE planning permission
  - Inadequate provision of Public Open Space and play equipment.

#### DECISION