

Snodland **566972 162926** **24 November 2009** **TM/09/02869/FL**
Snodland West

Proposal: Erection of replacement dwelling, lost as a consequence of fire damage, alterations to access and associated landscaping works
Location: The Bungalow Holly Hill Snodland Kent DA13 0UB
Applicant: Mr David Simms

1. Description:

- 1.1 This full application proposes the construction of a replacement dwelling to replace a fire damage bungalow that was partially demolished following a fire in July 2006. The bungalow was of permanent construction and from its appearance appeared to date from the early to mid 19th century, although its roof was probably replaced in the 20th century.
- 1.2 The application proposes the demolition of the remains of the existing bungalow and the construction of a 3/4 bedroom replacement dwelling on the site but 3m away from the northern site boundary to reduce the impact of the proposal in views from the public car park and to also enable access to all sides of the property without having to go on adjoining land.
- 1.3 The dwelling would comprise of a single storey split level dwelling which would be rectangular with a width of 11.5m and depth of 10.7m. The building would be finished with a curved roof and have a maximum height of 4.7m, but due to the dwelling being dug into the site, 4.1m above natural ground level. The dwelling has been designed with a partial basement so that its physical dimensions are not significantly larger than the previous dwelling, with a lower ridge height and overall length but a greater total floor area.
- 1.4 The applicant, Lafarge Cement UK, is keen to build a sustainable house using its cementitious products which can be a model for use elsewhere. The building is proposed to be a high quality contemporary design, designed to respect the sensitive location and be built to achieve the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4.
- 1.5 The design is intended to reflect the surrounding area. Flints are proposed to be used in the gabion walls as they are found in the North Downs and also in surrounding buildings. The white painted render is to reflect the chalk of the North Downs and the sedum covered curved green roof reflects the profile of the Downs.

2. Reason for reporting to Committee:

- 2.1 Request by Cllrs Boakes and Moloney due to the level of public interest and also concerned about the size of the proposed dwelling on the former bungalow site and also about the visual impact of the development on the local landscape.

3. The Site:

- 3.1 The site is located on the west side of Holly Hill immediately adjacent to a small public car park that serves the North Downs Way and Holly Hill Wood, which is a public open space. The site is surrounded by mature woodland to the north, south and west and has views to the east across the Medway Valley. The site is accessed from Holly Hill that forms part of the North Downs Way long distance footpath.
- 3.2 The site is located outside any settlement boundary as defined in the Tonbridge and Malling Local Development Framework. The site is within the Metropolitan Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4. Planning History:

- 4.1 None relevant.

5. Consultees:

- 5.1 TC: Object – the residential use has long since been abandoned and this Council would not wish to see a new building in the Green Belt.
- 5.2 DHH: Comments awaited.
- 5.3 Private Reps: 5/0X/1R/0S + ART8. One letter received raising the following concerns:-
- Modern appearance of the replacement dwelling is not in any way in keeping with the area and the surrounding properties and had hoped that Lafarge would have endeavoured to produce something that would sit comfortably with its rural/agricultural environment.
 - The proposed dwelling is too large in relation to the existing. The proposed design and size of the dwelling represent a huge increase over the pre-existing.
 - Holly Hill is a unique and extremely precious environment in the North Kent area where any development proposals should be viewed with the utmost scrutiny. The proposal, if granted, would alter the character of the environment and would set a precedent for this type of development.

6. Determining Issues:

- 6.1 This application proposes a replacement dwelling within the Green Belt and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The principal considerations with this application are the principle of the development and the impact of the development on the surroundings.

- 6.2 The application proposes the replacement of a dwelling that was fire damaged and then partially demolished. The residential use of the site has not been intentionally abandoned and the principle of the use of the site as residential remains established.
- 6.3 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts indicates that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for one of a number of purposes, including; limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings, and then providing the new dwelling is not materially larger than the dwelling it replaces. Policy CP3 of the Tonbridge and Malling Local Development Framework Core Strategy confirms that the national policy contained in PPG2 will be applied to Green Belt areas in the borough.
- 6.4 The proposed dwelling while larger in footprint and floor area than the original is not, in my view, materially larger than the dwelling it replaces. The design of the dwelling is narrower and lower than the bungalow that historically occupied the plot. It is 10.3 metres wide and 4.75 metres high whereas the original dwelling is 14.2m wide and 4.95m high. The new dwelling has a larger footprint (120m² against 81.5m²) but this has been achieved by squaring off the rear of the building and use of a partial basement. This increase in footprint is not considered to be materially larger than the original building. If it had not had to be part demolished, for safety reasons, the original building could have been extended either by permitted development or an appropriate extension by a similar amount without the need for a planning application.
- 6.5 The replacement dwelling has been designed to provide a partial basement level and the curved roof design helps to keep the overall height of the building to within the historic built envelope of the original bungalow. It is therefore considered that the development is in accordance with the guidance contained within PPG2.
- 6.6 The site is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy CP7 refers to development within the AONB and states that development which would be detrimental to the natural beauty and quiet enjoyment will not be permitted. Development should also have regard to local distinctiveness and landscape character, and use sympathetic materials and appropriate design.
- 6.7 As the property is a replacement for a fire damaged property that was only partially demolished due to being unsafe it is considered that the development is acceptable in principle in an AONB location. The contemporary design of the building has been chosen as it enables the use of materials to blend in and complement the local environment and feature a curved, green roof to blend in with the hillside.
- 6.8 I am aware that design is a subjective matter and that this development strays away from the traditional appearance of other dwellings in the area. However, the site is an isolated plot that does not have an established street scene to integrate with. The applicant wishes to build an exemplar sustainable house using its

cementitious products which can be a model for use elsewhere, and be a high quality design to respect the sensitive location. (Cementitious products are the wide range of cement based building materials which form a key part of the applicant's products range – the applicant has permission for a new cement works at Snodland). The design utilises flint and white render to capture features of the local chalk landscape and the sedum covered roof reflects the profile of the Downs This would achieve Level 4 on the Code for Sustainable Homes which is one of the requirements of the emerging MDEDPD.

- 6.9 *It is considered that the design, while differing from other buildings in the locality would not be unacceptable in this location. The site would be screened from the public car park and the highway by the existing vegetation and the choice of materials and roof design would further integrate the development into the environment. The presence of a dwelling in this location would also assist in passive security in the vicinity and assist towards reducing anti-social behaviour in the area. I am pleased to see a well thought-out decision which uses a modern design vocabulary and especially bearing in mind that PPS1 indicates that "Local Planning Authorities should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness particularly where this is supported by clear plan policies or supplementary planning documents on design."*
- 6.10 The Kent Downs AONB Landscape Design Handbook supports the principle of sustainable landscapes and the use of local materials perpetuates local character. This guidance advises that the use of flint, which is always found in tandem with chalk, has a long history of use on the Downs as a building material. The choice of flint for the walls is welcomed in this sensitive location as it is a material that is sympathetic to the surroundings.
- 6.11 Given the isolated position of the plot it is considered that the development would not have an impact on the residential amenity of any other property in the locality and would not raise any adverse highways issues.
- 6.12 Overall, it is considered that the development accords with adopted planning policy and is therefore considered to be acceptable.

7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 **Grant Planning Permission** in accordance with the following submitted details: Letter dated 24.11.2009, Other dated 24.11.2009, Schedule dated 24.11.2009, Design and Access Statement dated 24.11.2009, Location Plan A100 dated 24.11.2009, Site Survey A101 dated 24.11.2009, Section A102 dated 24.11.2009, Site Plan A103 dated 24.11.2009, Floor Plan A104 dated 24.11.2009, Elevations A105 dated 24.11.2009, Elevations A106 dated

24.11.2009, Elevations A107 dated 24.11.2009, Section A108 dated 24.11.2009, Elevations A109 dated 24.11.2009 and the following conditions:

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

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. All materials used externally shall accord with the approved plans, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

3. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping and boundary treatment. All planting, seeding and turfing comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be implemented during the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the earlier. Any trees or shrubs removed, dying, being seriously damaged or diseased within 10 years of planting shall be replaced in the next planting season with trees or shrubs of similar size and species, unless the Authority gives written consent to any variation. Any boundary fences or walls or similar structures as may be approved shall be erected before first occupation of the building to which they relate.

Reason: Pursuant to Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality.

4. The building shall not be occupied nor the use commenced until the area shown as parking space on the approved plans has been drained and surfaced and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than the parking of vehicles.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to hazardous on-street parking.

5. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending, revoking and re-enacting that Order) no development shall be carried out within Classes A to H (inclusive) of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of that Order unless planning permission has been granted on an application relating thereto.

Reason: In order for the Local Planning Authority to monitor further development in this sensitive location.

Contact: Robin Gilbert