

Recommendation Report

Reference:	SE/17/01616/FUL
Date:	12.07.17
Subject:	Appraisal
Name:	Matthew Besant
Address:	Grass Verge north of Millfield Lane, New Ash Green

Proposal

Construction of parking bays

Relevant Planning History

None

Constraints

'Phase 1' - Open Space allocation
Phase 2 and 3 none.

Policies

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Sevenoaks District Core Strategy – SP1
Allocations and Development Management Plan – EN1, GI2

Publicity Expires

22.06.17

Consultations

Parish Council – Objection - *The Parish Council recognises that there is an issue with parking on Millfield Lane that needs to be addressed with additional spaces, however, the right-angle parking design of phases 2 and 3 of the proposed development are potentially dangerous, as drivers will be reversing into a busy road.*

This will not prevent cars being parked opposite the parking bays, causing further obstruction and difficulty accessing the parking bays.

The Parish Council would prefer to see the parallel parking extended along Millfield Lane in front of houses 5 – 13 Millfield and to have parallel parking on the north verge, along the length of the road. This would provide safer parking and also leave the carriage way free of parked vehicles.

It was a concern that there was no pedestrian access to the bays and people would have to walk along the road to access the bays.

Should this application be granted, we would request that necessary banking and planting are carried out to shield nearby houses.

Highways – Comment - *Whilst I have no objection in principle to the proposals which will have the effect of reducing on-street parking in the area, I would like to see provision for pedestrians going to / from their cars without the need to walk in the road. Links*

should be provided to the rear / side of the parking bays to the adjacent footpath network.

Representations

4x Objections which can be summarised as concerns over loss of local character, loss of open/ play space, noise and pollution issues

20x Supporting comments which can be summarised as concerns of lack of existing provision; lack of passing space for emergency vehicles, safety concerns.

1x Letter from 'Chapel Wood Residents Society' which supports the proposal in principle but raises design and access concerns.

Appraisal

Description of Site

The application site is formed of three parts, two on the southern side of Millfield Lane (Phase 2 and 3) and one on the northern side (Phase 1).

Both verges are formed of open spaces. On the northern side 'Phase 1' is an allocation for the open space, which is currently occupied by grass. Phase 2 is currently a flat verge with grass. Phase 3 is largely occupied by a mound covered in trees, shrubs and bushes.

Description of proposal

Phase 1 includes 5x parallel parking bays. Phase 2 includes 10x perpendicular spaces. Phase 3 includes 12x perpendicular bays, and required the removal of existing trees and part of the bank. On outline the plans show the land as being replanted in grass.

Principle Issues

The proposed development will be assessed in relation to the policies that are relevant, outlined in the Policies section above, an overview of the policies and their contents is given below.

The NPPF identifies a set of core land-use planning principles that should underpin decision-taking. One of these core principles is to 'always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings' (Para 17).

The NPPF also states that 'The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people' (Para. 56).

Impact of the Character of the Area and Open Space Allocations

Policy SP1 'Design of New Development and Conservation' of the Core Strategy states that '*All new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated*' (pp.60). It also reads that '*the Districts heritage assets and their settings,*

including listed buildings, conservation areas [etc]... will be protected and enhanced'

Relevant to this application are the following parts of EN1 'Design Principles', which is supported by SP1 and SP11 of the Core Strategy, reads '*Proposed which would create high quality design and meet the following criteria will be permitted...*

b) the layout of the proposed development would respect the topography and character of the site and the surrounding area and sensitively incorporate natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds within the site;

c) the proposal would not result in the loss of building, open spaces or green infrastructure that would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the area; ...

f) the design of buildings and the layout of spaces, including footways, car and cycle parking area, would be permeable and provide connectivity with neighbouring areas';...

g) new development would be inclusive and where appropriate make satisfactory provision for the safe and easy access of those with disabilities.

Policy GI2 'Loss of Open Space', and supported by SP10 of the Core Strategy reads '*Change of use or redevelopment of Green Infrastructure, Open Space, Short of Recreation sites within the urban confines of towns and villages, as defined on the policies map, and redundant school playing fields will not be permitted unless the applicant demonstrate that:*

- The open space is surplus to requirements; and that there is no need for an appropriate alternative community, sports or recreational use, or*
- The loss will be mitigated by equivalent replacement provision (in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility) or*
- The development is for alternative sports/ recreation use.*

...

There should be no significant adverse impact on the character of the local environment and any potential loss of biodiversity interests should be mitigated.

The proposal would result in the loss of an area of allocated open space on the northern side of the road. Whilst comments from neighbours suggest there is a shortage of local supply, the loss of this allocated space has not been sufficiently justified and nor is there a proposal for mitigation.

No concerns have been raised by Kent highways with regards to the proposed materials, although the proposal does not include a permeable surface. Such a matter could be dealt with by condition were Kent Highways to raise concerns.

Kent Highways and policy EN1 both raise concerns with the accessibility of the spaces. I am concerned that spaces within all three spaces are not likely to be accessible by pedestrians and those with disabilities other than by walking on the road, which whilst relatively quiet is characterised by fairly free flowing and potentially fast moving traffic.

Of more concern is the proposed removal of the locally significant currently upon the bank where 'Phase 3' would be sited. New Ash Green broadly, and Millfield Lane are characterised by their open spaces, interspersed singular and groups of trees, and these form a key part of local character. The proposal to replace the removed trees with grass would represent a significant loss to local character. The existing trees are mature and form a key part of the characteristic of the road and thus their loss would be significantly harm the street scene. Further to the above, concerns are raised over the loss of the trees and shrubs and the impact that such a loss would have on neighbouring amenity. The proposal would require a change in land levels and thus even where existing trees could potentially have been conserved by condition, such works would require digging into root networks and trees would likely not survive, thus harming local character in the longer term.

Overall, whilst the applicant and neighbouring comments have raised concerns over the lack of existing parking provision, the loss of local open space, locally significant trees and the potential harm to biodiversity outweigh the potential benefits, and the proposal does not comply with EN1 nor GI2.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy EN2 'Amenity Protection' of the ADMP states that '*Proposals will be permitted where they would provide adequate residential amenities for existing and future occupiers of the development and would safeguard the amenities of existing and future occupants of nearby properties*' (pp.19).

The proposed parking areas are located along the roadside, where it would appear that existing parking arrangements allow for on-street parking and this is heavily utilised. Given the distance between the proposed parking area and dwellings, and the existing relationships, it is not likely that there would be any significant increase in noise of pollution associated with the additional parking areas in their own right.

As such neighbouring amenity will be conserved.

Other Issues

There are no other issues.

Conclusion

The proposal would fail to conserve local character; it would result in the loss of local open space, remove trees which form a key part of local character, and the potential harm to local biodiversity. Further, access to the parking spaces for pedestrians, giving particular concern to those with disabilities, means the proposal would fail to comply with part g) of EN1 of the ADMP.

Overall the proposal does not comply with EN1 or GI2 of the ADMP and supported by Policies SP1,SP10 and SP11 of the Core Strategy.

Recommendation Refuse

Case Officer: Matthew Besant **Date:** 12.07.17
Manager / Principal: A Salter **Date:** 13.7.17