

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 21 December 2011

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	11/00705/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	16 December 2011
WARD/PARISH:	SADBERGE AND WHESSOE / HAUGHTON WEST
LOCATION:	Darlington Golf Club, Haughton Grange Whinfield Road, Darlington DL1 3JD
DESCRIPTION:	Construction of new link road between Sparrow Hall Drive and the existing golf club access road (detailed application).
APPLICANT:	Mr David Proud

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

A previous application for outline permission for a link road (Ref: 10/00752/OUT) was approved at the Planning Applications Committee Meeting on 8 June 2011 subject to a planning agreement. A full detailed application has now been submitted for the link road. The location of the link road has been modified slightly from the previous application to move it further to the west by some 5m to avoid infringing on land owned by a third party.

The link road would be 4.8m in width plus a 2m wide footpath to the side. The link road would run some 32m from Sparrow Hall Drive to the existing access road. A corresponding footpath on the opposite side of Sparrow Hall Drive is also proposed.

Current access to Darlington Golf Club is from Whinfield Road via Green Lane which is a narrow and poorly maintained track. It is intended that the new link road would provide the only vehicular access to Darlington Golf Club; the applicant proposes to form an obstruction within the existing access road in order to prevent access to and from Green Lane.

PLANNING HISTORY

The previous outline application for a link road was approved at the Planning Applications Committee meeting on 8 June 2011. This approval was subject to a planning agreement which has not yet been completed.

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The following policies of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan are relevant:

- E2 (Development Limits)

- E3 (Protection of Open Land)
- E12 (Trees and Development)
- T8 (Access to Main Roads)

The following policies of the Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document are relevant:

- CS2 (Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design)
- CS15 (Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity)
- CS16 (Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety)

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

Objections have been received from local residents in relation to this application. The main points of concern raised are:

- The proposal will have an unacceptable impact on traffic levels and congestion which will be a particular danger to pedestrians and cyclists.
- The potential for the link road to lead to 'rat running'.
- The link road will increase noise levels.
- The resultant loss of green space will be harmful to the visual appearance of the area.
- Green Lane should be improved instead.
- The link road will set a precedent allowing a future housing scheme.

Whinfield Residents Association objected to the proposal raising concerns about rat running, fly tipping, anti social behaviour and crime prevention.

Comments from local residents and members of Darlington Golf Club have also been received in support of the application. The main points raised are:

- Green Lane is unsuitable and its continued use is a danger.
- The new link road would prove a better, safer access.
- Access to Green Lane will be blocked preventing rat running.

The **Highways Engineer** commented that there is sufficient capacity within the local highway network to accommodate the traffic associated with the new link road and that the proposal would not be harmful to highway safety. A Traffic Survey was carried out between the 17 March 2011 and 16 May 2011 and the assessment of this is that there are no operational or highway safety impacts associated with the development which will have a significant impact on the local highway network.

The **Arboricultural Officer** has asked for a condition to be placed on the granting of planning permission regarding tree planting.

Barmpton Parish Council commented that the application should be approved.

PLANNING ISSUES

At its meeting in June 2011 the Committee granted outline planning permission for a link road to the Golf Club. This application effectively proposes a small amendment to the position of the

road and the considerations that are relevant in this case are little different to those which applied to the previous scheme and which led to the grant of conditional planning permission.

The proposed link road is required to provide better access to Darlington Golf Club which is an existing recreational facility in the countryside. The proposal is acceptable in principle subject to other considerations including the impact on the character and appearance of the area and highway matters.

The proposed new link road would cross the existing grass verge to the north of Sparrow Hall Drive. The majority of the grass verge would be unaltered and consequently the proposal has no significant impacts with regard to informal recreation.

The proposed new link road would not be an unduly prominent feature and would not cause significant harm to the visual relief provided by the open space. The proposed new link road would also result in the loss of a section of hedgerow to the north of the verge and a condition requiring tree planting would be appropriate to mitigate the impacts of the proposal.

A habitat survey has been carried out and the conclusion of this is that although the hedgerow is of a low ecological value it is suitable for nesting birds. Vegetation clearance should not therefore take place between 1 February and 31 August unless it is under ecological supervision and following the submission of a nesting bird survey.

The nature and location of the proposed link road is such that it is not considered likely to result in any unacceptable negative impacts in terms of residential amenity.

A traffic survey has been undertaken and this did not identify any significant operational or highway safety impacts likely to arise from the development. It was concluded that the low traffic flows associated with the development will not have a significant impact on the local highway network. It is also considered that the proposed road will provide a safer and therefore preferable route from the point of view that vehicles will be able to pass one another and it will allow for better forward visibility.

Concern has been expressed that the introduction of the new link road could lead to rat running from Sparrow Hall Drive to Whinfield Road. The Golf Club is prepared to enter into a Planning Agreement so that the use of Green Lane by private vehicles to gain access to Sparrow Hall Drive can be prevented. This would involve obstructing the passage of vehicles for example through the construction of bollards or some other suitable form of barrier on part of the existing access road to the west of the proposed link road.

It is considered that the proposed road would be unlikely to increase the risk of crime in the locality (through fly tipping or due to use as an escape route) as access to Green Lane would be prevented and the new link road would not be a through road.

Concerns have been raised that if the road goes ahead this will open up adjacent land for housing development. However any future application for housing development should it ever be made would have to be considered on its own merits at the time. The construction of the access road would not make it any more likely that planning permission for housing would be forthcoming.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect

CONCLUSION

This planning application is for the construction of a new link road to Darlington Golf Club from Sparrow Hall Drive. The proposed link road is considered acceptable and will not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The link road has no significant impacts in terms of residential amenity. The proposed link road does not adversely impact on highway safety. No issues are raised in relation to crime prevention.

RECOMMENDATION

THE DIRECTOR OF PLACE BE AUTHORISED TO NEGOTIATE AN AGREEMENT UNDER SECTION 106 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 TO SECURE THE FOLLOWING:

1. TO PREVENT VEHICULAR ACCESS BETWEEN GREEN LANE AND SPARROW HALL DRIVE IN ORDER TO PREVENT AN ALTERNATIVE ROUTE BEING CREATED BETWEEN WHINFIELD ROAD AND WHINBUSH WAY.

THAT UPON SATISFACTORY COMPLETION AND SIGNING OF THAT AGREEMENT, PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. A3 Implementation Limit (3 years)
2. B5 Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plan)
3. The section of hedgerow to be removed to facilitate the development is suitable for nesting birds and consequently vegetation clearance shall not take place between 1 February and 31 August unless it is under ecological supervision and following the submission and approval, by the Local Planning Authority, of a nesting bird survey.

REASON - In the interests of ecology.

4. No development shall commence until details of the provisions made for ensuring that surface water does not discharge onto the public highway, have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall not take place other than in accordance with the approved details.

REASON– To ensure that surface water does not discharge onto the public highway.

5. No development shall commence until details of a tree planting scheme have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall not take place other than in full accordance and implementation of the approved details.

REASON – The proposal would result in the removal of part of a hedgerow and a tree planting scheme is required to mitigate this loss.

6. No development shall commence until details of the provisions made for access by pedestrians including dropped crossings/tactile paving, and a short section of footway within the highway verge to the south of Sparrow Hall Drive, have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall not take place other than in accordance with the approved details.

REASON– The new access would attract use by pedestrians which should be adequately accommodated.

Suggested summary of reasons for granting planning permission

The proposed link road is considered acceptable and will not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The link road has no significant impacts in terms of residential amenity. The proposed link road does not adversely impact on highway safety. No issues are raised in relation to crime prevention. The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policies in the development plan set out below:

Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997:

- E2 (Development Limits)
- E3 (Protection of Open Land)
- E12 (Trees and Development)
- T8 (Access to Main Roads)

Darlington Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011:

- CS2 (Achieving High Quality, Sustainable Design)
- CS15 (Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity)
- CS16 (Protecting Environmental Resources, Human Health and Safety)

INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant is advised that works are required within the public highway on Sparrow Hall Drive and contact must be made with the Assistant Director : Highways and Engineering (contact Mr.A.Ward 01325 388743) to arrange for the works to be carried out or to obtain authority under Sec.184 of the Highways Act 1980 to execute the works.
2. The proposed brick wall for signage identified on the approved plans is located outside of the application site. This feature does not form part of this application (Ref: 11/00705/FU) and would require planning permission if it is to be built.