

**WESTERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE
ON 23RD JANUARY 2013**

UPDATE REPORT

Item No: (3) **Application No:** 12/02420/FULD **Page No.** 53

Site: 20 Manor Crescent, Compton, Newbury.

Planning Officer Presenting: Jake Brown

Member Presenting:

Parish Representative speaking: Alison Strong

Objector(s) speaking: Colin Jackman

Support(s) speaking: N/A

Applicant/Agent speaking: Mr and Mrs Pipikakis

Ward Member(s): Councillor Von Celsing

Update Information:

Reason for Committee determination:

In addition to the Development Control Manager calling the application to the Western Area Planning Committee, the application was also called to Committee by the Ward Member, Cllr Von Celsing.

Further representations from Compton Parish Council:

Since the production of the Committee report, a supplementary statement has been submitted by Compton Parish Council. The full document is attached to this update and the photographs will be shown during the presentation of the Parish Council at the meeting.

The Parish Council also state in their submissions that:-

'The previous applications have a fuller explanation of the above viewpoint:-

Under application 12/00301/FULD (which was withdrawn) the following was submitted:-

The reasons for Compton Parish Councillors objecting were:-

1. It is contrary to the Compton Village Design Statement, which states "13. The pleasant visual character of the street scene should be maintained by new development by avoiding overbearing extensions and inappropriate in-filling which can have a terracing effect".
2. The development cannot even be classed as 'in-filling' as there is NO space available between 20 and 22 Manor Crescent.
3. The plans are unclear as to exactly where this new dwelling would be located. The space in the rear garden of 20 Manor Crescent is very limited and it is difficult to see how any new property built there would not be overbearing and have a seriously detrimental effect on neighbouring properties.

Under application 12/01519/FULD (which was returned as invalid) the following was submitted:-

The proposal would have the same effect as the original proposal "a terracing and urbanising effect" and is "not in keeping with the Guidelines of our Village Design Statement". From the road there is very little difference in the proposed elevation of that of the original proposal. The building has been moved closer and parallel to the South boundary with a gap of about 18" between house and next door's garage, leaving a larger gap between the house and No. 20. It will still have the same terracing/urbanising effect.

The Village Design Statement is available on our website if you would like to have a look at it. You can select it from the menu box through this link: <http://www.comptonparishcouncil.org/dnn/Documents/tabid/58/Default.aspx>

N.B. The Point 13 quoted above is actually Point 7 in the VDS.

Point 6 may also be useful: Open green spaces, whether private or public, are important elements in the conservation of the rural character of Compton and should make a positive contribution to the public realm.

Another interesting observation is that the picture at the top of page 6 highlights the 'Open Green Spaces at Manor Crescent' and No. 20 is included in the picture.

Another factor which may or may not be useful is the response from Highways.

Under application 12/00301/FULD the following comment was made:

...the proposed dwelling has two double bedrooms but only one parking space. Compton is one of the less sustainable locations within West Berkshire and it would not be unreasonable to assume that this size dwelling in this location could generate two car owners. Two parking spaces are more appropriate therefore. Alternatively I would suggest that the proposed dwelling be reduced to a one-bedroom dwelling which would also reduce the requirement for parking to one space.

In the current application the following comment was made by Highways:-

Two parking spaces are shown for the existing dwelling with one space for the proposed dwelling. Given that this is a two bedroom dwelling in one of the less sustainable locations within the District I would prefer to see two parking spaces for the proposed dwelling. However, it would be difficult to sustain a refusal on this basis alone. Given this I would be unable to object to this application on the basis of the provision of one parking space.'

Further representations from Applicant:

The applicant has submitted a series of photographs that will be shown during the applicants' presentation at the meeting. In respect of the photographs the applicant states that the presentation will show 'pictures of other extensions /developments in the area close to my application.

The applicant further states that 'As you can see the area has many different types / styles of houses on our street. Many have been extended with single, double story and loft extensions. Most of these have gone to the edge of the boundary. I do not think we will be setting a precedent or a terracing effect as ours is a detached proposal and all applications need to be considered on their individual circumstances. We have worked closely with the planning officers to come up with the design. We have changed many details with their advice so that it meets all required regulations.

We feel that a double story extension would not be a better option in this case. This is not garden grabbing as this is our own garden and we have not bought the garden for development purpose from anyone else

We have also read the current Parish Plan and they actually say that there is a need for small dwellings in the area. Please also note that my neighbour who is affected the most has not objected to this application. Some of the objections are the same and also they do not even live in the area, we have only had 2 households object, neither of which would be directly affected by the development, their concerns are mostly unrelated to planning issues. I do not understand why this application has gone to committee as the planning officer has recommended approval and there has been less than 10 objections.'

In addition the applicant has submitted an extract of the Compton Parish Plan which is attached at the end of this document.

Officer Conclusion.

Taking into consideration the additional representations received, the Officer recommendation remains unchanged.

DC

Compton Parish Council respectfully request that during the decision-making process the Western Area Planning Committee give due consideration to the following items drawn from the National Planning Policy Framework, along with the supplementary commentary relating directly to the village of Compton and the application.

NPPF

6. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

49. Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

52. The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities. Working with the support of their communities, local planning authorities should consider whether such opportunities provide the best way of achieving sustainable development. In doing so, they should consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining any such new development.

53. Local planning authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area.

7. Requiring good design

56. 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.

61. Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

64. Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Compton, will within the next 12-60 months see the redevelopment 2 major sites within the village creating new homes that will contribute to both local and WBC housing needs.

Fairfield Estate now approved, with works to commence in 2013 replacing 6 x 2 bed flats with 2 x 1 bed maisonettes, 6 x 2 bed houses and 4 x 3 bed houses.

IAH Site currently going through SPD, will significantly increase the overall housing density and demographic of Compton.

Compton Parish Council sponsored the development of a Village Design Statement through lengthy community consultation. The VDS states:

7. The pleasant visual character of the street scene should be maintained by new development by avoiding overbearing extensions and inappropriate in-filling which can have a terracing effect”.

9. New developments, however small, should respect neighbouring properties in scale siting, style and the use of materials.

Compton has two ‘Crescents’ both formed of the same 1940’s institutional designed family housing. Their crescent curve is further enforced by the open space between each pair of houses. While over the years, some of these houses have seen development of end single story laundry rooms and coal stores for more general family use, the visual open space remains.

Compton Parish Council holds the application in contradiction to the Compton VDS and to the National Planning Policy Framework.

- The proposed site cannot be classed as ‘in-filling’ as the space between 20 and 22 Manor Crescent is formed of a family sized garden designed originally, and still serving the purpose of, enhancing quality of living and the character of the rural setting.
- The proposal will have overbearing presence that will cause a serious detrimental effect on neighbouring properties.
- Surrounding properties do, in a small number of cases, differ in style and character but less than 10%of dwellings within Manor Road, Westfields Road and Manor Crescent have extensions to date. Therefore, the housing density of this area is truly enhanced by the appropriate allocation of open space between the pairs of houses.
- With these houses being ‘institutional family homes’ this open space and garden allocation contributes to sustainable and healthy living which must be allowed to remain.
- The application is of low design and has access requirements that bring further limitations to the use of the open green space that sets the front scene of the Crescent.
- The application is not *“improving the character and quality of the area and the way it functions” (NPPF #64).*

These comments are supplementary to those already submitted by Compton Parish Council through the formal planning consultation process.

20 & 22 Manor Crescent



24 & 26 Manor Crescent



Manor Crescent Street Scene



Gordon Crescent



Extract of Compton Parish submitted by applicant



Compton Parish Plan



The Landscape

The area is farmed, mostly arable with many large fields bordered by old hedges with multiple species. There are small areas of ancient woodland on hill tops. The area is criss-crossed by ancient drove roads and tracks including the Ridgeway National Path. The underlying rock is chalk with flints, which is reflected as a local material used throughout the village in flint walls.

Over 45% of households give country or village life as their main reason for settling in Compton. Over 80% of respondents said that the quality of the countryside around Compton was very important to them. Over 80% thought that it was very important to keep the River Pang and ditches clean to improve the environment of Compton. Over 50% commented that looking after woodlands was also important. Over 75% suggested that there should be special open spaces in Compton for picnicking and for children to play.



The Built Environment

The working party met on a wet and windy day to walk the village, keen to explore areas not yet known. It is interesting that when living in a village, or anywhere for that matter, our daily lives take us on a routine, which is difficult to break. We have no reason for taking a left hand turn instead of the daily right – a junction on which we take no real notice of the fabric, the materials of the boundaries – we tend just to watch for a safe place in the traffic to turn and be on with our business! The look at detail led the working party to believe that the fabric of the village could be improved with the use of vernacular materials and the preservation of its

individual character with sympathetic new development. Rather than duplicate work by providing information here, it was decided that the way forward was a 'Parish or Village Design Statement' (VDS). As there is already a planning process for this particular mechanism, the Working Party decided that this was the way forward. Consequently a Village Design Statement for Compton is underway and will be available on www.compton-village.org.uk and on the West Berkshire District Council website (www.westberks.gov.uk) when approved. In this particular case, the action point – the VDS – has already commenced and is an example of how the Parish Plan acted as a catalyst for this work.



Housing

The majority of existing dwellings in Compton are owner-occupied, detached or semi-detached dwellings. A survey carried out recently by the Rural Housing Trust demonstrated that there was a need for small, affordable dwellings in Compton. Many young people who are currently living with parents, or renting, could not afford to buy their own property. Results from the Household Questionnaire indicated that most people were keen to see small family units, homes for the young, single people and special category needs e.g. with disabilities. There was agreement that these would best be provided by either rented or shared equity housing schemes.

Education

Compton is privileged in having a Church, Primary School and the Downs Secondary School located within the village, as well as being well served by pre-school provision. Both schools are