

Planning Reference No:	10/2779C
Application Address:	Albany Mill, Canal Street, Congleton
Proposal:	Amendment to Approval 06/1414/FUL to Change Slab Levels to the Apartment Block containing 6 x 1 Bed Units and 10 x 2 Bed Units (Block A)
Applicant:	Great Places Housing Group
Application Type:	Full Planning Permission
Grid Reference:	386192 362592
Ward:	Congleton Town West
Consultation Expiry Date:	9 th September 2010
Date for determination:	27 th October 2010

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to a Deed of Variation to the existing Section 106 Agreement and conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Trees
- Ecological Impacts
- Highway safety
- Design considerations
- Amenity of neighbouring and prospective occupiers

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application has been referred to committee because it is for more than 10 dwellings and is therefore a major development.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application relates to the site of a former textile mill building, and the associated car park, which has recently been demolished.

The surrounding development comprises residential properties on the opposite side of Canal Street to the north east and Burslam Street to the north west. A pair of semi-detached properties and another mill, which has been converted to offices, stand in Highfield Road to the southeast. On the Canal Street frontage, the development site adjoins the Vale Club and the property known as 58 Canal Street.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission was granted in 2006 for the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of 43 no. affordable 2 bed apartments, comprising a mix of shared ownership, discounted for sale and rented accommodation. This application seeks consent

for revisions to the approved scheme to change the slab levels to the Apartment Block A on the Canal Road frontage.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

1982 - 14197/3 Refusal of permission for covered area unloading/loading.

1983 - 15362/3 Refusal of permission for covered area unloading/loading.

1991 - 23700/3 Refusal of permission change of use to furniture showroom and sales area.

1992 - 24104/3 Permission for change of use to furniture warehouse for sales.

1994 - 26157/3 Permission for change of use from storage to gymnasium

1995 - 27308/3 Permission for change of use of land to parking area for use of the Vale Club

2006 - 06/0157/OUT Redevelopment including 49 no. affordable apartments, comprising a mix of shared ownership, discounted for sale and rented accommodation – Withdrawn

2006 - 06/0590/OUT Outline planning permission for redevelopment including 49 no. affordable apartments, comprising a mix of shared ownership, discounted for sale and rented accommodation.

2007 - 06/1414/FUL Full planning permission for redevelopment including 43 no. affordable 2 bed apartments, comprising a mix of shared ownership, discounted for sale and rented accommodation

5. POLICIES

National Policy

PPS 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS 3 - Housing

PPS25 - Development and Flood risk.

Local Plan Policy

GR21 - Flood Prevention

GR1 - New Development

GR2 - Design

GR3 - Residential Development

GR5 - Landscaping

GR9 - Accessibility, servicing and provision of parking

NR1 - Trees and Woodland

NR3 - Habitats

NR5 - Habitats

H4 - Residential Development within Settlement Boundaries

H13 - Affordable Housing and low cost housing

E10 - Re-use and redevelopment of existing employment sites

6. CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways:

The Strategic Highways Manager has assessed this application and recommends the following condition be attached to any application which may be granted: The internal layout shall be sustainably drained in such a way so that no discharge onto the public highway prevails.

7. VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Congleton Town Council has no objections

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

An e-mail has been received from a resident of Highfield Road, expressing concern about loss of light.

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement

The amendment to floor levels has been necessary in order that the existing and proposed site levels for the whole development are coordinated to provide acceptable gradients for both pedestrian and vehicle uses in and around the site. The architectural design of Block A remains as planning permission 04/1414/FUL.

10 . OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

In view of the previous approval on this site, this application does not present an opportunity to re-examine the principle of redeveloping the site for affordable housing or the loss of the existing employment site. The current application does not propose any change in the number of units from the approved scheme and therefore no new housing land supply questions are raised. The main issues in this case are, therefore, the acceptability or otherwise of the detail of the scheme in terms of the effect on protected trees and other trees of amenity value, ecology, highway safety, design and street scene and the impact on the privacy and residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

Trees

The Canal Road, Congleton TPO 1980 protects an area of trees on land to the south west of the site. There are also a number of other trees in the vicinity, which are not protected. However, as the proposed amendment relates to the frontage building, which would be located on the opposite side of the site from the trees concerned, it is not considered that there would be any impact on trees.

Ecology

The buildings which stood on the site previously had some potential for roosting bats. However, the site has recently been completely cleared and as a result there will be no ecological impacts from the development.

Highway Safety

No change is proposed to the layout of the access and parking arrangements. However, according to the applicant, the amendment to floor levels has been necessary in order to ensure that the site levels are coordinated to provide acceptable gradients for both pedestrian and vehicle uses in and around the site. The Strategic Highways Manager has raised no objection subject to the imposition of a condition relating to the drainage of the site. This is considered to be a reasonable request, given that the site access and parking areas would slope downwards towards the public highway.

Design

In terms of design and street scene implications, Block A as already approved would be three storeys in height and it is proposed to increase its height by a further 0.8m. However, it would remain lower in height than the mill building which it replaced, which rose to 4 storeys on the road frontage. Furthermore the building would be read in the context of the adjacent 3 storey Sunnyside Mill and the properties on the opposite side of the road, which are at a substantially higher ground level.

As a result of the proposed amendments, the ground floor level of the building would be between 0.8m and 3m above the pavement. Consequently, there would be a lack of active frontage at the northern end of the building. Whilst this is undesirable in urban design terms, it would provide an improved level of privacy to the occupants of the flats. Furthermore, due to the bend in the road, the north end of the building would be set further back from the pavement than the south end. This would help to mitigate any oppressive sense of enclosure when walking along Canal Street, and would give the opportunity to provide landscaping and planting to soften the impact of the brick wall. No changes are proposed to the elevational detailing of the building and therefore, overall, it remains acceptable in design terms.

Amenity

No changes are proposed to the site layout, and therefore window to window distances would be unchanged. Consequently, the main issue in the consideration of the amenity implications is whether the increase in the overall height of the building would affect light to any neighbouring dwellings.

A distance of 47m, 22m and 25m would be maintained between Block A and the properties in Highfield Road, Burslam Street and Sherratt Close respectively. The dwellings in Sherratt Close are also well screened by a bank of mature trees and hedgerow planting on the opposite side of Canal Street. Furthermore, all of the surrounding properties are at a higher ground level than Block A and therefore, it is considered that the increase in the overall height of the building would not have any discernable impact on the level of light or residential amenity afforded to those dwellings.

Block A would be situated immediately alongside the adjacent Vale Club building. There are no side windows in the Vale Club which would be adversely affected by the increase in the height of the building, and it would not project sufficiently far back into the site to impact on the amenity areas to the rear of the club, or the principal windows in its rear elevation. Furthermore, these areas were already heavily overshadowed by the former mill buildings, and notwithstanding the increase in height, it is considered that the proposed redevelopment is likely to improve the overall standard of amenity for the club.

11. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of its impact on protected trees and other trees of amenity value, highway safety, ecology, design and street scene and would provide adequate protection for the privacy and residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. It therefore meets the requirements of the relevant local plan policies and is recommended for approval.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to a Deed of Variation to the existing Section 106 Agreement to reference the new permission and the following conditions:-

- 1. Standard time limit**
- 2. Approved plans**
- 3. Revised scheme of drainage to be submitted and approved**
- 4. Revised scheme of landscaping to be submitted and approved**
- 5. Implementation and maintenance of landscaping**
- 6. With the exception of the above, development to be carried out in accordance with the conditions attached to planning permission 06/1414/FUL and details approved pursuant to those conditions.**

Location Plan: Cheshire East Council Licence No. 100049045

