

APPLICATION NO: 23/3619M

LOCATION: Heatherley Woods, Alderley Park, NETHER ALDERLEY, MACCLESFIELD

PROPOSAL: Proposed redevelopment of the site to create a single Integrated Retirement Community (Use Class C2) comprising 139 no. Extra Care units; associated healthcare, wellbeing, support and amenity facilities; pedestrian and vehicular access; with associated parking, landscaping, utility infrastructure and other associated works. (resubmission of application - 22/2819M)

REPRESENTATIONS

The Woodland Trust - The Trust objects to this planning application on the basis of deterioration of Heatherley Wood. Essentially their concern is that a 15m buffer zone is not maintained along both boundaries to the Ancient Woodland, and that car parking and gardens do encroach into this zone in the proposals.

Two additional representations have been received from local residents – essentially responding to updated statements from the applicant concerning viability and lighting impact. Previous objections on height and massing, overdevelopment and parking are repeated, and concern is expressed about the accuracy of the submissions made, and how the proposed development will not bridge the financial gap to fund the life science developments.

KEY ISSUES

Ancient Woodland – The Woodland Trusts comments are acknowledged and as referenced in the Ecology Section of the report, the 15m buffer is standing advice which is a material consideration. What needs to be considered however is what that guidance is aiming to achieve and how that applies to a particular site. In this case the site was previously developed, with hardstanding up to the site boundary with the ancient woodland and as such the root protection zone that would apply to a greenfield site is not applicable, and there are no woodland soils with associated fungi etc in this area. The proposals would largely utilize this space for garden/landscape areas, with some intrusion from an access road and limited parking utilizing green gap (permeable) paving towards the northern boundary. The Council's Ecologist and Tree Officer have considered the developments impact on the ancient woodland and have raised no concerns.

The applicant has submitted a supplementary statement re-enforcing these comments, and highlighting that there will be no tree losses in the Ancient Woodland, and that this woodland has been brought under active management since the original approval at Alderley Park in 2016, and how they feel a buffer will now be established between the developed part of the site and the Ancient Woodland.

Need for the use – The applicant was keen to emphasise that they feel more weight should be applied for the need for the proposed type of (integrated care) accommodation:

- *extra care housing in the form of an integrated retirement community is not “very specialist” it is just one form of older persons housing in the broad spectrum of different types;*
- *NPPG describes the need for older persons housing, including extra care, as “critical”;*
- *NPPF now makes it incumbent upon LPAs to ensure that planning policies are robust and effective enough to meet the diverse needs which inherently arise from an older, more vulnerable demographic;*
- *a demonstrable and acute need for extra care housing exists (in Cheshire East, and specifically in this local catchment area) and there is an acknowledged lack of current and forecast supply to meet that need; and*
- *it is entirely proper for a proposal which contributes to meeting such a need to be accorded, as a minimum, significant weight in the planning balance when any assessment is carried out.*

(Quoting from a recent appeal decision this year) The Inspectors’ approach demonstrates that need, provision of affordable housing, a lack of specific sites allocated for older persons housing and release of general market housing are all material considerations deserving of significant weight and should be accorded such in the planning balance assessment.

Parking – The officer’s report suggests that a Parking Management Plan may be appropriate, to be controlled by condition, however the applicant was keen to point out that a Valet Parking Scheme is already proposed as part of the s106. This provides control for the LPA to approve the parking scheme and for the operation of this to be kept under review. In circumstances where any changes are needed after a period of operation, this can be done. They highlight that they have a legal ability to lease more parking spaces in the Multi Storey Car Park from Bruntwood,(Alderley Park) if they need to.

As the applicant has suggested this approach it is agreed that this would be a stronger control than a condition, and as such it is recommended that this should be added to the S106 requirements.

Secondary Access – The applicant was keen to make it clear that following construction that this access then becomes the Service Access for the scheme and is essential to separate service and delivery vehicles from cars/pedestrian/cycle users of the principal residents/visitors access, from a safety perspective.

CONCLUSION:

There are no recommended changes to the recommendation or conditions, however as set out above an additional Section 106 requirement should be added as follows:

Section 106	Amount	Trigger
Valet Parking Scheme	To be agreed by the LPA	Prior to the commencement of development