

Application No: 09/2553M

Location: HONFORD COURT, SOUTH ACRE DRIVE, HANDFORTH, WILMSLOW, CHESHIRE

Proposal: DEMOLITION OF EXISTING HONFORD COURT BUILDING, DETACHING FROM EXISTING HONFORD HALL BLOCK, SMALL EXTENSION TO HONFORD HALL BLOCK TO RATIONALISE WC FACILITIES AND M & E PLANT. CONSTRUCTION OF 36NO. 2 BED APARTMENTS (BLOCK OF 12 AND BLOCK OF 24) INCLUDING ASSOCIATED PARKING AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

For CHESHIRE PEAKS & PLAINS HOUSING TRUST

Registered 21-Aug-2009

Policy Item No

Grid Reference 385782 383153

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions and a section 106 agreement

MAIN ISSUES

Impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, housing policy, nature conservation, the adjacent railway line and existing trees.

Date Report Prepared:

26th October 2009

REASON FOR REPORT

The development would result in the erection of 36 dwellings.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises a three-storey block of 35no. sheltered housing units that is currently vacant, and part of the adjoining Honford Hall (a community centre facility). Both are owned by Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Association. The application site is bounded to the east by Handforth Railway Station and railway line, to the west by Cypress House (a care home facility) and a hotel and associated car parking, and to the north by two-storey dwellinghouses.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Full planning permission is sought to demolish the existing three-storey block of sheltered housing units and part of the community centre building; the erection of 36no. two-bedroom apartments located in two separate blocks (one comprising 12 apartments and the other comprising 24 apartments); the erection of a small extension to the rear of the community centre building; and associated parking and infrastructure.

RELEVANT HISTORY

79753P Extensions & new car park to residential care home
Approved 20/01/95

POLICIES

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1	Spatial Principles
DP4	Making the Best Use of Existing Resources and Infrastructure
L4	Regional Housing Provision
EM1(B)	Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets – Natural Environment
EM1(D)	Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets – Trees, Woodlands and Forests
EM18	Decentralised Energy Supply

Local Plan Policy

BE1	Design Guidance
DC1	New Build
DC3	Amenity
DC6	Circulation and Access
DC9	Tree Protection
DC38	Space, Light and Privacy
H1	Phasing Policy
H2	Environmental Quality in Housing Developments
H13	Protecting Residential Areas

Other Material Considerations

PPS3	Housing
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CONSIDERATIONS (External to Planning)

Highways: No objection subject to conditions and a s106 agreement

Environmental Health: No objection subject to conditions and a note in respect of land contamination.

Housing: No objection.

Leisure: Comments are awaited.

Estates: Comments are awaited.

Network Rail: No objection subject to conditions/informatives

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of representation was received that raised a concern regarding insufficient parking and the potential danger to children from the adjacent railway line. All other matters raised were not material planning considerations.

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A PPS3 Housing Self-Assessment Checklist, a Phase I & Phase II GeoEnvironmental Assessment, a Design & Access Statement, a Transport Statement, a Tree Survey, a Bat Survey, and an Acoustic Consultancy Report were submitted as part of the planning application. Full copies of these are available to view on the application file.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

The principle issues surrounding the determination of this application are the impact of the proposed development on residential amenity, the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the existing trees, any impact on protected species or the adjacent railway, and any highway issues regarding access and parking.

Policy

Principle of Development

The application site is located within a predominantly residential area. The principle of new dwellings in this location is therefore considered to be acceptable.

PPS3: Housing

The Council produced new guidance in respect of housing developments titled "PPS3 Housing and Saved Policies Advice Note". The Advice Note is based on a list of five criteria outlined in PPS3 which Planning Authorities should have regard to when determining planning applications for new housing. In summary, the Advice Note states that planning applications for new housing should meet the following criteria:

1. Ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in the area and does not undermine wider policy objectives (*does the application accord with the housing objectives of the Borough and wider policy objectives e.g. affordable housing and urban regeneration*).
2. Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people (*does the application meet the housing needs of the area and/or provide affordable housing*).
3. The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability (*is the site in a suitable and sustainable location, is it previously developed land, what constraints exist*).
4. Using land effectively and efficiently (*is the density at least 30 dwellings per hectare*).

5. Achieving high quality housing (*is the site accessible to public transport and services, is the development well laid out, safe, accessible and user friendly, is there adequate open space and/or access to recreational open space, does the design complement/improve the character of the area, is the car parking well designed and integrated, does the development enhance biodiversity*).

A PPS3 Housing Self-Assessment Checklist was submitted with the planning application to address the criteria outlined in the Advice Note. The site is considered to be in a suitable and sustainable location and exceeds the Government's minimum housing density. It is a site within a predominantly residential area, which is within walking distance of public transport links, Handforth district centre and to services. The scheme would provide high quality housing.

The proposed development would provide 36no. two bed apartments for rent. The Affordable Housing Officer states that social stock comprises 12% of housing in the Borough, well below the national level of 19.3%. The availability of rented stock through re-lets is low relative to the expectation that existing stock flows should address 90% of all need. The largest proportion of additional affordable units is required as rented properties, both for new forming households and existing families. The proposal is for the site to be 100% social rented housing. This will meet a much needed demand for rented accommodation in this area.

For these reasons it is considered that the proposal broadly complies with the five listed criteria.

Design

The proposed development would comprise the demolition of the existing three-storey apartment block and part of the community centre, and the erection of two blocks of social rented housing and an extension to the existing community centre.

Block A would comprise 24 apartments that would largely be sited on the footprint of the existing three-storey block of apartments and Block B would comprise 12 apartments and would be sited to the south of the existing apartment block. Both buildings would comprise three storeys with an overall height of 10 metres compared to the existing height of the building which is 11.5 metres. Both blocks would be of a modern contemporary design that would be constructed of brick with render panels and the roof would comprise a shallow pitch butterfly.

The apartments have been designed in two smaller blocks rather than one large block in order to reduce the scale and bulk of the overall buildings and for them to be more in keeping with the surrounding area. The surrounding buildings comprise a mix of designs, heights and materials and therefore the modern contemporary design is not considered to be detrimental to the surrounding area. The existing apartment block is currently raised above the level of the adjacent car park by approximately 1.8 metres however it is

proposed to lower the existing ground level so that level access can be gained from the car park which would subsequently reduce the height of the buildings when viewed from the surrounding area.

The existing apartment block is attached to the adjacent community centre by a single storey link that is to be demolished. The existing community centre building would be reconfigured and a single storey extension would be attached to the rear southern elevation to accommodate the toilet facilities that would be lost.

For the reasons outlined above it is considered that the proposed development is considered acceptable in design terms and would not have a detrimental affect on the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

Amenity

A residential care home building is sited to the west of the application site and two-storey terrace properties are located to the north. Block A would be sited further away from the neighbouring care home than the existing building, and the proposed building would be sited over 50 metres from the dwellinghouses to the north and would be screened by the existing community centre building. Block B would have no impact on neighbouring amenity as the closest buildings comprise a hotel and an office. No objection is therefore raised on amenity grounds.

Highways

The Highway Engineer raises no highway objection to this application.

The development is changing from the existing bedsit facility to apartments. There are a total of 42 parking spaces proposed which is shown split into 3 disabled and 39 standard spaces. Upon reviewing the highway adoption limit records the Highway Engineer noted that two of the proposed parking spaces on the plan are formed on what is adopted highway. This is not acceptable from a highway perspective and these spaces have to be removed. This will reduce the parking level of standard bays from 39 to 37 which reflect a parking provision ratio of 1.02 spaces per dwelling not 1.25 as indicated in the Design & Access Statement.

Whilst the Highway Engineer notes the comment at Section 3 of the Design & Access Statement that parking provision is more than sufficient based on known levels of parking on similar tenure schemes, there is no supporting information submitted with the application.

The second aspect for which amended plans are required refers to the existing turning head facility. It would appear that the proposed plan is removing a section of the existing turning head facility and encroaching into it to provide an increased area for parking and a footway. The turning head must remain in its current parameters and must not be adjusted in order to

facilitate manoeuvring for deliveries and refuse collection. This may impact on the proposed layout and will need to be addressed by the applicant.

The Highway Engineer has indicated that the required changes can be dealt with by way of a condition and do not need to be submitted prior to determination.

Residential schemes can still attract higher levels of vehicle ownership and in view of the limited parking provision a financial contribution of £3,000 is required for a Traffic Regulation Order to control potential parking overspill on South Acre Drive. This will need to be secured by way of a section 106 agreement. The site will be assessed post occupation and should this situation arise then it can be addressed. If the funding is not used it will be returned to the applicant and this will be contained within the wording of the agreement. The provision of the Traffic Regulation Order, if required, will promote the aims of sustainable travel as referred to in the Transport Statement supporting this application.

Forestry

The proposed arboricultural information supporting this application is somewhat basic in terms of the level of detail necessary to determine the full effects of the proposed development. The Tree Survey submitted is just a condition/amenity assessment and does not provide any information as to the impact of the proposed development on existing trees.

The only specific concerns raised by the Forestry Officer are in respect of the proposed level changes and the potential impact upon the trees proposed for retention on the plans and others not indicated in this submission. Further information has therefore been requested and this is currently awaited.

Landscaping

The soft landscape proposals are generally acceptable to the Landscape Officer subject to the addition of a shrub bed along the base of the proposed retaining wall to soften the structure. If the application is approved the Landscape Officer recommends that landscape and boundary conditions are imposed (subject to this amendment) and the submission of additional information prior to the commencement of development in respect of existing and proposed levels, the proposed crib wall, the fence along the top of the wall, proposed boundary treatments particularly along the railway to the side and rear of block, bin store enclosures, hard surfacing materials and future landscape maintenance. This has been forwarded to the agent and is currently awaited. No objection is therefore raised from a landscape perspective.

Ecology

The ecologist who undertook the survey is known to the Nature Conservation Officer and is suitably qualified and experienced to undertake work of this kind. Whilst the Bat Survey was undertaken during the winter, which meant no emergence survey could be undertaken, the Nature Conservation Officer is satisfied that considering the location of the building, the surrounding land use

and the construction type of the lofts that bats are not reasonably likely to be present or affected by the proposed development. In order to ensure that the building retains some potential for bats a condition is recommended for the incorporation of features into the scheme for use by roosting bats.

Environmental Issues

Noise

This Department would raise concern relating to the sensitivity of the site in terms of the proposal for residential apartments in close proximity to the railway line and the associated impact of noise to the future residents of the apartments. In formulating her comments, the Environmental Health Officer has considered the Environmental Noise Impact Assessment - Report 1466/ENIA, which has been produced by Acoustic Design Technology and has been submitted as part of the application.

The report is useful in providing sound level measurements taken at the site and in the assessment of the environmental noise impact at the proposed apartments. This Department considers that the recommendations made in that report in terms of the installation of standard thermal double glazing and trickle ventilation is satisfactory in terms of noise from the Manchester Road (road traffic noise). Consequently, the main concerns the Environmental Health Officer raises relates to those apartments who face and are in close proximity to the railway line.

The railway line is a main route line and therefore a busy track in terms of rail traffic. There are likely to be variations in terms of the number of trains per day and the Environmental Health Officer highlights the fact that the consultant's noise assessment was taken over a limited period of time during the week. Also, whilst in line with the measurement format as detailed in Planning Process Guidance Note 24, I would highlight the fact that dB LAeq sound level measurements are an 'averaged out over a stated period of time' figure.

The 'actual' noise from the passing of trains at the application site has been noted as ranging from between approximately 74 dB(A)SPL and 87 dB(A)SPL which are significantly high noise levels – albeit, short lived in terms of the period of the passing of the train. However, such a high noise level, character and type of noise will undoubtedly be intrusive and disturbing within the proposed apartments – particularly those apartments which face towards the railway line.

It is further recognised that significant operational changes could occur in the future in terms of rail traffic on that line. As a consequence of all these points, it is the opinion of this Department that it would be prudent to install high performance acoustic windows to the habitable rooms of all apartments in both blocks A and B on the railway façade of the development. It is therefore recommended that this is restricted by condition.

As guidance, the minimum standard which this Department would accept is windows that achieve a sound reduction of not less than 36 Rm (dB)/40 Rw

(dB). By way of example, this can be achieved by installing windows of 10mm float glass – 12 mm air space – 6.4 mm laminate glass. However, the Environmental Health Officer would advise that other window designs/specifications would be accepted provided that the aforementioned degree of sound reduction is achieved.

Contamination

As the application is for a sensitive end use and therefore could be affected by any contamination present, it is requested that a standard note be attached to the application.

Other Considerations

Renewable Energy

Policy EM18 of the Regional Spatial Strategy relates to residential developments comprising 10 or more units and states that at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements should come from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, unless it can be demonstrated (having regard to the type of development involved and its design) that it would not be feasible or viable. It is considered that this requirement can be dealt with by condition and that the caveat should be also be included.

HEADS OF TERMS

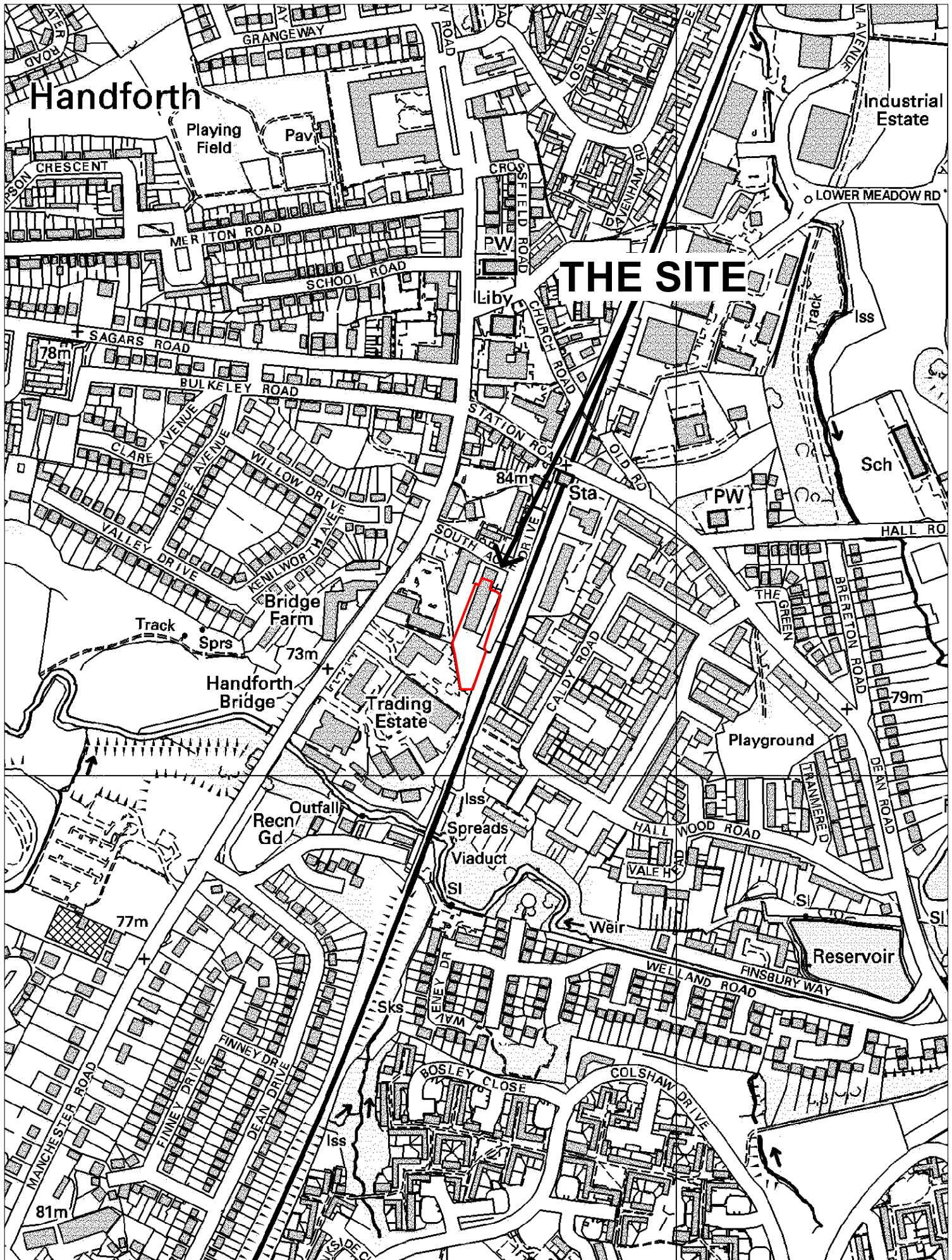
The applicant should enter into a section 106 agreement for a Traffic Regulation Order and to secure the development as affordable housing.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

Recommend approval subject to the signing of a section 106 agreement

SUBJECT TO:

Further information being received in respect of the existing trees on site and outstanding consultee responses being received.



09/2553M - HONFORD COURT, SOUTH ACRE DRIVE, HANDFORTH, WILMSLOW

N.G.R. - 385,780 - 383,160

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Application for **Full Planning**

RECOMMENDATION : Approve subject to following conditions

1. A03FP - Commencement of development (3 years)
2. A02EX - Submission of samples of building materials
3. A02HA - Construction of access
4. A02HP - Provision of car parking (scheme to be submitted)
5. A04HP - Provision of cycle parking
6. A26HA - Prevention of surface water flowing onto highways
7. A07HA - No gates - new access
8. A30HA - Protection of highway from mud and debris
9. A01LS - Landscaping - submission of details
- 10.A04LS - Landscaping (implementation)
- 11.A12LS - Landscaping to include details of boundary treatment
- 12.A10LS - Additional landscaping details required
- 13.A01AP - Development in accord with approved plans
- 14.Revised Plan showing existing turning head and deletes two parking bays
- 15.Acoustic Windows
- 16.Features for Bats
- 17.Renewable Energy Provision
- 18.Vibro-Compaction Machinery
- 19.Excavations/Earthworks Adjacent to Railway