

Planning Reference No:	10/1551N
Application Address:	Audlem Country Home, School Lane, Audlem
Proposal:	Extension in Time Limit for P05/0007 Relating to Extensions and Alterations to Existing Care Home to Provide Self Contained Accommodation for the Elderly.
Applicant:	Keenrick Nursing Homes
Application Type:	Extension in time for outline permission
Grid Reference:	366090 343572
Ward:	Cholmondeley
Earliest Determination Date:	7 th July 2010
Expiry Dated:	26 th July 2010
Date of Officer's Site Visit:	8 th July 2010
Date Report Prepared:	8 th July 2010
Constraints:	Wind Turbine consultation area

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Amenity
- Impact of the extensions on the character and appearance of the Listed Building, the Conservation Area and the locality
- Highway matters
- Affordable housing

1. REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is to be determined by the Southern Committee because planning permission is sought for 13 new-build dwelling units and the conversion of an existing building to an additional 9 units.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The site is an area of sloping grass / garden land within the curtilage of Audlem Nursing Home which fronts Vicarage Lane. The site is bounded on the southern and western sides by timber post and rail and trellis fencing with boundary planting in the form of established hedging and trees. Breeze House, part of the existing accommodation, is located to the east and the existing home to the north. Audlem Nursing Home is based around the original Audlem Grammar School which has itself had many extensions at different times in its history. The land which is the subject of these extensions was at one time covered in buildings. The site is clearly seen from the public footpaths to the south but trees and hedges around the site screen views into the site for much of the summer when seen from Vicarage Lane, when close to the site.

The nursing home is a Grade II* listed building constructed in brick with a slate roof, the earlier part having been built in 1655 with the Headmaster's House added in 1770. Later nineteenth and twentieth century additions are also present. The modern extension to the main building is single storey and Breeze House, adjacent to the site entrance, is one and a half storey. The site is also within the Audlem Conservation Area and within the settlement boundary for Audlem.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This is an application for an extension in time to the planning permission granted under reference P05/0007. In considering the application the Authority should consider whether there have been any material changes in circumstance since the original permission was issued, which would justify a different decision on the application.

The 2005 planning permission granted consent for one and a half and two storey extensions with one area, where the lift would be accommodated, rising to three storeys. The development seeks planning permission for a total of 22 new units some of which would be accommodated in the single storey extension on the west of the nursing home. However the application is also considered to be for a change of use from a C2 nursing home to a sui-generis use which would include fully nursed care and independent living units and also the facility for people living independently to receive some degree of care and nursing when required. In total the existing buildings and new accommodation would be fully refurbished to form accommodation for 17 residents with full care nursing who would be housed in the original nursing home, 3 residents in Breeze House and 28 residents in new or converted apartments. This would include 9 units created from the existing single storey accommodation and 13 in new build apartments. The extended nursing home would provide accommodation for a maximum of 48 residents.

It is anticipated that a maximum of 10 staff would be present at any one time and 24 hour care would be provided. There would be no resident warden or manager. A total of 20 car parking spaces would be provided to serve the development as a whole. This would provide an increase of 8 new spaces for the new development.

The development would be divided into small units, broken by gables with some elements set forward of others. The design includes dormer windows, balconies, bays and a galleried walkway at first floor level on the rear. This would overlook a garden area surrounded on three sides by built development. A lounge extension is also proposed to the existing single storey accommodation.

4. RELEVANT HISTORY

P05/0007 Extensions and Alterations to existing care home to provide self contained accommodation for the elderly. Approved 3rd May 2005

P05/0710 LBC for extensions and alteration to existing care home for self contained accommodation for the elderly. Approved 9th September 2005

P01/0543 Extension and detached building to provide additional accommodation. Approved 17th July 2001.

P01/0533 LBC for extension and detached building to provide additional accommodation. Approved 3rd August 2001

P98/0065 LBC for extensions to provide staff room, day room and three bedrooms. Approved 9th July 1998.

P98/0064 Extensions to provide staff room, day room and three bedrooms. Approved 10th June 1998.

P97/0982 LBC for single storey extension. Withdrawn.

7/15784 LBC for single storey extension. Approved 14th October 1988.

7/15783 Single storey extension. Approved 4th August 1988.

7/15246 Extension to nursing home. Refused 9th June 1988.

7/15247 LBC for a 22 bedroom extension to nursing home. Refused 9th June 1988

7/12212 LBC for 2 bed extension to nursing home. Approved 1st August 1985.

7/12212 Two bed extension to nursing home. Approved 1st August 1985

7/11196 Conversion to a 24 bed residential home for elderly. Approved 19th July 1984.

7/11197 Conversion to a 24 bed residential home for elderly. Approved 13th August 1984.

5. POLICIES

The development plan for this area is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

Local Plan Policy

BE.1 (Amenity)

BE.2 (Design)

BE.3 (Access and parking)

BE.4 (Drainage Utilities and Resources)

BE.7 (Conservation Areas)

BE.9 (Listed Buildings: Alterations and Extensions)

BE.16 (Development and Archaeology)

RES. 4 (Housing in Villages with Settlement Boundaries)

RES.7 (Affordable Housing within Settlement Boundaries)

TRAN.9 and Appendix 8.1 (Car Parking)

Other Material Considerations

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment.

PPG13: Transport

6. CONSULTATIONS

Strategic Highways Manager: No highway objections.

English Heritage: The application should be determined in accordance with local and national policy guidance and in consultation with the local conservation officer.

Conservation Officer: Given that this is an application for an extension in time the proposal raises no new issues. Conditions of the original permission should be repeated.

Archaeology: PPS:5 Planning for the Historic Environment has replaced PPG16 and the wording for the reason for the archaeological condition can be revised to accommodate the wording of the up to date policy.

Audlem and District Amenity Society: Re-iterate comments from 2005 namely:-

- Regret the loss of the green space which is an amenity for existing residents;
- Access will be a big problem during construction;
- Additional visitors' cars will add to congestion in the lane.

Ancient Monuments Society: No response at the time of writing this report.

Georgian Society: No response at the time of writing this report.

Head of Housing Strategy and Development: The Housing Needs Survey carried out in the Crewe and Nantwich Borough in 2005 shows there is a housing need in Audlem, including a need for new affordable elderly persons' accommodation. Also, the survey carried out by the Rural Housing Enabler, Bob Vass, in 2007 confirms the need for affordable housing in Audlem.

United Utilities: No objection subject to the site being drained on a separate system if possible, water meters to be provided at the applicant's expense.

Environment Agency: No response at the time of writing this report.

7. AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL

Do not propose to make a representation.

8. OTHER REPRESENTATIONS:

One letter from a resident in Vicarage Lane, Audlem.

The representation notes that the sewerage system may be barely adequate for the existing complex.

9. APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

A Design and Access Statement was submitted with the original application and is resubmitted with this application.

Design and Access Statement (R W Woodward dated 2005)

The Design and Access Statement can be summarised as follows:-

- The 1989 extension now falls short of the standards required for care homes. All bedrooms must have a minimum of 12 sq m in area and have en-suite facilities. To accommodate this in the existing buildings would reduce the number of bedrooms from 39 to 26. However, the home cannot operate with the related reduction in income. It is therefore essential to add facilities to provide additional income to make the business viable;
- The alternative would be closure and loss of jobs with upheaval of the present residents, many of whom are frail;
- It has therefore been decided to improve the standards and adopt the new "care

homes" approach;

- Government advice indicates that 60 bedrooms are generally required for units to be viable. However it is considered that by offering a variety of styles of accommodation in an "assisted care" situation, viability can be achieved with 45 units;
- Cottage-style semi-independent living units are proposed which will create a "village feel", providing close-knit accommodation but retaining an element of watching at a discreet distance for those who may need this;
- The gables, dormers, varied ridge heights, narrow spaces, and irregular building forms are deliberately intended to suggest a village character;
- The Headmaster's House hides a large proportion of the original school building right up to roof level and Victorian additions have largely obscured the views of the north west elevation up to first floor level. Twentieth century additions hide the building even more;
- When the building was acquired by the owners many unattractive modern school buildings were removed and the roof rebuilt. The present lawns resulted from the demolition of the surplus buildings;
- Previous consent prior to acquisition by the present owner allowed for building over the whole site and other extensions have been permitted for the nursing home, some of which have not yet been implemented;
- The site has evolved organically throughout its history and many additions were added to the school but it is considered that of all the extensions which have been added over time the Headmaster's House was the most damaging;
- The property is located to the south east of Audlem Church conveniently close to the shops and village services for elderly persons;
- Many local residents are not aware of the home and this is considered to be due to the manner in which the existing buildings cluster around the 1655 school building so that only fleeting glimpses of it are seen;
- The exception to this is the view from public footpaths to the south east. This view will not be obscured by the proposed extensions;
- Breeze House on the southern site frontage to Vicarage Lane was constructed to a design using materials approved by the local planning authority and this will form the pattern for the proposed extension;
- In order to mitigate the effects of the new development on the original building when approaching from the south west and Vicarage Lane, it is proposed to provide an archway at the foot of a tower on the south western side of the development. A second view will be encountered between the proposed development and Breeze House. A further view will be afforded up the existing drive. This will create a series of snapshots of the older buildings rather than the gradual emergence of views which exist at present. However, there will be no view of the new development, say from the Stafford Street or Audlem Church, because the proposed development is of much lower height than the original buildings.

10. OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site is located within the settlement boundary for Audlem in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan. The nursing home on the site is a Grade II* Listed Building. As such, Policy BE.9 of the Replacement Local Plan applies. However, the site is in the Conservation Area and Policy BE.7 also applies. There are no policies specific to residential institutions in the Replacement Local Plan but Policy RES.4 allows for new residential development in Audlem. General policies

BE.1-BE.4 are applicable to all new development. Policy TRAN.9 relates to parking requirements.

In summary, policies seek to ensure that extensions and alterations respect the scale, materials, colour, detailing and features of the listed building concerned and the conservation area, and do not detract from the character, appearance and setting, especially with regard to gardens, landscaping and impact on the street scene.

The original application did not specifically seek consent for a change of use. However, it was considered that the new units to be built and the alterations to change existing bedroom accommodation to small dwelling units with bedroom, lounge/kitchen and bathroom facilities would change the nature of the use from a C2 residential institution to a sui-generis use, including both nursing home accommodation and accommodation which may be occupied by persons wishing to live independently or making some use of facilities offered. In support of this view, it is noted that 17 residents would be accommodated in the nursing unit, with 28 residents in 22 units which would offer facilities for independent living.

PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment has replaced the former PPG15. However the principles of the need to preserve and enhance both the conservation area and the setting of the listed building are still maintained and therefore this does not present a reason to refuse the application.

The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Audlem. There are, therefore, no objections in principle to the extensions to the nursing home and the inclusion of new units for independent living either on policy grounds or the fact that the development would result in a change of use.

Amenity

There are no dwellings so close to the proposed extensions as to be adversely affected by the new units themselves. Whilst Rose Cottage is close to the site access, the amount of traffic which would be generated by the alterations, once constructed, is not considered to be sufficient to justify refusal of the application on the grounds of detriment to living conditions at that dwelling. Breeze House separates Rose Cottage from the proposed extensions.

Impact on the character and appearance of the Listed Building, the Conservation Area and the locality

The design of the building is based on that of Breeze House which was constructed in the 1990s. The bulk and mass of the building would be reduced by stepping the building height down in line with the fall of the land, setting some elements back and others forward, the use of gables, balconies and dormer windows. The proposed building would be located fairly well forward to reflect the general pattern of development in the area and the small size of built elements would reflect the smaller buildings in the conservation area. The proposed materials for external finishes are brick and tile which are appropriate for this listed building in the conservation area.

At the officer site inspection it was noted the hedgerow and trees around the site boundary have matured since the original application was submitted in 2005. The views of the original listed building, the grammar school, were less visible through the

hedging in summer as a result. Also one tree close to the north side of Breeze House, within the grounds of the nursing home, has matured limiting views of the grammar school building from the public rights of way in the fields to the south. It is likely therefore that the boundary vegetation would need to be removed to allow construction of the units. This would include two established trees. The original application form submitted in 2005 noted that trees and planting along the site boundary would be removed and the area replanted. There are therefore no objections to this work.

The original application was subject to amendments particularly to allow enhanced views of the original school building and to remove elements which detracted from the setting of the listed building and appearance of the conservation area. It is considered that the design which was accepted in 2005 is still acceptable in this location and will preserve the character and appearance of the listed building and the conservation area.

Highway Matters

The site is within the settlement boundary of Audlem and close to the centre of the village within easy walking distance of the shops for the more mobile residents. In 2005 the Highway Authority raised no concerns about access to the site but had concerns about the level of parking. Additional information was submitted at that time and it was accepted that the proposed layout with 20 car parking spaces was adequate to serve the needs of the staff, residents and visitors. Eight of the independent units would be less than 30 sq m in total floor area and another three units would vary in size between 30 – 40 sq m in area. Only six of the twenty two units are proposed as two bedroom accommodation. With this number of very small units, it was considered that the level of parking was adequate, particularly since the home operates a minibus and the site is very close to the shops in the village. It is not considered that there have been any changes in circumstances which would warrant a different opinion now.

Affordable Housing

The 2005 application was submitted, prior to the formal adoption of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011, which took place before the determination of the application. The former Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council did not seek any affordable housing provision for this institution which is currently a nursing home but seeking to offer a range of living accommodation through these extensions. More recently the Council has required a number of extra care facilities/ homes to provide some affordable housing when extending in this manner or providing a whole new development. Further, PPS3 which came into force in November 2006 and was to be used for the determination of planning applications from 1st April 2007 now includes extensive requirements to ensure that the planning system delivers “a mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas both urban and rural.” (Para10). Para 68 notes that PPS3 may supersede planning policies in existence at that time and advises Local Planning Authorities to ensure that developments “achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular families and older people.”

The site is located close the village centre where there is a range of local shops. The village has a bus service and the units offered in this application would meet a need for the elderly, a group of people for which PPS 3 specifically refers.

The Head of Housing notes that the 2005 Housing Needs Survey identified a need for elderly persons' accommodation in Audlem and the need for affordable dwellings was further shown in the local survey in 2007. However there are concerns that those surveys are now quite old. The current need for affordable dwelling units for the elderly in Audlem will be known when the Strategic Housing Market Assessment is published.

Paragraph 30 of PPS3 advises in relation to the delivery of affordable housing for rural areas "This requires planning at local (and regional) level adopting a positive and pro-active approach which is informed by evidence with clear targets for the delivery of rural affordable housing."

The grant of planning permission for this development for a further three years will allow the delivery of dwellings for use by the elderly whether with or without care, which is in accordance with the requirements of PPS3. The application makes no reference to the provision of affordable units or the viability of the development to allow delivery of such units or a commuted payment as a contribution to affordable housing provision. However this is an application for an extension in time of an existing planning permission. At this point in time, with the absence of up to date information to demonstrate the need for elderly persons affordable dwellings (ie the Strategic Housing Market Assessment) it is considered that it would be difficult to justify refusal of the application.

11. OTHER MATTERS

One representation raises concerns about the existing sewerage system to cope with the current effluent. However United Utilities have raised no objections and in the absence of such an objection it would be difficult to substantiate any such reason for refusal.

The original permission was granted for elderly persons' accommodation but conditions did not define elderly. It is recommended that the condition limiting the occupation of the independent units to persons in need of close care or living more independently should also specify that persons should be aged 60 years and over, or in the case of the occupation of 2-person units, at least one of the occupants should be aged 60 years and over. Since the existing home is for nursing care the age restrictions should not apply to the nursing accommodation.

12. CONCLUSIONS

The development will allow the delivery of specialist accommodation offering care to those in need together with additional dwelling units for persons wishing to live independently but who may require care in future years. The development is considered to be of an appropriate design, to preserve the

character and appearance of the Grade II* Listed Building and the Audlem Conservation Area. The development includes adequate parking provision and would not adversely impact on existing residential amenities at nearby dwellings. There are no material circumstances which would justify refusal of this application at this point in time.

13. RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE with conditions

- 1. Commence development within 3 years.**
- 2. Development in accordance with approved plans.**
- 3. Samples of materials to be submitted, approved and used in the construction of the building.**
- 4. Use of the premises as a nursing home together with self contained units for persons needing close care and other persons who may wish to live more independently where nursing care may be available if required and for no other purpose whatsoever. Occupants of the independent living units including close care units should be aged 60 years or more, or in the case of 2 bed units at least one of the occupants should be aged 60 years or more.**
- 4. Details of boundary treatment to be submitted, approved and implemented**
- 6. Details of appearance of ramps, guides, rails and finishes to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 7. Details of appearance of balconies and galleries to be submitted, approved and implemented**
- 8. Details of surfacing materials to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 9. Landscaping scheme together with any trees/hedges to be retained and measures for their protection to be submitted and approved.**
- 10. Implementation and maintenance of landscaping and tree protection measures.**
- 11. Archway between the reception area/ lift and unit 12 shall not be enclosed without the prior submission and approval of a separate planning application.**
- 12. Prior to first use of the development, provision of car park as per site layout and retention.**
- 13. Programme of archaeological work to be submitted, approved and implemented.**
- 14. Access to the site only via School Lane between Roseleigh and The Smithy and sign to be provided at entrance to the site to confirm this in accordance with details to be submitted and approved.**

