

Application No: 11/1322M

Location: HOPE GREEN RESIDENTIAL HOME, LONDON ROAD, ADLINGTON, CHESHIRE, SK10 4NQ

Proposal: Extension of Existing Care Home with Associated Landscaping and Car Parking

Applicant: Maria Mallaband Care Group Ltd

Expiry Date: 24-May-2011

Date Report Prepared: 29th July 2011

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to conditions

MAIN ISSUES

- Departure from Green Belt Policy and are there very special circumstances which justify the proposal as an exception to the presumption against inappropriate development
- Need for specialist accommodation
- Impact on trees and landscape of the site
- Impact on residential amenity
- Highways

REASON FOR REPORT

This proposal is a Departure from the Development Plan. The proposal therefore requires determination by the Northern Planning Committee under the terms of the Council's constitution.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The appeal site lies within the grounds of the Hope Green Residential Care Home, located to the edge of Poynton village. The Home caters for the Elderly and forms part of a Older persons Care Complex operated by a Specialist Provider in this field, Maria Mallaband Care Homes. There are two Care Homes within the complex, the application premises itself (Hope Green) and a further substantial building to the south of the application premises, known as Carmel Lodge. Carmel Lodge comprises 36 licenced, en-suite, bed spaces, all of which are registered for Dementia care. The two homes operate under separate leases. Hope Green comprises 39 ensuite bed spaces for general older persons care.

The complex shares a central car park and access via London Road. The complex is set within extensive landscaped grounds and the site frontage contains an extensive belt of broadleaf and coniferous trees.

To the rear of the site lies the railway line. To the north of the proposed extension is a small residential housing estate of 5 dwellings, accessed via a shared drive. On the opposite side of London Road lies Adlington Industrial Estate.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal would form a two storey extension of circa 481 sq m gross internal floorspace to the Hope Green nursing home to comprise 11 additional bedrooms. The application is put forward on the basis that the 11 additional en-suite bedrooms as proposed would be for the use of dementia patients. Overall, the premises will comprise circa 1876 sq m internal floorspace.

Both homes are managed and staffed under the same management regime, they would however appear to operate under separate leases. The extension will be sited to the rear of the site and extend towards the dwelling at no 5 Hope Green Way. The development area is currently overgrowth and comprises the only underdeveloped part of this complex of buildings

RELEVANT HISTORY

The site has an extensive planning history, the most relevant being: -

04/2344P – Erection of Nursing Home for the Elderley (amendments to 04/0421P) approved December 2004 following completion of Legal Agreement

04/0421P - .Erection of 32 bed nursing home for the elderly (outline application) approved August 2004 following completion of Legal Agreement

03/2481P – Erection of 42 bed residential care home for the elderly (Outline) – refused November 2003. Appeal lodged and subsequently withdrawn.

01/257P – erection of 10 post care units (outline) – refused April 2001. Appeal dismissed September 2001.

98/1889P – Erection of one dwelling (outline) – refused 18.11.98- Appeal dismissed 11.08.99

Planning applications for extensions and alterations to the residential care home. The following application is relevant to the application site:-

98/0612P - Alterations to ground levels and access and landscaping works – approved June 1998.

POLICIES

Regional Spatial Strategy

DP1 (Spatial Principles)

DP2 (Promote Sustainable Communities)

DP4 (Make the Best Use of Existing Resources & Infrastructure)

DP5 (Manage Travel Demand, Reduce the Need to Travel & Increase Accessibility)

DP7 (Promote Environmental Quality)

DP9 (Reduce Emissions and Adapt to Climate Change)

RT2 (Managing Travel Demand)
L1 (Community Provision)
EM1 (Integrated Enhancement and Protection of the Region's Environmental Assets)
RDF4 (Green Belt)

Local Plan Policy

BE1 (Design Guidance)
GC1 (New Development in the Green Belt)
GC10 (Extensions to Residential Institutions in the Countryside)
T2 (Transport)
DC1 (Design New Build)
DC3 (Amenity)
DC6 (Circulation and Access)
DC8 (Landscaping)
DC9 (Tree Protection)
DC38 (Guidelines for space, light and privacy for housing development)
DC57 Residential Institutions;
T3 Pedestrians;
T4 Access for people with restricted mobility;
T5 Provision for Cyclists.

Of the remaining saved Structure Plan policies, only policy T7: Parking, is of relevance.

Other Material Considerations

National planning guidance in the form of PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, PPG2 Green Belts; PPS4 Sustainable Economic Growth; PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, PPG13 Transport

Circulars of most relevance include: ODPM 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation; ODPM 05/2005 Planning Obligations; and 11/95 The use of Conditions in Planning Permissions.

Relevant legislation also includes the EC Habitats Directive, the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994.

Ministerial Statement March 2011 – Planning for Growth

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Strategic Highways Manager: No highway objections, subject to conditions

Environmental Health: No objections, subject to conditions

Environment Agency: No objection, subject to conditions.

Network Rail : No objection subject to Network Rail assets not be affected

VIEWS OF THE PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL

Adlington Parish Council: No objection

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

None received

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:

- Supporting Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Arboricultural Issues Report
- Elderly Persons accommodation needs report
- Ecological Scoping
- Flood Risk Assessment

All of these documents are available in full on the planning file, and on the Council's website.

Elderly Care Need Assessment

- The proportion of over 85 year olds within the Need Assessment Area (3 miles radius of the site aka Target Area) is 27% higher than national profile
- The number of persons aged over 85 is forecast to rise by 82.6% over next 20 years
- The Department of Health published the Care Homes for Older People - National Minimum Standards (3rd Edition) in 2003, clearly confirming their view that only single ensuite bedrooms are 'Fit for the Future'
- One third of existing homes within the Target Area have less than 5 ensuite bedrooms and a potentially limited lifespan given current service user expectations
- There are 14 existing care homes in the Need Assessment Area providing 398 bedrooms offering an ensuite wc This is below national average
- The proportion of ensuite bedrooms in the Need Assessment Area is below the national average (65.5% compared to 72%)
- There is a current statistical demand for 412 elderly care beds. This will rise sharply to 471 by 2015 and 531 within a decade – an increase of over 26%
- A statistical shortfall of appropriate accommodation currently exists for the elderly which will increase over the forthcoming decade
- Demand for beds is likely to increase as elderly numbers grow and existing dated care facilities no longer meet service user expectations and consequently fall out of service
- Without forward planning to make further provision in the face of rising demand and obsolescence of existing facilities, there will potentially be a significant local shortage within 5 years

Planning Statement

- Circa 20% of the site falls within the defined Predominantly Residential Area and 80% with Green Belt

- The Green Belt boundary does not relate to any discernable feature and has been excessively tightly drawn. PPG2 advises that boundaries should endure, be carefully drawn so as to not include land which is unnecessary to keep permanently open
- The proposal is inappropriate development but there are very special circumstances to justify the scheme and it does not conflict with the reasons for including land within the Green Belt
- The very special circumstances are based on the need for the proposal given the aging nature of the population and the requirement within the licensing regime for Care Homes which require ensuite provision. This will create significant obsolescence in existing provision
- There will be a 30% increase in the need for dementia care provision within the next decade, given the demographics of the area
- High land values and demand for housing development, Dept of Health Regulations have resulted in many smaller operators leaving the sector and many are struggling to survive; funding has to be front loaded and can not subsidize the development as it progresses
- The proposal meets the criteria of GC10 and DC57 of the Plan

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development and Policy

The site lies in the North Cheshire Green Belt. New buildings are strictly controlled within the Green Belt as advised in national guidance PPG2 and Local Plan policy GC1. Policy GC1 states that within the Green Belt permission will not be granted for inappropriate development, except in very special circumstances.

Within the Green Belt, proposals should have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the green belt than existing development.

The proposed extension to the care home would have a floorspace of approximately 481 sq m. This equates to a circa 27% increase in floorspace. The ridge height is proposed at circa 7.3m which is lower than the existing Care Home building and adjoining dwelling at 5 Hope Green Way.

The resultant development in terms of footprint, floorspace and mass would result in an element of erosion of openness of the site, given that the area of the extension will infill a significant 18m width to the side of the existing Care Home. However the area is surrounded by built form, with the railway line to the rear being a further natural barrier.

In essence, the proposal will further urbanise this site and this will have an impact upon the openness of the site. The harm to visual amenity from public vantage points is therefore considered to be limited. However, given the increased width of the building envelope even the glimpsed vantage points would offer a reduction in openness of the site.

It is therefore necessary to consider whether the very special circumstances put forward in terms of the need for the additional (carehome) bed spaces outweighs the harm caused to the green belt by reason of inappropriateness.

Assessment of need for the Specialist Older Person Accommodation

A key housing strategy is 'To provide supported accommodation appropriate to the needs of the Borough's population'. This strategy aim is fully supported by this proposal which will provide purpose built accommodation for which there is a recognised need for elderly people, particularly those with dementia.

The former Macclesfield Borough district has an ageing population with a higher proportion of pensioner households than the regional average (2001 Census) and population predictions indicate that there will be 13,400 additional persons in the over 65 age group by 2029. It is a key aim of the Council to meet the needs of the Borough's ageing population. The need to cater for the care needs of the ageing population is well documented and the needs assessment submitted with the application builds on data in the Macclesfield Borough Housing Needs Study 2004 and the Macclesfield Borough Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2008. Historically, care needs have been met with the provision of residential care homes and whilst there will continue to be some demand for residential care homes (particularly for example for dementia patients) policy is moving towards the provision of extra care schemes. This scheme is put forward as an extension to the existing care home to provide 11 ensuite bedrooms for dementia patients.

The SHMA incorporates a section concerning Extra Care Housing and indicates that the number of people aged 45 or over with dementia in Macclesfield (former Borough) is expected to rise from 2,096 in 2009 to 2,658 in 2019 (26.8% increase).

Hope Green is registered as an older person's home with The Care Equality Commission and currently has 41 beds. It is proposed that this will be increased to 52. Because of the need for additional dementia bed spaces in the market it is proposed that the extension will be registered as dementia beds with The Care Equality Commission.

The Need Assessment submitted by the Applicant focuses on a 3 mile radius of the site. The evidence submitted and précised above is accepted. There is clearly a proven need for older persons care in this area. It is also likely that the changing licensing regime will result in a reduction in available bed spaces which will further increase need.

Policy GC10 sets the criteria against which proposals for extensions to existing residential institutions in the Green Belt will be assessed.

These criteria are;

1. Extensions should be well related to the existing building in terms of scale, form and design;
2. Extensions should not exceed the height of the existing building
3. Extensions should not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site (large scale extensions of more than 30% of the floorspace of the original building/s are likely to be unacceptable)
4. Extensions should not adversely affect the character and appearance of the countryside
5. The use of the extension should be ancillary
6. Construction of new buildings within the grounds will not normally be acceptable

In terms of the detailed design of the extension, the criteria of GC10 are complied with. The design of the extension replicates the brick and render external appearance of the existing care home and is subservient in terms of height and massing. The compliance with GC10 is considered to be of significant weight in the balancing of the inappropriateness of this development in overall PPG2 Green Belt policy terms.

A condition should be imposed that the bed spaces which this proposed puts forward should be for dementia care patients (on the basis that this is the case to justify the development in the Green Belt in the first place).

Policy DC57 of the local plan sets out the criteria for the development of residential institutions: The site must be close to local facilities such as bus services, local shops and other community facilities and is normally sited in a residential area; the concentration of specialist housing and care facilities in an area should be avoided; the development must not materially prejudice the amenity of neighbouring property; adequate private garden space in the order of 10 sq m per resident must be provided; the development satisfies general requirements for all developments including adequate parking; vehicular and pedestrian access should be safe and convenient, particularly by the adequate provision of visibility splays. All these criteria are adequately satisfied.

It is also noted that negotiations with the Applicant have resulted in the acknowledgement of the benefits of green travel planning by the Applicant, who is willing to provide a travel plan. This is considered to be a significant benefit which will assist in promoting sustainable travel choices by staff and visitors alike, in accordance with overarching policy in PPS1 and PPS4.

Landscape and trees

The landscape impact from public vantage points outside the site is limited due to good screening to the frontage of the site with mature trees. An arboricultural statement has been submitted with the application and an assessment of this from the Council's Arboriculture Officer has confirmed that the one Protected Ash Tree will need to be removed. The Arboricultural Officer is of the opinion that the Ash tree is a compromised specimen which has a limited life expectancy and that mitigation planting would be of greater benefit to the amenity of the area.

Highways

The Strategic Highways Manager has commented on the proposal and notes that as the site comprises two care homes. He advises that the 36 spaces throughout the site is in excess of the minimum number of spaces that would be required for the overall number of bedrooms. No significant highway safety issues are therefore raised.

Neighbour Amenity and Design

Policies BE1 and DC1 of the Local Plan seek to ensure a high quality of design in new development that is of appropriate scale and sympathetic to the site and its surroundings.

The locational characteristics of the extension sit very well with the existing building line to the side garden area. Materials and architectural language are in keeping with the existing building and the scale of the proposal is subservient to the existing built form within the site. Overall, the proposal is of an acceptable design.

The siting of the extension does not compromise the amenity or privacy of the adjoining residential property. Additionally, the added activity associated with the small increase in staff members necessary to care for the needs of high dependency dementia patients in the proposed extension, is not likely to result in discernible intensification of traffic/activity within the site that would be detrimental to the amenity of neighbours. The central car park access remains, which is some distance from adjoining residential properties, who themselves are set back off London Road by mature landscaped belt.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASON(S) FOR THE DECISION

Having regard to the character of this specific area of Green Belt, on balance, it is considered that the submitted very special circumstances in the form of the demonstrated need, and the compliance with the functional and design criteria of GC10, outweigh the harm to the Green Belt arising from the inappropriate nature of the development.

The proposal will help meet up with demand for specialist care against a changing demographic where the population is aging and living longer. The site is readily accessible and will help deliver sustainable economic development in accordance with recent Governmental advice 'Planning for Growth'.

Whilst it would normally be appropriate to alter Green Belt boundaries through the Local Development Framework process, the circumstances of this site, its generally developed surroundings and its planning history for care home use, including the permission in 2004 as a Departure from the Development Plan of Carmel Lodge within the site; which extended into the Green Belt in the south of the site are unlikely to be readily repeated elsewhere.

Application for Full Planning

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to following conditions

1. Commencement of development (3 years)
2. Details of materials to be submitted
3. Development in accord with approved plans
4. Provision of car parking
5. Landscaping - submission of details
6. Tree retention
7. Tree protection
8. Protection for breeding birds
9. Protection from noise during construction (hours of construction)
10. Pile Driving
11. Provision of cycle parking

12. Landscaping (implementation)

13. travel plan to be submitted

14. dementia care use only

