

Application No: 14/2648N

Location: Land off Gutterscroft, Haslington, Crewe

Proposal: Residential development of 13no. two storey houses, 6no. one bed apartments, associated roads and garages.

Applicant: Mr Kevin Higgins, Cransleigh Estates

Expiry Date: 22-Aug-2014

SUMMARY:

The proposal is for housing within the settlement boundary of Haslington where there is a presumption in favour of development.

Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon design, highway safety, amenity, flood risk, drainage, landscape and ecology and therefore satisfies the environmental sustainability role.

The proposal would satisfy the social sustainability role by providing for much needed housing in an existing settlement where there is existing infrastructure and amenities. The proposal would provide policy compliant levels of affordable housing.

The proposal would contribute to employment and economic growth which satisfies the economic sustainability role.

The boost to housing supply is an important benefit – and this application achieves this in the context of a deliverable scheme.

Local concerns of residents are noted, particularly in respect of highway matters but the impact is not considered to be severe under the NPPF test.

The scheme represents a sustainable form of development and that the planning balance weighs in favour of supporting the development subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject completion of a Section 106 Agreement and conditions.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Approve with conditions

PROPOSAL:

This is a full planning application for the erection of 13 detached and semi-detached dwellings and 6 one bed flats within the site. The houses would be accessed from a cul-de-sac off Gutterscroft and the apartments from Gutterscroft itself. The dwellings would be of traditional design and materials, including black and white 'Tudor' style features.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The application site comprises an irregular shaped backland site to the rear 149 Crewe Road, Haslington. This is accessed via a relatively unmade public right of way known as Gutterscroft which bounds the site to the south. Surrounding land uses are predominantly residential, with access to local amenities within Haslington. Properties within the locality are of varying types, design and age. Consent has already been granted for 10 dwellings on the opposite side of Gutterscroft (13/4968N).

RELEVANT HISTORY:

P07/1103 Demolition of the Existing Buildings and Construction of 44 Dwellings and Associated Works (Approved with conditions January 2008).

P07/1693 Reserved Matters Application for the Demolition of Existing Buildings and Construction of 44 Dwellings and Associated Works (Duplicate Application) (Withdrawn).

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Of particular relevance are paragraphs 14, 49 and 50.

Development Plan:

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

The relevant Saved Policies are: -

- BE.1 – Amenity
- BE.2 – Design Standards
- BE.3 – Access and Parking
- BE.4 – Drainage, Utilities and Resources
- BE.5 – Infrastructure
- RES. 5 – Housing in Villages with Settlement Boundaries
- RES.3 – Housing Densities
- RES.7 – Affordable Housing

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles
SE 1 Design
SE 2 Efficient Use of Land
SE 3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
SE 4 The Landscape
SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE 9 Energy Efficient Development
SE 12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
SC 5 Affordable Homes
PG 1 Overall Development Strategy
PG 2 Settlement Hierarchy
EG1 Economic Prosperity

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Interim Planning Statement: Affordable Housing (Feb 2011)

Supplementary Planning Document – Development on Backland and Gardens

CONSULTATIONS:

Highways:

No objections subject to conditions relating to service strips, junction construction and a construction management plan.

Environmental Health:

Recommend conditions and informatives suggested in relation to construction and piling hours and external lighting.

United Utilities:

No objection.

Haslington Parish Council:

This is an application for houses on the southern part of the area originally granted permission some years ago at appeal, when included with the northern section for a total of 44 houses including 14 affordable units. The northern section has had permission renewed twice, but development has never progress beyond removing a hedge.

Haslington Parish Council submit objections in two capacities, firstly representing the views of local residents and secondly as the owner of the Gutterscroft Community Centre which is accessed via the Gutterscroft road which forms part of the application area. Planning permission has expired for the land within this application.

Assurances were provided by Cheshire East "Planning" during the renewal application for the northern part of the site that even though the number of houses proposed was below the level requiring affordable homes to be provided, the commitment for the site as a whole would be transferred to the southern section if that area was subject to a further planning application.

The site is in the centre of the village, close to shops, pub, churches, primary school and bus stops all of which can be readily accessed on foot, ideal for the location of affordable housing. The commitment to provide 14 affordable homes was in return for permission to build on a site that included greenfield land, this requirement can not be evaded.

The original developer who gained planning permission at appeal for this land, committed to resurface the road up to the gates of the Gutterscroft Centre (a community hall owned by Haslington Parish Council), and also resurface the car park for the hall.

The submitted plans show at least two properties with vehicle access directly on to the Gutterscroft road, this will add to the congestion of the road, which is used intensively by parents bringing and collecting children from groups using the community hall.

A turning point needs to be provided close to the Gutterscroft Centre, to allow visitors to turn safely, as the proposed development encroaches onto land that has historically been used for parking and turning vehicles that visit the Centre.

Need to ensure that refuse and delivery vehicles can safely visit The Gutterscroft Centre and neighbouring properties.

The application does not show any evidence of the proposals taking into account the difference in height between the application land and adjoining properties on Batterbee Close - residents have concerns over drainage water running off the site and swamping their gardens.

The submitted plans do not accurately represent the dimensions of adjoining properties, longstanding extensions on houses in Batterbee Close are not shown, these include rooms with principal windows that would be very close to the proposed new properties.

The houses proposed are large and predominantly detached, non appear close to being considered affordable.

This development would not be safe to use the existing Gutterscroft road, the road is narrow, unsurfaced and has appalling visibility at its junction with Crewe Road. The development of the northern part of the site was to provide land for a wider access road, but development of this has not yet taken place. A condition must be applied that no development of the southern land can take place until safe access is provided either by the developer of the northern land or by the southern land developer buying additional land to then build the required safe access.

Haslington has been relying on this site to provide affordable homes in the village on what is effectively brownfield land. Most of the affordable units were in a block of apartments with 1 and 2 beds, this type of accommodation has not been offered on Vicarage Road, or other sites submitted outside the settlement boundary. The developer of this land off The Gutterscroft needs to provide some affordable property that includes 1 and 2 bedroom apartments.

REPRESENTATIONS:

Neighbour notification letters were sent to adjoining occupants and a site notice posted

Seven representations have been received objecting on the following grounds:

- Increase in vehicle movements
- Highway safety
- Gutterscroft is hazardous and needs to be improved
- Insufficient parking provision
- Existing problems with bin collections
- No need for more housing other than affordable
- Loss of amenity in terms of privacy, light, noise and outlook
- Disturbance during construction
- Damage to property during construction
- Loss of wildlife
- Flood risk
- Increased use of footpath could impact on security of existing properties

APPRAISAL:

The key issues are principle, design, amenity, ecology, trees, highways and affordable housing.

Principle of Development

The principle of residential development has previously been accepted on this site under application P07/1103. The site is situated within the Haslington Settlement Boundary where the key issues in the determination of this application is whether or not the proposal accords with Local Plan policies NE9 (Protected Species), NE5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats), BE1 (Amenity), BE2 (Design Standards), BE3 (Accessing and Parking), BE4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources), BE5 (Infrastructure) and TRAN9 (Car Parking Standards).

Amenity

In terms of residential amenity, due to the siting of the houses and the distances between those proposed and those existing, there would be no significant adverse impact on the amenity of the existing dwellings on Batterbee Court, School Street and Crewe Road or the new dwellings that are currently under construction off Gutterscroft. Having regard to the flats, the distance to the properties at the rear is 15m and as such the windows on the elevation

facing Batterbee Court should be obscure glazed and the kitchen windows should be high level. Amended plans to show this have now been received by the Council.

Having regard to the residential amenity of future occupiers of the dwellings, all would have adequate private amenity space in order to provide usable garden space and bin storage.

There would be some disruption during the construction phase of the development; however it is considered that this could be adequately controlled by conditions limiting the hours of construction and any piling that may be necessary.

Design

The importance of securing high quality design is specified within the NPPF and paragraph 61 states that:

“Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”

The proposed dwellings would be 2 storey and of a mix of 8 styles. They would all be of a relatively traditional design having brick and render finishes, with timber detailing and tiled roofs. The apartment block would face on to Gutterscroft with the other properties facing onto the cul-de-sac serving the proposed dwellings

The design and layout of the development is considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy BE.2 (Design) of the adopted local plan.

Highways

This site has previous permissions which have included for an approved junction design with visibility splays and geometry which meet required design standards therefore the access strategy to this brownfield site is viable. This development is for 13 houses which are to be accessed from a new road of adoptable standard with a turning head and 6 flats accessed from Gutterscroft. A refuse vehicle turning track has been provided which demonstrates appropriate access and egress for the site.

The proposed site layout does need a 2 metre wide service strip or footway on both sides and this will need an amended plan by condition as currently there is shortfall in this regard. Parking standards comply with Authority requirements.

Traffic generation is not considered to be a material impact against current standards.

The Head of Strategic Infrastructure recommends that conditions are imposed requiring the submission of a plan showing the service strip, construction of the access prior to

construction of the dwellings and submission of a construction management plan. Subject to these conditions the development is considered to be in compliance with Policy BE.3 of the adopted local plan.

Affordable Housing

As originally submitted, the application did not include any affordable housing provision. Following negotiations, there has been a revised layout submitted which includes 6 apartments that are to be 100% rented and this has been accepted by the Strategic Housing Manager. As such the proposals are considered to be acceptable in affordable housing terms. This provision can be secured by Section 106 Agreement..

Trees and Landscape

The submission is supported by a Tree Survey Report which incorporates a tree constraints plan as existing. The survey covers 15 individual trees and several lengths of hedge. The survey concludes that the majority of trees of higher value are located on the site boundaries and that trees within the site should not pose a constraint to development.

There would be some loss of hedges on the site, which while regrettable, can be mitigated by landscaping conditions requiring replacement planting.

Overall the impact of the proposal on trees and landscape is considered to be acceptable subject to conditions relating to tree protection and landscaping.

Ecology

The submitted report identifies a veteran birch tree towards the centre of the site but it is unlikely to be of sufficient quality to warrant its retention as part of the development.

Hedgerows are a priority habitat and a material consideration in the determination of the application. There are two sections of hedgerow present on site, one of which would be lost as a result of the development. The second hedgerow could be retained, but is likely to be affected by the driveways of the proposed housing. If planning consent is granted it is recommended that suitable replacement hedgerow planting is incorporated into the landscaping scheme for the site.

An area of semi-improved grassland is present on site. The submitted ecological survey was undertaken too early in the season to allow a full assessment to be made of the nature conservation value of the grassland habitats however based upon the species recorded it is unlikely that the grassland is of substantial nature conservation value.

If planning consent is granted conditions should be imposed requiring protection for nesting birds and incorporation of features for breeding birds.

Sustainability

There are three dimensions to sustainable development:- economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy;

an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent.

Environmental Sustainability

The application site is previously developed land and is, therefore, classed as brownfield and is therefore a priority for development. The proposal is acceptable in terms of trees, landscape and ecology and is therefore considered to be environmentally sustainable.

Social Sustainability

The proposal will provide dwellings on a brownfield site within an existing residential area. Six affordable units in the form of one bedroom flats that would contribute to an acknowledged need in the area. The site is within walking distance of a range of shops and services in Haslington village. The proposal is therefore considered to be socially sustainable.

Economic Sustainability

The proposed development will help to maintain a flexible and responsive supply of housing, bringing direct and indirect economic benefits to the village, including additional trade for local shops and businesses, jobs in construction and economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain. The proposal is therefore considered to be economically sustainable.

Response to Objections

The representations of the members of the public have been given careful consideration in terms of impact on amenity, highway safety and ecology and these issues are addressed in the report.

One objector has expressed concern about increased use of the public footpath leading to a risk to security and possible vandalism. Whilst these concerns are understood, there is no evidence that additional residential properties would cause this.

The Parish Council has requested that additional parking and turning provision is provided for the Gutterscroft Centre. This however is not considered to be a reasonable requirement commensurate with the scale of the development.

Planning Balance

Taking account of Paragraphs 49 and 14 of the NPPF there is a presumption in favour of the development provided that it represents sustainable development unless there are any adverse impacts that *significantly and demonstrably* outweigh the benefits.

The proposal is within the Settlement Boundary of Haslington, an established residential area, and is in accordance with development plan policy RES.2 (Unallocated Housing Sites), therefore there is a presumption in favour of development.

The proposal would have some economic benefits in terms of jobs in construction, spending within the construction industry supply chain and spending by future residents in local shops.

It is considered that there are no significant negative effects of the proposed development that would outweigh the potential benefits. Therefore, it is considered that the application should be approved subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to a Section 106 Agreement to secure the affordable housing (all rented) and the following conditions:

- 1. Standard time 3 years**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Submission of amended layout plan showing 2m service strip**
- 4. Construction of access prior to construction of the dwellings**
- 5. Pile driving limited to 09:00 to 17:30 Monday to Friday, 09:00 – 13:00 Saturday and not at all on Sundays**
- 6. Construction method statement**
- 7. Materials to be submitted for approval**
- 8. Tree and hedgerow protection measures**
- 9. Landscaping details including boundary treatments to be submitted and approved**
- 10. Implementation of landscaping**
- 11. Prior to the commencement of development details of existing and proposed levels are to be provided.**
- 12. Protection of birds during the breeding season**
- 13. Incorporation of features to house breeding birds, including House Sparrows and Swifts.**
- 14. Submission of external lighting details**
- 15. Submission of foul and surface water drainage details**

In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Interim Principal Planning Manager has delegated authority to do so in consultation with the Chairman of the

Southern Planning Committee provided that the changes do not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision.

Should this application be the subject of an appeal, authority be delegated to the Principal Planning Manager in consultation with the Chairman of the Southern Planning Committee to enter into a planning agreement in accordance with the S106 Town and Country Planning Act to secure the Heads of Terms for a S106 Agreement.

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