

Application No: 14/3215C

Location: LEONARD CHESHIRE HOME, THE HILL, SANDBACH, CHESHIRE, CW11 1LA

Proposal: The conversion of the existing listed building into 12 no. 1,2 and 3 bed apartments with associated parking and landscaping. Demolition of the newer build elements to the north and west elevations.

Applicant: Brookmoor Developments Ltd

Expiry Date: 22-Oct-2014

SUMMARY:

The development site lies within the Open Countryside, however the principle of residential use has been established by a previous approval.

The development would comprise a form of environmental, economic and socially sustainable development in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.

The alterations to the building are considered to be acceptable.

The impact on residential amenity, trees, protected species and highway safety is acceptable subject to conditions.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the application should be approved subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions

PROPOSAL

This application proposes the conversion of this Grade II Listed Building into 12, one, two and three bed apartments, with associated parking and landscaping and demolition of the newer build elements to the north and west elevations.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a former mansion house that was used as a disability care facility for many years. To the west is the newly developed care facility and 3 dwellings and a barn that

has permission for conversion lie to the east. To the rear of the site is open countryside, However there is an application for residential development on this land and also an ongoing appeal for the same development.

RELEVANT HISTORY

There are several historic applications relating to alterations to the main building and the erection of the new unit and other ancillary buildings. The most relevant being 13/0258C, which included the change of use to residential (C3).

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance is paragraphs 127 to 134 (inc)

Development Plan:

The Development Plan for this area is the adopted Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review 2005, which allocates the site as being within the Open Countryside.

The relevant Saved Policies are: -

PS8 Open Countryside
GR1 New Development
GR2 & GR3 Design
GR6 Amenity and Health
GR9 Parking and Access
NR1 Trees and Woodlands
BH3 Listed Buildings
BH4 Listed Buildings

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 7 The Historic Environment
SE 9 Energy Efficient Development
SE 12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
PG 1 Overall Development Strategy
PG 2 Settlement Hierarchy
EG1 Economic Prosperity

Other Considerations:

SPD14 Trees and Development
BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)

CONSULTATIONS:

Highways: No objection subject to conditions relating to parking provision and bin storage.

Environmental Protection: No objection subject to conditions/informatives relating to noise and disturbance and travel planning.

Sandbach Town Council: Welcome the application and offer no objection.

REPRESENTATIONS:

Neighbour notification letters were sent to adjoining occupants, a site notice was posted outside the site and an advertisement was placed in the local paper.

At the time of report writing two representations have been received expressing concern about parking, access and highway safety when looked at in conjunction with the application for housing on the neighbouring site.

APPRAISAL

The key issues to be considered in the determination of this application are set out below.

Principle of Development

The National Planning Policy Framework states the following:

*“At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision taking.*

*For **decision taking** this means:*

- *Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:*

- *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or*
- *specific policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted*

The site is designated as being within open countryside; however the principle of allowing residential development on this site has already been established under application number 13/0258C. The application to bring this vacant Listed Building back into use is considered to be acceptable in principle.

This proposal is for the conversion of the building to 12 residential apartments which is considered to be acceptable in this location.

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 ROLE

Ecology

A minor bat roost has been recorded at the property. The roost is located under a fascia board on an elevation of the buildings not affected by the proposed development and the bat report submitted with the application advises that it is feasible to retain the roost in its current location.

The Council's ecologist has assessed the information submitted with the application and is satisfied that the proposed development would be highly unlikely to have any adverse impact on the roost.

Trees

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application which addresses issues relating to trees on the site. The proposal would result in the loss of one mature Oak Tree, a semi-mature Cypress, a semi-mature Western Red Cedar, a semi-mature Scots Pine and a mature Yew Tree (all to the front of the site). The loss of trees is considered to be regrettable; however they do not have statutory protection. A comprehensive landscape scheme showing appropriate replacement planting should be secured by condition.

Appearance

The proposal is for the conversion of the building to 12 apartments. This would involve the removal of relatively recent additions to the building. The elements identified for removal are considered to be inappropriate additions and their removal is considered to be acceptable.

The building requires considerable renovation and repair works and the intention of the developer is to retain as much of the original fabric as possible. This is to be welcomed and as such a suite of conditions should be imposed to ensure that this is secured.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in design terms and would not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance or setting of this Listed Building. The development is in accordance with Policy GR2, BH3 and BH4 of the adopted local plan.

Highways

The site would be accessed from the existing vehicular access and a new vehicular access has been approved for the new care facility adjacent to the site. Twenty parking spaces are proposed within the site. The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) has requested that 21 spaces are provided and there is adequate space to do this. In addition the HSI would like to see a reconfiguration of the bin storage within the site to ensure that there is no conflict with refuse vehicles. Therefore a condition should be imposed requiring a plan to be submitted showing a revised parking and bin storage layout.

Subject to the condition referred to above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in highway safety terms and in accordance with Policy GR9 (Highways) of the adopted local plan.

ECONOMIC ROLE

The Framework includes a strong presumption in favour of economic growth.

Paragraph 19 states that:

‘The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth’

The proposal would generate economic benefits by virtue of employment created during construction.

Affordable Housing

The development would not provide any contribution to affordable housing. However the developers have submitted a report demonstrating that this would not be financially viable. Given that the conversion of the building would ensure the renovation and retention of this Listed Building, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to require any provision of affordable housing as part of the development as it would render it economically unviable, possibly resulting in the further deterioration of the building.

SOCIAL ROLE

Amenity

The development would bring the property back into residential use and would not include any additional buildings; indeed it proposes removal of some of the more modern elements of the building. It is therefore considered that there are no significant adverse impacts on the amenities of nearby residential properties, or the neighbouring care home.

The proposal is therefore considered to be in compliance with Policy GR6 (Amenity & Health) of the adopted local plan and acceptable in terms of residential amenity.

Conclusion – The 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 principle of residential use of the building has already been established under the previous application (13/0258C).

The proposal would have some economic benefits in terms of jobs in construction and spending within the construction industry supply chain.

The development is considered to represent environmental, economic and social sustainable development in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.

The impact on protected species and highway safety is acceptable subject to conditions.

On the basis of the above, it is considered that the application should be approved subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. **Commencement**
2. **Approved plans**
3. **Submission of a revised parking and bin storage plan showing 21 parking spaces and amalgamated bin storage area**
4. **Submission of landscaping scheme**

5. Implementation of landscaping scheme
6. Submission of boundary treatments
7. Submission of tree protection measures
8. Submission of a Heritage Management Plan, including a method statement for external and internal repairs for approval
9. Submission of full details for all replacement windows and repairs to existing windows
10. Submission of full details of proposed balconies

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 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.

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