

TWC/2014/1122

Land junction of Stirchley Avenue/Randlay Avenue, Randlay, Telford, Shropshire
Erection of 31no. dwellings with associated parking, access and landscaping

APPLICANT
Telford & Wrekin Council, Kirsty Liddell

RECEIVED
15/12/2014

PARISH
Hollinswood and Randlay

WARD
The Nedge

OFFICER Gareth Thomas

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: Yes

MAIN ISSUES:

Scale and design of proposed development, Design & Access

PROPOSAL:

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 31 dwellings that will be marketed for private (market) rent. The proposed houses are a mix two and three bed semi-detached units, all of which are two storeys in height. A total of 51 car parking spaces are provided within the development.

The application has been submitted with the following documents in support of the proposals:

- Application Form;
- Planning and Design and Access Statement;
- Transport Statement and Travel Plan;
- Drainage Strategy;
- Ground Conditions Report and Remediation Strategy;
- Ecology Appraisal and Bat Report;
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Assessment;
- Air Quality Assessment;
- Viability Assessment

The layout of the proposal has been designed to accommodate the constraints identified in the next section of this report. It has been designed in accordance with Secure by Design principles, is site specific and promotes contemporary, sustainable living using modern methods of construction. This means that attention has been given to creating spaces that are safe, well overlooked and distinctive, with good landscaping and good connections with the wider community and facilities.

The development proposal utilises an existing access off Randlay Avenue, which will be improved to comply with highway standards. Importantly, the pedestrian links that exist will be retained and enhanced through the provision of a proper footpath link to the Town Park. Currently there are no formalised footpath links through the site. Existing connections to the town centre will also be maintained and enhanced and the link to Stirchley Avenue will be surfaced and another one to the bus stop created.

Within the site, the proposed access will serve two cul de sacs that will serve the proposed houses. The main access road will also serve the pumping station that is necessary to serve the site drainage.

SITE & SURROUNDINGS:

The application site is located approximately 1.5km south of Telford town centre and fronts onto both Stirchley land and Randlay Avenue. The site is broadly rectangular in shape and backs on to the Town Park in the area of Blue Pool and Randlay Pool.

The site currently comprises hard surfacing associated with the former Randlay Lorry Park, which has in the past been used for the parking of lorries and vehicles in connection with the International Trade Centre, as well as a car park. The site is just under one hectare in size and contains a large number of largely scrub trees. The site is bound on two sides by woodland. There are thickets of trees enveloping the remaining sides. To the south west lies the 'Blue Pool' lake and a small allotment area. Further to the west is the Town Park and Randlay Pool. The site is situated on the edge of the Town Park and the site is used informally by local residents as a pathway both to the Park and the town centre.

On the opposite side of Randlay Avenue is a large residential area comprising a mix of high and medium density housing estates. The former lorry park is however separated from this residential area by yet another woodland.

The site falls from east to west and north to south, and from north to south. There is an approximate 2m level difference on Stirchley Avenue and a 4m level difference from north to south. A particular feature of the site is the relatively low level grassed mound that runs along the length of Randlay Avenue frontage. This mound is planted up and represents a strong linear feature of the site.

The site has a self-contained quality and can be classed as a brownfield site. It has the benefit of outline planning permission for residential development granted as part of the wider Southwater development in 2010. This permission remains extant.

Bus stops are located within 100m of the site at Randlay Avenue and Stirchley Avenue. The site is served by five primary bus routes (Route 11, 12, 22, 44 and 96) linking to Telford Town Centre. The number 11 route operates between Madeley and the town centre with a frequency of a bus every 10 minutes throughout the day. The number 12 route links Holinswood and the town centre, again with a 10 minute frequency. The number 22 route links Madeley and Sutton Hill with the town centre and has a 20 minute frequency. The number 44 route which also operates between Madeley and Telford Town Centre, Monday to Friday links with Wellington and the PRH with a 10 minute frequency. The number 96 links Ironbridge, Shrewsbury, Wellington and the town centre, with a 2 hourly frequency.

THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Members will be aware that the Housing Investment Programme (HIP) is intended to deliver a number of Council objectives through the development of 425 new homes owned by the Council. A Wholly Owned Company (WOC) will be established to manage the property portfolio. The first phase of the programme involves the

development of both market rental units and affordable rental units at Southwater, Hollinswood, Randlay, Woodlands Primary School, Malinslee, Wildwood Woodside and Springfields, Newport.

The programme presents an opportunity for regeneration within the Borough and a means of providing high quality private rented accommodation. A number of benefits will accrue including providing opportunities to bring forward difficult sites that would be unattractive to the private sector, economic opportunities in relation to materials supplies and jobs during the construction period and subsequent maintenance and opportunity to continue the Southwater regeneration and develop Council owned sites across the Borough.

Currently three sites are being promoted through the planning process at Woodlands, Hollinswood and Randlay. A viability assessment has been submitted for the combined sites. This is considered acceptable, as the viability assessment reveals some disparity between the viability of the various sites. Consequently, in broad terms, the more profitable sites will “subsidise” sites that have either greater construction costs (brownfield land) or where s106 requirements are more onerous, which combine to reduce profit margins. For example, profit levels of -6.8% are envisaged for one of the sites in question; this means that if that site is not combined as part of an overall package, there will be a very strong probability that it will not come forward for development by the private sector. The overall scheme viability indicates too that an affordable housing provision of 17% is possible.

SUMMARISED CONSULTATIONS

Standard consultation responses

Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council supports the application subject to conditions. There are however serious concerns regarding parking issues. We already experience unacceptable parking problems within our estates when an event at the TIC is held. With the lorry park developed, we could see yet further problems on the local highways. Restricted parking and enforcement will be necessary to keep Randlay Avenue and Stirchley Avenue safe.

Highways: Comments awaited

Drainage: Support subject to condition requiring surface water run-off restriction to 5 litres per second per hectare and any attenuation feature to be designed to attenuate flows including 1 in 100 year flood event plus 30%.

Affordable Housing: Comment

This is an application for 31 homes for market rent. The site is part of Phase 1 of the Council's Housing Investment Programme (HIP) which will provide 24% homes for affordable rent overall. The total HIP (420) homes will provide at least 20% homes for affordable rent.

Tree Officer – Object to retention of woodland to the south-west casting shading – woodland contribution required to undertake thinning.

Ecology: Acknowledges that a preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been submitted that adequately considers the ecology of the site, including sections on habitats,

which primarily relates to the existing planted woodland at the southern part of the site (to be retained), the primary habitat – grassland containing single stands of semi-mature trees; there are designated sites directly adjoining the site including the Town Park LNR and Wildlife Site) which will require buffer planting. Bats – no evidence of bat roosting; site is used for foraging; this habitat could be replaced by new planting as part of the development. Amphibians - one pond within 160m of the site surveyed but was too dry to be a suitable habitat for GCN. Too more ponds within 500m also surveyed but had a low Habitat Suitability Index indicating that GCN are unlikely to be present. These features are unlikely to be a suitable habitat. Birds – The trees here do provide nesting opportunities – felling should take place out of season – replacement trees to contain bird boxes. The Ecologist recommends appropriate conditions and informatives to include effective landscaping and bat/bird boxes.

Local Access Forum: Object. I note that this development will sit directly in front of the new, large and excellent pedestrian, cycling, and horse riding entrance to Town Park. It is not clear from the plans how this access, that the public have enjoyed, is to be retained. There is no clear bridleway/footpath running along the east side of the site or along the side of the access road, which is, I feel, a serious omission. I would also suggest that any new routes should be Bridleway to allow the lawful use by cyclists and that no restrictive furniture would be placed on them to limit its use by riders and those of limited mobility. It is not acceptable to use the centre of the new access road for non-motorised users. There is also a public right of way running to the west of the development as well as the new and beautifully made gates and interpretation panels for a major entry point to Town Park. I would like some assurance as to how this is to be retained and that the footpath will not be restricted in any way. It currently seems to be used and crossed by a large lorry turning area servicing the new pumping station. I strongly recommend that the developer engage with the LAF at the earliest opportunity.

Parks & Open Spaces:

The development will contain a number of properties which will contribute to the need of play / recreational facilities for the area. There are some nearby proposed play recreational facilities for children and young people which could be enhanced in order to maximise the capacity and meet the need arising out of this proposed development. I would therefore suggest that should development (if successful) provide 2 or more bedroom properties; that they meet this need through conditioning of WLP Policies LR4 and LR6. I would suggest an appropriate sum to request would be £600 per property in relation to this policy. This should be provided prior to commencement of development if at all possible.

A commuted sum for maintenance of any open space within the site will be required for the ongoing maintenance of these areas.

Surface water drainage proposals are not clear in the application. Proposals to discharge water into Blue Pool may not be acceptable. However, no objection to discharge into Randlay Lake subject to approval of details.

Landscape details have not clearly identified the boundary treatment to Telford Town Park. This is one of the main entrances into the Park.

Telford Town Park is a regional destination facility which holds regular large outdoor community events including music festivals / fairgrounds / large commercial events. The majority of these outdoor events within the park are in close proximity to this proposed residential area. Should this development proceed, these new residents will be some of the closest to the event area and are likely to hear the events which are regularly put on to serve the wider Borough community. Therefore, serious consideration to the design / orientation of buildings to reduce potential noise nuisance (e.g. triple glazing etc.) must be included to secure the continuation of events within the park which serve the whole Borough.

A lighting plan showing the spillage of light proposed from this development into Telford Town Park is required in order to fully assess the implications on the Local Nature Reserve.

Education: No objection. Contributions sought - £60,069 primary; £33,064 secondary places.

Pollution Control (Environmental Health): The planning application has been submitted without noise monitoring or details of acoustic mitigation that may be required to achieve current guidelines. If minded to approve the application a suitably worded condition should be attached to the development requiring this information and ensuring that any mitigation required is completed.

Urban Design Officer – generally supportive subject to omission of railings which are not appropriate for this parkland setting; some small alterations to windows suggested. Landscaping needs redesigning so that there are more trees within the development.

Shropshire Fire Service: Include Fire Authority informative

Neighbour consultation responses: None

RELEVANT HISTORY

W2009/0914 - Outline planning application with means of access (part) for a mixed use development comprising Offices and Civic offices (B1a/sui generis); Residential (C3) (up to 330 units); Retail, Cafes/Restaurants, Financial and Professional Services, Drinking Establishments (A1,A2,A3,A4); Learning and Media Centre (to include the replacement of Meeting Point House), Leisure Pool, Cinema, Hotels, Energy Centres, Conference and Event facilities including outdoor events space and a Medical Centre (C1, D1, D2 and sui generis); associated landscape improvements to the public realm, replacement and construction of Southwater Lake, boundary treatment and new and reconfigured access; construction of basement, undercroft, surface and multi storey car parking; and all associated and ancillary works. Retention, refurbishment and extension of the existing ice rink building and extension to bowling and bingo building. Retention of existing hotels (the Holiday Inn and International Hotel) and Event Centre facilities

Note: The above permission granted planning permission for Residential Development at the current application site.

RELEVANT POLICIES

National Planning Guidance
National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Central Telford Area Action Plan (CTAAP)

LDF Core Strategy

CS1 Homes
CS3 Telford
CS9 Accessibility and Social Inclusion
CS13 Environmental Resources
CS15 Urban Design

Saved Wrekin Local Plan Policies

UD2 Design Criteria
H22 Community Facilities
H23 Affordable Housing
OL11 Woodland and Trees
OL12 Open Land and Landscape – contributions from new development
OL13 Maintenance of Open Space
LR6 Developer contributions to outdoor recreation open space provision within new residential developments

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

This planning application raises the following main issues:

- The Principle of development including loss of part of the site as an employment site;
- Highway Impacts
- Design considerations
- Affordable Housing and Viability of development

1. Principle of development

The principle of residential development has already been established by virtue of planning permission ref W2009/0914 that granted outline planning permission for residential development on this site. This permission formed part of the wider Southwater development. The principle is also supported in this location as it is within the built up area of Telford as defined by the Proposals Map of the Wrekin Local Plan. Core Strategy CS1 (Homes) indicates that Telford will be the location for the overwhelming majority of new homes identified to be built over the Plan period. Likewise Policy CS3 (Telford) states that Telford will be focus of the Borough's spatial development and will accommodate the majority of new homes jobs and services. Clearly, the site should therefore be considered positively for housing development provided it meets policy requirements and other material considerations.

The outline permission acknowledged that whilst the principle of development was considered acceptable, any matters which were not clearly dealt with as part of the

outline application would be expected to come forward as part of the details at reserved matter stage and appropriate conditions to achieve this were attached to the outline permission. This is an application for full permission but will need to reflect those conditions.

In addition, with regards to housing, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that Local Planning Authorities should significantly boost their supply of housing. In paragraph 49, it states that applications for housing should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

In this regard the site is well located not far from Telford town centre, on the edge of an existing residential area and is easily accessible for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users. Bus stops are located very close to the site on Randlay Avenue and Stirchley Avenue and it is considered that travel by bus would be a viable alternative to the private car.

The outline permission is subject to a section 106 Agreement, with an agreed affordable housing requirement for 20% (which is in line with CTAAP requirements). However this scheme forms part of the Council's Housing Investment Programme (HIP) and this site is designed to provide 100% market rented properties. Members will recognise that this development forms part of a single development project under the Council's Housing Investment Programme. Some sites will have lower affordable rented properties than others. So for the Randlay Avenue site, the proposal will provide 100% market rented properties. But this must be viewed in the context overall of the first phase of the HIP programme providing 17% affordable housing overall, slightly below the outline requirements. But at the same time, Members will appreciate that viability of the Southwater scheme now cannot reasonably equate with viability at the time when outline permission was granted.

The issue of noise has been raised by the Parks & Open Spaces section given the close proximity of the Town Park and events. However the Pollution Control Officer is satisfied that this issue can be addressed via planning conditions and this is considered to be a proportionate response given the fact that the site benefits from outline planning permission.

2. Highway Considerations

The design of the access roads serving the development is acceptable in principle. The proposed highway works of access to the site involve the construction of an improved (existing) single means of access off Randlay Avenue. This is considered to be the most cost effective and deliverable approach for access. This access is located some 50m from the Randlay Avenue/Stirchley Avenue roundabout. It has served the lorry park and car park for several years and is well established.

Randlay Avenue is a local distributor road, providing multiple accesses to local residential roads to the east and west of the development site. At peak times, traffic levels are considered to be moderate. Randlay Avenue is connected at its northern end with Stirchley Avenue via a three-armed roundabout. At peak times no material queuing or congestion occurs at this junction.

Stirchley Avenue is a key arterial route providing links from the A442 to the Southwater development and town centre and is subject to a 40mph limit. It links onto the St Quentin Gate via a five-armed roundabout. Access by car is considered satisfactory.

The site is bound by footways and an important entrance in to the Town Park. This will need to be retained. The Local Access Forum has suggested that the access into the Town Park at this point should be upgraded to a bridleway. However, there is good access into the park at this location and this proposal will positively enhance this access without the need for more formalised (or separate) access.

3. Design Considerations

The site lies just outside the CTAAP area. However it is a requirement of both national and local policies that attention be given to the requirement for good design. The site itself benefits from its location adjoining the Town Park and a wooded area both to the south and west. Although not a strategic gateway site, it does front on to Stirchley Avenue which is one of the principal highways linking the A442. But in essence, the site forms part of the Stirchley Avenue residential area.

The layout has been formed having regard to the following principles:

- Utilising an existing access road which needs to be improved in terms of visibility
- There is a strong pedestrian link through the site and into the Town Park; although there is no PRow defining this route, this proposal provides an ideal opportunity to both formalise this route into the Town Park and indeed enhance the pedestrian and cycling environments, including appropriate lighting.
- The existing informal link on to Stirchley Avenue and therefore bus routes is to be enhanced
- The need to respect and reflect landscaped features that should be enhanced by development proposals
- The need to reinforce existing street patterns and provide dual aspect dwellings at important junctions

The scheme in the opinion of your Officers has reacted well to these design principles. The development shows good urban form comprising two storey units that display a variety of rooflines and contemporary design elements to the individual buildings, including projecting bays and full height windows. The materials build upon the local palette (which is not particularly inspiring) and utilises red brick, contrasting blue brick courses and timber. The development as proposed will help create an exemplar housing scheme to meet the needs and requirements of contemporary living. It is considered that the proposed built form responds well to the site and topography. The built form respects and responds to the massing and scale of adjacent buildings and consequently it is likely to succeed in creating a strong 'sense of place' and a development which has strong connectivity and natural surveillance throughout to improve security and safety.

It is considered that the design accords with Wrekin Local Plan Policy UD2 Design Criteria.

4. Affordable Housing and section 106 requirements

No affordable housing is provided with this development. However the application is promoted as an integral part of the Council's Housing Investment programme, which will deliver 17% affordable housing during the first phase. The HIP Programme is designed to enable the Council to procure the construction and management of private rent and affordable rent homes that respond to the housing needs of the Borough. This will also help stimulate economic growth and regeneration through the creation of 425 new homes, safeguarding existing and generating new jobs in the construction and maintenance sectors. This is to be welcomed.

Overall the project will generate 17% affordable housing although as stated elsewhere in this report, some sites will need to subsidise others and the mix of housing on each site has been carefully considered not only in economic terms but importantly to meet housing needs of differing areas of the Borough.

In terms of other section 106 contributions, education contributions are necessary for this development, which are consistent with the levels agreed as part of the outline permission. A total of £40,069 is proposed having regard to the viability of the scheme project. The leisure and recreation officer has requested that a contribution of £18,600 is necessary. However the viability does not allow for open space contributions. Officers accept the viability difficulties associated with this project; moreover, it is also recognised that this site is in a highly sustainable location alongside the Town Park which has seen significant enhancement of open space, recreation and leisure enhancement as part of Southwater. The comments in relation to landscape maintenance do not really feature here as the company renting the flats will be responsible for all maintenance on site. A contribution of £2,000 for planning monitoring and £1200 travel plan monitoring is included.

Conclusions

Members will appreciate that at the national level, sustainable development is promoted through the NPPF, which defines three dimensions: economic, social and environmental, which cannot be considered in isolation. The proposed development will help provide the delivery of new homes in a short time frame. Although not providing an affordable element, it will contribute to housing supply and delivery

This is a highly sustainable location, highly accessible to bus services, leisure facilities, schools and to Telford town centre. It is ideally located to promote non-vehicular access to Telford and the Town Park. Outline planning permission exists for residential development and in capacity and design terms, the site can accommodate the numbers involved and represents an acceptable design and housing layout.

Each of the planning issues considered in respect of the current application has been carefully considered by officers and appropriate weight has been attached to each planning issue in reaching a planning balance. The proposed site is available and deliverable and as part of the HIP programme, the Council can ensure the delivery of a significant number of affordable dwellings and market rent housing as part of the overall project. The site can be developed without detrimental impact to highway safety, nor any adverse impacts to ecology, drainage, and will not be adversely affected by noise or air quality.

Furthermore the proposal is as suitable use which will not cause harm to the surrounding residential amenity. In terms of landscape impact, the site benefits from the presence of woodland on two sides.

RECOMMENDATION

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that Full Planning Permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriately worded conditions and the completion of a prior Memorandum from the Assistant Director. It is also recommended that delegated authority is given to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to amend and add conditions as appropriate. The Memorandum will include an agreement to include the making of financial contributions including £34,456 CTAAP highway contribution, £40,069 for education provision and £2,000 for planning and financial monitoring contributions and £1200 for Travel Plan monitoring..

Conditions

1. Full Permission – 3 years
2. Sample of Materials
3. Highways Contamination
4. SUDS Design
5. Noise Mitigation
6. Details of enclosure/boundary treatment
7. Landscape Management Plan/Woodland Management Plan
8. Trees – protection and replacement
9. Ecological conditions
10. Site Environmental Management Plan
11. Tree/Hedge Protection
12. Landscaping Implementation
13. Hours of Work/Lorry Movements
14. Development in accordance with Plans

Informatives

Fire Authority

Broadband

Ecology