

TWC/2014/1124

Former Woodlands Primary School, Ironbridge Road, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire  
Erection of 101no. dwellings with associated parking, access and landscaping

**APPLICANT**

Telford & Wrekin Council, Kirsty Liddell

**RECEIVED**

15/12/2014

**PARISH**

Madeley

**WARD**

Woodside

**OFFICER** Gareth Thomas

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: Yes

**MAIN ISSUES:**

Scale and design of proposed development, Green Network, TPO, Loss of Playing Pitches, Design & Access

**PROPOSAL:**

The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 101 dwellings that will be marketed for private (market) rent. The proposed houses are a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced units, all of which are two storey in height save for two units that will be 2.5 storeys. A total of 195 car parking spaces are provided within the development.

**SITE & SURROUNDINGS:**

The application site is located at the former Woodlands Primary School, Park Lane, Woodside, Telford and is a broadly rectangular site, bound by Ironbridge Road, Mound Way and Park Lane.

The site comprises land and buildings associated with the now vacated and cleared Woodlands Primary and Nursery School along with land located to the north west of the school and extends to approximately 2.65 ha. The site lies within a predominantly residential area with residential uses located to the north and west of the site. The site is located approximately 120 metres from Woodside Local Centre which provides healthcare, educational provision and day-to-day necessities.

The school site includes the former playing field which was located to the south of the former school buildings where the site abuts Ironbridge Road. Part of the playing field was used as a site compound for the storage of materials associated with the construction of the Abraham Darby Campus to the south. Beyond the Ironbridge Road lies the newly built Woodlands Primary School which opened in early 2012 and was built as part of the Abraham Darby Campus as a replacement facility for Woodlands.

Vehicular access to the site is currently gained directly from Park Lane, which has recently been reconfigured as part of a highways improvement scheme that also, improved the permeability of Park Lane to the wider Woodside area. Pedestrian access is also gained via the Park Lane entrance along with additional pedestrian access being located off Ironbridge Road and Mound Way.

The site's eastern edge fronts onto Mound Way and is defined by existing hedgerow and trees. To the west, serviced by Ironbridge Road is 'The Keep', a private residential development built on an old pit mound. To the north are two existing dwellings and to the north-east is an area earmarked for future development which will see the creation of a new community park on land adjacent to Bennett House.

Woodside has been the subject of significant regeneration over the past few years, which has recently seen the delivery of the Park Lane Centre, extensive public realm enhancements and the remodelling of Park Lane. There is further investment proposed to the Park Lane area through a mixed use development for residential and retail development. Woodside is identified as one of the Council's six Priority Neighbourhoods in which issues related to social deprivation are being addressed through community-focussed partnership which has led to the above regeneration initiatives.

In the wider context, the site lies approximately 1 mile from Madeley Centre which provides a range of local services, including shopping, community and other social facilities. Telford Town Centre is located approximately 5 miles from the site which provides a wider range of both comparison and convenience shopping.

The proposed development site is served by two primary bus routes (Route 11 and 44) linking to Telford Town Centre. The site is best served by the number 11 route which operates between Madeley and Telford Town Centre with a frequency of a bus every 10 minutes throughout the day. The second route is the number 44 route which also operates between Madeley and Telford Town Centre, Monday to Friday. Bus stops are located on either side of the Ironbridge Road, along Park Lane and Mound Way offering excellent public transportation links to and from the site.

The outline application was the subject of concerns expressed by Sport England relating to the loss of the school playing pitch; these concerns were resolved following the offer of £150,000 towards the provision of a new sports pitch at the William Reynolds School.

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

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

## 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

Madeley Town Council – Support subject to conditions. Woodside is identified as one of Telford & Wrekin Council’s six priority Neighbourhoods in which issues for social deprivation are being addressed. Wrekin Local Plan policy H23 states that a proportion of affordable housing will be sought on sites which come forward for residential development (the actual amount depending upon the level of local need) Madeley Neighbourhood Plan policy H1 states that new residential development is expected to contribute to meeting the identified need for affordable housing with a presumption that this would be on-site. The National Planning Policy Framework allows for subsidy to be recycled for alternative provision.

It is noted that the Design & Access Statement refers to an Affordable Statement provided with the application. The Viability Statement refers to the Telford & Wrekin Council’s Housing Investment Programme (HIP) offer of a 17% affordable housing contribution across a phased development programme – none, however, are to be provided in this scheme.

Areas of Woodside are in the top 10% most deprived nationally (all of Woodside’s five SOAs rank in the 20% most deprived nationally). In particular four of Woodside’s SOA’s rank in the top 10% Income Deprivation domain.

Access - Madeley Town Council has noted the care that needs to be taken to ensure that the proposed development properly accounts for the link between the re-located Woodlands Primary School and Nursery School and its principal catchment area. The pedestrian/cycle route between Park Lane Centre and Ironbridge Road through the development site and the associated crossing points must be regarded as a strategic link and appears to have been accorded due importance.

There is, however, concern at the proposal for a new vehicular access to the site from Mound Way. This, due to the relocation of the schools and leisure facilities, had become an area of extreme congestion at certain times of the day and had been mitigated by construction of a Parking facility on Mound Way (TWC/2012/0609 – planning condition 18) but which will be exacerbated by the creation of a new junction. Is there need for this second access point? There is also concern that the estate road configuration will lend itself to informal dropping off/collection point for pupils that would create a potential for disturbance to future residents. It is considered that infrastructure development needs to take into account the impact of the site on existing traffic movement conditions in its immediate environs to avoid contributing to congestion and this is not achieved by the illustrative layout plan

Local Amenity - New residential development will increase demand on existing educational and recreational facilities. Original outline proposal included provision for the enhancement of existing play facilities located off Park Lane and the development of a new MUGA and skate park. Funding generated by this site was also to allow for further enhanced sports

provision to be provided at William Reynolds School and contribute towards the delivery of a new and enhanced community park located off Park Lane.

Planning obligation should be conditioned towards off-site provisions and maintenance of open space

Environment - There is considerable on-site loss of trees which are described in the arboricultural report as in generally good physiological and structural condition – a number are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Whilst there is intention to retain some boundary trees at the junction of Mound Way and Park Lane, it is noted that 3624G at the junction of Mound Way and Ironbridge Road is to be removed. These are a prominent feature of the locality and provide a significant amount of visual public amenity and link between the pitmound woodlands of Brick Kiln Leasow and Meadow.

Planning condition should require replacement planting in order to retain trees on site frontages

Ecological appraisal has indicated the presence of foraging bats and birds. In order to avoid unnecessary disturbance, light spill from street lighting and external lighting schemes should be designed or conditioned to reduce ecological impact. The development of the grass playing field will result in a considerable loss of vegetation. Compensation and/or enhancement measures should be considered.

Boundary/Landscape - There is a need to enhance the setting and character of the site and the treatment of perimeter boundary to Mound Way and Ironbridge Road is critical. Current landscape proposals appear to retain the existing 900mm metal railings backed by native hedgerow. Commuted sum would be required to ensure planting of gaps and for future maintenance

Highways Agency – No objection

Highways: Comments awaited

Drainage: Support subject to conditions

- No development shall take place until detailed designs for the attenuation and control features have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These designs should include the identification of an outfall to the eastern attenuation basin.
- No development shall take place until drainage simulation files have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To ensure the adequate drainage of the site and avoid flooding.
- No development shall take place until details on the future ownership and maintenance of attenuation and control features have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority

Affordable Housing: Comment

This is an application for 101 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.

Ecology: Acknowledge that an ecological assessment has been undertaken including a bat transect activity survey. In terms of habitats, much of the southern parts of the site is improved grassland with some scrub and bare ground. Recommend conditions relating to effective landscaping and the prior approval of lighting. No evidence of GCN in ponds within 500m of the site (these were dry in any event). No evidence of badgers. Recommend conditions requiring provision of bat and bird boxes.

#### Parks & Open Spaces:

This site is a former school with playing field which was subject to considerable consultation with Sport England / P & OS regarding the outline application for the proposed development. This resulted in the securing of funds to mitigate the loss of playing field. Parks and Open Space believe it is essential that all new developments make full provision for the infrastructure/amenities and services which they create. New residents to the area will increase demand upon the existing recreational resource. The development will contain a number of properties which will contribute to the need of play / recreational facilities for the area.

There are some adjacent 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 and mitigate for the loss of playing field. In accordance with the approved planning obligation on the outline application for this site please confirm that the applicant is meeting this need through conditioning of WLP Policies LR4 and LR6 and providing a contribution of £150,000 as previously agreed. Should these funds not be proposed as previously agreed, Sport England (as statutory consultees) should be re-consulted. P & OS would also request to clarify this issue given the application is a full application and not a reserved matters application as anticipated. Should funding for children's play not be provided to meet the needs arising from this development, P & OS would request to be re-consulted as our comments are currently assuming that the above sum is to be provided.

Offsite attenuation is to be provided. The details of this proposal need clarifying, particularly given its close proximity to children's play facilities. P & OS would seek to ensure the design of this facility does not affect the safety of users of the adjacent well used Public Open Space, so would welcome input into its agreed design.

There is to be open space (and potentially incidental open space within the development) proposed within the development but no clarification as to how and who is to manage this. As such there will be a requirement for a long term landscape management plan which not only identifies how the area is to be managed but also identifies how this is to be funded.

Education: S106 contribution of £334,500 towards education facilities.

Pollution Control (Environmental Health): Support subject to conditions

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 to the satisfaction of the LPA.

Urban Design Officer – No objection in principle subject to comments on some details. Notes however that the scheme is much improved since pre-application discussions.

Sport England – comments awaited. Members are asked to note that the outline permission was subject to a contribution of sufficient funds to provide a replacement sports pitch. This features in this application also.

Shropshire Fire Service: Include Fire Authority informative

Neighbour consultation responses

Following neighbour consultation, two letters of objections were received and are summarised below:

- A public right of way running through the site has been blocked
- Local roads are overstretched particularly as a result of recent regeneration and school developments
- Building works have taken place in this area for 10 years now with consequent noise and disruption for local residents
- Impact on wildlife
- One property abuts the site and has principal windows overlooking the site – this is unacceptable from privacy and maintenance points of view
- One letter of support
- Site has become an eyesore and dumping ground
- However noise and dust problems could again appear

#### RELEVANT HISTORY

TWC/2012/0609 – Residential development (up to 87 no. dwellings) and associated infrastructure (Outline) – Outline Granted 30/7/2013

#### RELEVANT POLICIES

National Planning Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

#### 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

UD4 Landscape Design

H22 Community Facilities

H23 Affordable Housing

T4 Development Principles

T22 Planning Obligations

OL3 Green Network

OL4 Development in the Green Network

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 Highway Impacts
- Highways considerations
- Design considerations
- Affordable Housing and Viability of development

##### 1. Principle of development

The principle of residential development is 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. The principle of residential development has been established by virtue of outline planning permission Ref TWC/2012/0609 granted for 87 dwellings at this location in July 2013.

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 Madeley, 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 Ironbridge Road, Park Road and Mound Way and it is considered that travel by bus would be a viable alternative to the private car.

The site is shown as white land and green network. As new sporting and open space provision has been provided at the Abraham Darby Campus and at the William Reynolds Schools to the south, along with new green space provision nearby at Bennetts House. In particular the provision of a new attenuation pond and a new pedestrian and cycle link through the site will deliver wider green space improvements within the scheme. These new and improved spaces both within the site and adjoining or nearby will all be open to community use. This will greatly improve the public accessibility open spaces in this area in comparison to the existing provision. The proposal will therefore meet the requirements of policies CS11 and OL4 whereby community benefits are to be delivered as an integral part of development proposals. This also meets the requirements of paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

As part of the Council's Building Schools for the Future Programme, Woodlands Primary School has been relocated on land to the south of the site and now forms part of the Abraham Darby Campus. Part of the playing field was used as a site compound for the storage of construction materials associated with the new development. New and enhanced replacement sport pitch facilities have already been provided as part of these proposals which will be available for community use.

Enhanced sports pitch provision will also be provided at William Reynolds School through the use of funding generated from the proposed development and provide a new mini-pitch facility also for community use. The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy, which has been prepared in consultation with Sport England, confirms that the provision of this mini pitch will adequately meet the local deficiency of mini pitch provision projected for 2016 and 2021.

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 Madeley 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 and it is considered that travel by bus would be a viable alternative to the private car.

The outline permission was the subject of a viability assessment that determined that the site would be unable to deliver affordable housing, despite policy requirements. The site has now been brought into the Council's Housing Investment Programme, which will deliver 17% affordable housing across the programme. While affordable housing will not be provided at this site, Members will recognise that this site will deliver a housing offer that is not currently available. In the opinion of the Affordable Housing Officer, the programme should be viewed overall as providing a good % of affordable housing.

The loss of Green Network land that comprised the former playing fields associated with the school was acknowledged at the outline stage. It was felt that the provision of more meaningful playing facilities to the north west of the site on land adjoining Bennett House and the proposed new community park that will provide a MUGA, skate park and relocation of the existing Panna Court that would provide uninterrupted community use provided a net gain. The site also will be opened up and trees safeguarded where possible to provide wider community use and benefit.

## 2. Highway Considerations

The proposed highway works of access to the site involve the construction of two 5.0m wide access points from Park Lane and Mound Way. The principal access serving the development is from Park Lane with a secondary access off Mound Way. This is to provide a highway loop within the development and to increase permeability of the site both for local residential traffic and pedestrians. Although the Town Council raise concerns, the scheme has been designed in accordance with Manual for Streets. This access will of course also benefit emergency traffic.

Park lane is a residential road subject to 30mph restriction. A tidal flow pinch point is situated to the west of the site that gives priority to eastbound traffic movement. Park Lane is connected to the wider highway network via a priority junction with Mound Way. Park Lane is considered to be a lightly trafficked highway.

Mound Way is similarly classified as a lightly trafficked highway. This links to Lees Roundabout to the south and Woodside roundabout to the north. Outside of peak hours these junctions are also considered lightly trafficked. The area is subject to various speed control devices including speed tables given the presence of schools in the area. A cycle and pedestrian path is provided around the development site along Mound Way and Park Lane. As described elsewhere in this report the site has excellent bus service provision. The site is therefore considered highly accessible.

## 3. Design Considerations

Both National and Local Planning Policies require that all new development be of a high standard of design. The applicant's architect has responded to pre-application advice in presenting the final scheme.

The site benefits from the presence of mature trees that provide an effective backdrop to the development. The layout has been informed by a number of considerations, including:

- The need for connectivity to the wider area including the regenerated Woodside area, Madeley town centre and local primary and secondary schools. Clearly there is no access proposed onto the busy Ironbridge Road. But pedestrian links onto existing network is necessary
- The development has been planned in perimeter style that avoids shared courtyard parking. The scheme as a result takes on a suburban character, which is considered appropriate here
- The development is designed to provide dual aspect developments at key parts of the site – where they face Ironbridge Road, Mound Way and Park Lane. This helps tie the development in to the local built environment.
- The development was required to enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity with the wider area – this has been achieved evidenced by connections at key points along Ironbridge Road and Mound Way in particular. These access points for cyclists and pedestrians make use of mature woodland along the eastern and southern boundaries.
- To provide a good mix of housing to provide a diverse built environment.
- The provision of an attenuation pond to improve the sustainability of the site in terms of SuDS provision.

The layout is responsive and should help create an attractive built environment with adequate car parking provision. The individual dwellings comprise contemporary designs with strong gable features. It is considered that the design accords with Wrekin Local Plan Policy UD2 Design and should be supported.

#### 4. Affordable Housing and s106 Requirements

No affordable housing is provided with this development. However the viability assessment was accepted by Planning Committee in July 2013 when there was no affordable housing proposed due to viability issues. 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, although none were sought at the time of the outline permission. A total of £132,351 is proposed having regard to the viability of the scheme project. The leisure and recreation officer acknowledges that the £150,000 necessary to secure off-site sports pitch is adequate and no further contributions for leisure provision is necessary.

## 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 Madeley town centre. It is ideally located to promote non-vehicular access to the both Telford and Madeley town centres. Outline planning permission exists for residential development and the number of units proposed is consistent with expectations of the outline permission. 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. 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 a woodland to the west and the presence of mature trees within the site, the majority of which are to be retained. The outline permission did however concede that a number of trees would be removed but the replacement planting will provide a good alternative in the longer term.

## 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 £150,000 for the provision of off-site sports pitch, £132,351 for education provision and £2,000 for planning and financial monitoring contributions.

### 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. Local Lettings Plan
14. Hours of Work/Lorry Movements
15. Development in accordance with Plans

### Informatives

Fire Authority

Broadband

Ecology