

TWC/2017/0794

Land opposite College Farm House, Mill Lane, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire
Erection of 8no. dwellings with associated access and infrastructure **Amended Plans and Description**

APPLICANT

St Laurence Homes Ltd,

RECEIVED

27/10/2017

PARISH

Wellington

WARD

College

OFFICER Ian Lowe

THE APPLICATION HAS BEEN CALLED IN BY COUNCILLOR PATRICK MCCARTHY OF WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: YES

1.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This full planning application seeks permission for the erection of 8 dwellings comprising of 2no. 4 bedroom dwellings, 4no. 3 bedroom dwellings and 2no. 2 bedroom homes on land off Mill Lane, Wellington.
- 1.2 Plots 1, 2 and 3 are detached units with parking for at least 4 vehicles each. Plots 4, 5 and 6 form a terrace, each with 2 parking spaces and plots 7 and 8 form a semi-detached pair, again with 2 parking spaces. Plots 1 and 2 would be accessed by a separate shared access off Mill Lane with the remaining plots accessed off a shared driveway.
- 1.3 Each dwelling would be provided with front and rear gardens with rear patio areas and bin storage. Boundary treatment within the site would consist of a mix of 1.5m high brick wall and timber post and rail fencing in-between plots. A new hedgerow is proposed to the southern edge of the site and along the boundary with a public right of way which heads east to west past the site. A metal palisade fence extends along the boundary of this footpath which is outside the site boundary and would be retained. A 1.8m timber close boarded fence is proposed along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 1.4 The current layout and site plan follows the submission of amended plans based on discussions with the case officer. This includes for following changes.
- Reduction from 9 units to 8 units
 - Improved layout plan
 - Suitable parking for each dwelling
 - Proposed areas of planting and hedging for improved habitat creation

- 1.5 The application is supported by a suite of drawings and the following supporting documentation:
- Design & Access Statement
 - Ground Investigation Report
 - Ecological Appraisal (Jan 2018)
 - Green Network Statement

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The 0.25ha application site is located within the built up area of Telford and is sited on Mill Lane (private road) on the outskirts of Wellington town centre located 0.5miles to the west. The site is located immediately to the south of The Old Hall School, which is part of Wrekin College and which has associated extensive sports fields to the north of the site. Access to the site is via the private road off Waterloo Road to the west which also serves a terrace of 4 dwellings (Golf Links Cottages) and a detached dwelling house (Cottage Farm) located directly opposite the site. There is informal parking to the front of the terraced units. To the south of the site is a public right of way which runs east to west adjacent to the southern edge of the site. This separates the site from an embankment leading down to the railway line. A public foot bridge (Junction Bridge) across the railway line is located immediately to the south of the right of way and continues as Mill Lane on the opposite side where it eventually connects with the junction with Regent Street.
- 2.2 The application plot is largely overgrown and unmaintained private land enclosed by metal fencing and is not accessible to the public. The land is designated as Green Network in the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan. There are a few small trees and hedging towards the eastern edge of the site none of which are of sufficient value or public amenity to warrant protection. In the southern part of the site there is the remains of a dilapidated barn building.
- 2.3 The site lies in a sustainable location, on the outskirts of Wellington town centre with excellent links to public transport which provide connections to Telford, Shrewsbury and the wider area.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 TWC/2015/1151 - Outline application for a maximum of 5 dwellings and access with all other matters reserved – Outline Granted 23/02/2016
- 3.2 TWC/2013/0417 - Reserved matters application for the erection of 2no. detached dwellings - Reserved Matters Granted - 26/07/2013
- 3.3 TWC/2010/0068 - Application to replace extant Planning Permission W2007/1132 for residential development (outline application) Outline Granted - 12/05/2010
- 3.4 W2002/0635 - Residential Development (Outline) - Outline Granted - 04/10/2002

- 3.5 W2007/1132 - Residential Development (Outline) - Outline Granted - 16/10/2007

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 4.2 Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (2011-2031) (TWLP)
- SP1: Telford
- SP4: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- HO1: Housing requirement
- HO2: Housing site allocations
- NE2: Trees, hedgerows and woodlands
- NE6: Green Network
- C3: Impact of development on highways
- C4: Design of roads and streets
- BE1: Design Criteria
- ER12: Flood Risk Management

5. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Standard consultation responses

- 5.1 Wellington Town Council: No Objection
- 5.2 College Ward: Object:
Development encroaches onto Green Network and is a favourite walk for local dog walkers. College Ward has lowest green space per capita in borough which would be degraded by this development. Also raises concerns of traffic congestion, particularly due to location near to schools. Request made to call in application to planning committee.
- 5.3 Ecology: Support Subject to Conditions
The Ecology Officer original raised objections on grounds that the scheme failed to demonstrate how the development will prevent impact upon the Green Network how the scheme will 'promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats and ecological networks' as required by paragraph 117 of the National Planning Policy Framework. Following the submission of further amended plans, including the creation of an additional mixed species hedgerow along the southern boundary, the Officer has now removed their objections and now supports the development subject to conditions including the submission of a lighting plan and for the erection of 6 artificial nesting/roosting boxes. Standard Informatives also suggested.
- 5.4 Highways: Comment:
No objections to the proposal which does not fall on part of the adopted highway network. The development will not adversely affect any part of the adopted highway network in terms of safety or inconvenience to road users.
- 5.5 Drainage:

Scheme for foul and surface water to be submitted prior to the commencement of development along with a SuDS management plan for any appropriate feature.

- 5.6 Environmental Health (Contaminated Land): Support Subject To Conditions: Conditions required for the submission of an investigation and risk assessment, in addition to any assessment provided with the planning application, to be completed in accordance with a scheme to assess the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site.
- 5.7 Network Rail: Comment
No objection, however, the applicant should liaise directly with Network Rail's Asset Protection Team to set up a Basic Asset Protection Agreement.
- 5.8 West Mercia Police: Comment
Applicant should aim to achieve the Secured by Design award status for the development.
- 5.9 Shropshire Fire Service: Standard Informative

Neighbours and local groups

- 5.10 Neighbouring occupiers have been consulted and a site notice was erected. Objections have been received from 8 individual addresses summarised on the following grounds:
- Overdevelopment
 - Loss of green space
 - Lack of parking
 - No pavement – risk to pedestrians and walkers
 - Congestion – number of vehicles
 - Loss of privacy/nearness
 - Issues with existing water main to site
 - Concerns about building works

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:
- The Principle of the Residential Development
 - Impact upon Green Network
 - Scale, Design, Layout and Impact upon Neighbouring Occupiers
 - Highways
 - Drainage
 - Noise from school and railway

The Principle of the Development

- 6.2 Planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan consists of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and its policies. The NPPF is a material consideration to also take into account.
- 6.3 Of particular relevance to this site is a live outline planning consent (valid until 23/02/2019) that was granted for the erection of 5 dwellings on an area forming around 3 quarters of the current application site. This application is a material consideration and must be given significant weight in determining this application given that this outline consent remains valid for a further 9 months in which time a reserved matters application could be made and would be supported subject to the scale, design, layout and landscaping being acceptable. The current submission extends the red line boundary of this previously approved site to the south west and the area where the dilapidated barn building is located. In addition, there have been several previous consents relating to part of the application site.
- 6.4 The application site is located within the built up area of Telford and within walking distance of the core shopping area of Wellington and its bus and train stations. The development is therefore considered to be in a sustainable location close to a variety of shops, schools and services in addition to access to public transportation including bus services and Wellington Train Station.
- 6.5 Policies SP1 and SP4 of the TWLP support development within the urban area of Telford except where any adverse impact of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development. In this instance, although the site is located with a suitable, sustainable location, it is designated as Green Network. Green Network designation does not automatically determine that the Council will not support development. Instead, the Council will only support new development within the Green Network where it identifies, protects and enhances the Green Network and its functions. Where adverse impacts are identified, development will need to demonstrate that the benefits of the development outweigh any adverse impacts on the Green Network and its functions. The principle of development is therefore acceptable subject to the technical implications of the site including the scale and design of the development and the impact upon the Green Network.

Impact upon Green Network

- 6.6 The majority of the application site is designated as Green Network within the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan. The site was not included as Green Network within the now superseded Wrekin Local Plan and when the current live planning permission was granted in 2016.
- 6.7 Appropriate consideration must be given to the most recent consent which would, subject to the submission and approval of a reserved matters application, result in the erection of 5 dwellings on this site which is now

Green Network and where it would not be a requirement to provide any enhancements. This is a material consideration and also provides the developer with a 'fall-back' if the proposed scheme is not approved. It should also be noted that a small portion of the site to the south west corner, including the site of the former barn building remains outside of the Green Network designation.

- 6.8 The site itself remains private land and is fenced off on all boundaries without public access. Views into the site are made through the metal fencing which enclose the site. Historically, the site and its boundaries were fairly well maintained but since the submission of application for development on this site approximately 10 years ago, the site has not been well maintained which has resulted in it becoming largely overgrown. In addition, the former barn building on the site has become dilapidated. As concluded in the submitted Ecology appraisal and supported by the Council's Ecology specialist, the site is of particularly low ecological value providing only some potential for nesting birds and reptiles but no suitable features for bats or other protected species.
- 6.9 Following discussions between the developer and the Council's Ecologist, further plans and details have been submitted in support of the application demonstrating how the proposal will help provide improved landscaping and habitat including new trees and shrubs and in particular, the creation of a new hedgerow along the southern edge of the site. The applicant is also agreeable to conditions to provide the erection of 3 bird boxes and 3 bat boxes within the site. The Ecologist is therefore satisfied that the proposed development identifies the ecological value of the site, enhances the Green Network and overcomes any negative impacts.
- 6.10 For these reasons and in consideration of the live planning consent on this site which is a material consideration, Officers are satisfied that the proposed ecological mitigation measures will off-set the loss of Green Network in this instance. The proposal therefore complies with policy NE 6.

Scale, Design, Layout and Impact upon Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.11 Policy BE1 provides guidance to assess whether or not proposals are of an appropriate design quality and relate positively their context. It advises the Council to assess proposed development in relation to its scale, massing, form, density, orientation and layout, proportions, materials, landscape elements, access, parking and spatial quality.
- 6.12 Officers are satisfied that the scale and design of the proposed development is acceptable in this instance and would not result in the overdevelopment of this site. The submitted site plan demonstrates a scheme that provides a mixed scheme of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses with each property afforded appropriate levels of parking and amenity space. In addition, the proposed development provides good sized areas of landscaping and planting to the frontages, with some areas providing improved habitat. Officers are of the view that the visual appearance of this development would be a significant

improvement on what is currently a site of largely unmaintained scrub and a dilapidated former barn building.

- 6.13 The proposed house designs are appropriate and provide a mix of architectural details including window surround details, bay windows and brick detail to eaves. The proposed development would provide an attractive well landscaped development that would form a suitable addition to this site.
- 6.14 The density of the proposed development is 32 dwellings per hectare (dph) which has taken into account the character of this particular location and acknowledges the need to provide additional soft landscaping.
- 6.15 Notwithstanding concerns raised that the development would be to the detriment of walkers who regularly use this route, the development would not prevent the continued use of Mill Lane as a pedestrian route. Additional planting is proposed along the frontage with Mill Lane with the proposed dwellings set approximately 15m back from the site boundary. As a result, the dwellings would not appear overbearing or dominant to passers-by and would be partly screened by proposed planting.
- 6.16 Officers note the concerns raised by the occupier of Mill Farm Cottage to the west of the site on grounds of loss of privacy and nearness. There would be a minimum distance of approximately 16m from the front elevation of plot 2 and the boundary with this neighbouring house and a minimum distance of approximately 30m between building faces including the front of plot 2 and the side elevation of plot 8. As such, Officers are more than satisfied that there would be no adverse impact upon the occupiers of the nearest occupier by loss of privacy in this instance.
- 6.17 Overall, it is considered that the scale, design, layout and density of the site is acceptable and would not cause any adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area or upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Highways

- 6.18 As with the live outline consent for 5 dwellings, the application site utilises the existing right of access off Waterloo Road to the west. The Lane is not adopted highway and as such, the Council's Highways Officer raises no objection to the access arrangements of this proposal. It is not considered that the current proposal for 8 dwellings would not have any significant impact upon the local highways network although it is acknowledged that there would be more vehicles using Mill Lane which is also used by pedestrians. Given the nature of the road, it is relatively low speed and in this instance, officers do not consider that there would be any pedestrian safety implications on this private land. A condition will be attached to ensure that the areas for parking and turning are properly laid out prior to first use. A site environmental management plan will also be requested in order to control development operations.

Drainage

- 6.19 There are no objections from the drainage officer subject to details of surface and foul water drainage to be submitted prior to the commencement of any development. Officers are satisfied that there would be no drainage issues subject to the submission of these details as per the requested conditions.

Noise from School and Railway

- 6.20 Given the close proximity of the application site to the school and the railway line, a condition will be attached for the submission of a noise survey in order to determine what mitigation measures are required to the proposed dwellings. The mitigation measures will need to be installed in accordance with this guidance and a further assessment will need to be carried out prior to first occupation to ensure the features have had the desired noise reducing affect. If not, further mitigation will be required until it can be demonstrated that noise levels are acceptable.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed development would be in a sustainable location close to the district centre of Wellington. It has been determined that despite the recent Green Network designation of the site, it is of little public amenity or ecological value. Enhancements through planting and habitat creation put forward as part of this scheme ensures the development complies with Green Network policy NE6 of the TWLP. Furthermore, the existing live consent can still be implemented regardless of the Green Network designation and this fall-back position is a material consideration. The development would provide a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom units of an acceptable scale and design and the site layout respects the character of the area without being overdevelopment of the site and without any adverse impact to the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.
- 7.2 Notwithstanding the objections received and taking into account recent planning history which includes a live outline planning consent for 5 units, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with local planning policy outlined above and the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following conditions and informatives (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):-
1. Time Limit – Full
 2. Materials Conditions
 3. Landscaping Conditions
 4. Highway Conditions
 5. Drainage Conditions

6. Ecology Conditions
7. Noise Survey and Mitigation
8. Development in accordance with plans
9. Removal of permitted development