

TWC/2017/0454

Site of The Vineyard, North Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire
Change of use from Nursery (use class D1) to form 7 no. dwellings (Use class C3)
and the Erection of 7no. bungalows with associated car parking and landscaping

APPLICANT

Shropshire Restorations Ltd

RECEIVED

30/05/2017

PARISH

Wellington

WARD

Park

OFFICER Ian Lowe

**THE APPLICATION IS SUBJECT TO A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS**

OBJECTIONS RECEIVED: YES

1.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 1.1 This full planning application seeks permission for the conversion of Vineyard House (Locally Listed) located in Wellington into 7 apartments (1, 2 and 3 bedroom) together with the construction of 7 (2 and 3 bedroom) bungalows on land to the north of the main building. The proposals include the demolition of modern extensions to the main house and renovation works to the external elevations of the house and an adjacent barn building to the east. The previous use of the house is as a nursery with land to the north used as a recreation area.
- 1.2 The development proposes 34 car parking spaces which includes a mixture of 2 and 3 spaces for each bungalow (17 total) and 17 spaces for the proposed apartments. A new access road is proposed to the proposed bungalows off Vineyard Place, branching off the existing access road to Vineyard House.
- 1.3 Amended plans and information have been submitted following the submission of the application and these include:
- Widening of proposed vehicular access to bungalows.
 - Car parking to Erccall View repositioned.
 - Car parking bays to apartments widened to 2.8m
 - Driveway depth to bungalow plots 6 and 7 increased.
 - Landscaping revised to include fruit trees and native hedgerows to eastern boundary and within site. Wildlife corridor to east widened.
 - Road layout revised to allow additional planting.
 - Additional bat roost assessment submitted following Ecology Officer guidance
 - Response to Green Network allocation in emerging local plan.
- 1.3 The application is supported by a suite of drawings and the following supporting documentation:
- Design & Access Statement

- Planning Supporting Statement
- Ecological Appraisal including bat survey and report
- Arboricultural Appraisal
- Highways & Drainage Statement

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site, known as Vineyard House, is located within the Market Town of Wellington and within the built up area of Telford and Wrekin. Access to the house is via Vineyard Place which is located just over 100m north of a Morrisons Store on Spring Hill. The house is locally listed and has two Tree Preservation Order (TPO) trees within the parking area to the south of the main building. The green space and former hardstanding play area to the north of the building is allocated as Green Network in the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan.
- 2.2 Originally constructed as a large residential property in the 19th Century, Vineyard House has had a range of residential uses in more recent times including as a children's home and previously as a nursery. Despite retaining much of the main façade facing south, the building has had a number of single storey, two storey and roof extensions added over different periods up to the 1980's which significantly reduce the heritage value of the building. Internally, very little of the Georgian detail remains.
- 2.3 Historical mapping confirms the property was originally built within spacious grounds accessed from Vineyard Road to the south. The land surrounding the property has since reduced for the development of mainly bungalows and includes the new access point off Vineyard Place. An original barn building to the east of the house remains.
- 2.4 The area to the north of the main building is mainly laid out as grass except for an area of hardstanding used as a play area for the previous nursery use. There is a wooded area and school playing field located beyond the north boundary and 2 bungalows are located beyond hedging and fencing along the eastern boundary. The land to the north of the site is owned by Telford and Wrekin Council. The Woodland and recreation ground to the north are allocated as Green Network within the current development plan and retained as such within the emerging local plan.
- 2.5 A two storey dwelling known as Ercall View is located within the red line curtilage and sits on the western edge of the site adjacent to the turning head of Vineyard Place. The driveway to No.2 Vineyard Place is located on the northern side of the turning head adjacent to where the new access to the bungalows is proposed.
- 2.6 Land levels rise in all directions towards the main house which is located on a high point. Land lowers beyond the northern side of the main house but then rises slightly again towards the tree line beyond the northern boundary.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 W93/0155 - Change of use to Childrens Daycare Nursery to include staff residential accommodation and offices and alteration to existing vehicular/pedestrian access – 29/04/1993

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 4.2 Wrekin Local Plan:
UD2 Design Criteria
HE25 Building of Local Interest
- 4.3 Core Strategy:
CS1 Homes
CS5 District & Local Centres in Telford
CS9 Accessibility and Social Inclusion
CS15 Urban Design
- 4.4 The emerging Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (TWLP) has been submitted for independent examination. The Examination in Public hearings took place between 30 January and 10 February 2017. The Inspector has now published his proposed Main Modifications and they are currently subject to public consultation which will run until 22nd September 2017.
- 4.5 Paragraph 216 of the NPPF advises that from the day of publication, decision takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:-
- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced the preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
 - The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given);
 - The degree of consistency with relevant policies in the framework.
- 4.6 Given that the Inspector's draft Main Modifications have now been published the plan is at an advanced stage. A significant amount of weight should now be given to those policies that are not subject to change within the proposed main modifications and the weight should be given to those policies that are included in the list of modifications will depend on the nature of the proposed modification and the likelihood of consultation resulting in a further change. The emerging policies that are relevant to this application are:

SP1: Telford

SP4: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

HO1: Housing requirement

HO2: Housing site allocations

NE1: Biodiversity and geodiversity

NE2: Trees, hedgerows and woodlands

NE4: Provision of public open space

NE6: Green Network
C3: Impact of development on highways
C4: Design of roads and streets
BE1: Design Criteria
BE6 Building of Local Interest
ER12: Flood Risk Management

5. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Standard consultation responses

- 5.1 Wellington Town Council: No Objection
- 5.2 Drainage: Support Subject to Conditions:
Conditions to include submission of foul and surface water details based on sustainable drainage (SuDS) principles and to include the submission of a SuDS management plan.
- 5.3 Highways: Support subject to conditions:
Following the submission of amended plans, the Highways Officer raises no objections subject to conditions including the completion of parking and turning areas prior to first use, and conditions relating to access gradient and material. The developer would be required to apply for a section 184 (Highways Act 1980) licence to construct the new access.
- 5.4 Healthy Spaces Officer: Comment:
No objections in principle to the development or the loss of the space to the north of the main building. Request a contribution of £600 per 2 or more bed property towards recreational facilities for the area. This sum would go towards improving recreational facilities within Bowring Park, such as improvements to the existing Bowling Green.
- 5.5 Ecology: Support subject to conditions
The Ecology Officer has considered the application and the supporting documents including the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Pearce Environmental (February 2017) and the Bat Survey Report by Treetec (August 2016). They have also been provided with the Bat Survey Report by Treetec (July 2017). Both the main house and adjacent barn were surveyed for bats and both were categorised as supporting a summer day roost of a low number of a common bat species. The Officer recommends that prior to the commencement of works on the main house and barn a Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement with respect to bats and the roost identified in the Bat Survey Reports by Treetec (August 2016 & July 2017). They also suggest a condition for the erection of bat and bird roosting/nesting boxes (6 in total), a landscaping plan and lighting plan.
- 5.6 The Coal Authority: No Comment

5.7 West Mercia Police: Comment
No objection subject to a condition relating to the applicant aiming to achieve the Secured by Design award status for the development.

5.8 Shropshire Fire Service: Standard Informative

Neighbours and local groups

5.9 Neighbouring occupiers have been consulted and comments from 4 separate addresses have been received. Although it is noted that the principle of development is supported by most of the residents who have made comment, concerns and objections have been raised about parking in the locality, visibility when turning out of Vineyard Place and ownership of the access road within the site.

5.10 Objections have been received from No.2 Vineyard Place on grounds that there would be insufficient visibility between their driveway and the access to the proposed bungalows.

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.
- Scale, Design and Impact upon Neighbouring Occupiers
- Green Network
- Ecology and Landscaping
- Highways
- Drainage
- Planning Obligations

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 saved policies of the Wrekin Local Plan and the Core Strategy. The Telford & Wrekin Local Plan is at an advanced stage of preparation and its policies together with the NPPF are material considerations.

6.3 The application site is located within the built up area of Telford and Wrekin and within a few hundred metres walking distance of the core shopping area of the market town of Wellington. In terms of location alone, the development is considered to be in a sustainable location close to a variety of shops and services in addition to public transportation including bus services and Wellington Train Station. The project, which involves the retention and restoration of the locally listed building, would be in accordance with Core Strategy policies CS1, CS3 and CS5 which direct the majority of development

to district centres within the urban area.

- 6.4 Saved Wrekin Local Plan policy H6 seeks to support housing development on land between 0.4 and 1 hectare where it is located within 800m from a district centre and where the site can be adequately accessed and drained; provide sufficient parking; where there are problems of land stability and contamination that adequate remedial action has been taken, and that the proposal does not have an adverse impact on the local environment, especially in its relationship with adjacent land uses. It also suggests that schemes should generally be of a higher than average density.
- 6.5 The principles of these policies are carried forward into policies SP1, SP4 HO1 and HO4 of the emerging Telford & Wrekin Local Plan which direct sustainable development into Telford to meet the housing requirement delivering a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures.
- 6.6 On this basis, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the regeneration of the existing building to create 7 apartments and the erection of 7 bungalows in the grounds would be an effective use of this land and in a highly sustainable location. The development would be in accordance with the relevant policies outlined above. The remainder of the site specific design and technical issues are discussed below.

Scale, Design and Impact upon Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.7 Policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan provides guidance to assess whether or not proposals are of an appropriate design quality and relate positively to 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. Policy CS15, amongst other issues, states that development will assist in creating and sustaining safe places, positively influencing the appearance of the local environment. In addition, national guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework asserts that development should be of high quality design, respond to local context and should reinforce local distinctiveness.
- 6.8 Policy BE1 of the emerging local plan builds upon the existing design policies set out in UD2 and CS15. It also seeks high quality design and suggests that the council will support development that respects and responds positively to its context and enhances the quality of the local built and natural environment.
- 6.9 Policy HE25 and BE6 relate to the protection of locally listed buildings. Vineyard House, whilst not of a quality to warrant listing, is of significant value locally due to its architectural and historical interest. The relevant policies state that the Council will not support development which involves the demolition/partial demolition of a building of local interest unless replaced by a development of equal or better quality or where development would have a detrimental impact upon its setting.

- 6.10 Officers consider that the retention of the building is of significant importance and its conversion into apartments, supported by the building of the adjacent bungalows, would ensure the main house is enjoyed for further generations. Although some demolition is taking place, this would be to the modern unsympathetic extensions to the building, the loss of which would significantly improve the character and appearance of the house.
- 6.11 The proposal would provide a mixture of 2 and 3 bedroom apartments averaging 114sq.m (gross internal area). A central lift would be provided to allow improved access to the upper floors. The building would be re-rendered and new windows inserted where required. Conditions will be attached to ensure the colour and texture of the render is acceptable and that the windows match existing windows where possible.
- 6.12 The bungalows have been designed to reflect the design and character of other bungalows along Vineyard Place. Plots 1-4 on the northern side would be constructed with red brick to match these neighbouring bungalows which the 3 bungalows immediately adjacent to Vineyard House would be rendered to blend in with the appearance of the house. The bungalows would be 2 and 3 bedroomed with a main gable roof design and hipped roof attached garages to the side. They would be accessed off a single private access road and have landscaping to the front and modest rear gardens.
- 6.13 Officers consider the scale and density of the site is acceptable for this central location and ensures that Vineyard House remains the dominant feature of the site. The development would deliver a density of 31 dwellings per hectare (dph) which is slightly higher than surrounding roads which vary between 10 and 25dph, but remains a suitable level for this site which is in close proximity to the district centre.
- 6.14 The proposed development would not have any adverse impact upon the outlook and privacy of neighbouring occupiers, by reason of the orientation of properties and distances between them.
- 6.15 Overall, the proposal would make good use of this land in addition to retaining and providing improvements to the façade of the locally listed building. The development would not cause any detrimental impact to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or impact adversely upon the amenities of neighbouring properties. The proposal therefore complies with the policies outlined above in regards to the scale, design and layout of the development. Conditions for materials and landscaping will be attached to the decision.

Green Network

- 6.16 The grassed area to the north of the main house forms part of a wider proposed Green Network allocation within the emerging Telford and Wrekin Local Plan. It is not allocated as such within the existing local plan. The Green Network emerged from the original Landscape Master planning of Telford and was later adopted within the Telford Local Plan and the Wrekin Local Plan and has been extremely effective in protecting green space within Telford and

shaping the appearance of the town. The Green Network is identified as a strategic interconnected network of open spaces within the urban areas of Telford and Newport.

- 6.17 Policy NE6 states that the Council will protect, maintain, enhance and where possible extend the Green Network. It continues to state that new development within the Green Network will only be supported where it identifies, protects and enhances the Green Network and its functions. Policy NE6 can be afforded significant weight in the decision making process, as a material consideration, as it is not included within the draft Main Modifications to the new plan. It is important to note however that the policy does not form part of the adopted development plan at this stage.
- 6.18 Land within the Green Network has been assessed as performing the following functions:
- To provide significant visual amenity value in the form of extensive views over green open areas, water bodies or woodland;
 - To provide separation between built up areas and to help retain and enhance the individual identity of local communities;
 - To provide an appropriate supply of open land to meet the diverse recreational needs of an expanding population;
 - To maintain, protect and enhance the borough's ecological value in terms of natural habitats and species;
 - To maintain, protect and enhance the unique geological and archaeological features within the borough;
 - To provide open space linkages through which footpath, cycle ways and ecological corridors can connect different parts of Telford or Newport.
- 6.19 Having undertaken an assessment of the proposed development against the functions listed above the following conclusions have been reached:
- The site is a private enclosed space that cannot be accessed by the general public, it does not provide significant visual amenity in the form of extensive views over green spaces or open areas. However, by providing access to this site, views to the trees within Green Network north of the site would be made more possible from the side of the application site.
 - The site does not currently provide separation between built up areas.
 - The site is private land and whilst it had a previous use as a recreation area for the day nursery, it is highly unlikely that a similar use would come forward on this site. As such, the site has no value in terms of meeting the recreational needs of the population.
 - No unique geological or archaeological features have been identified within the site.
 - As stated above the application site is private land and there are no rights of public access across it, in terms of footpaths or cycle ways. The site does provide some ecological function and, as set out below, the Council's Ecology Specialist has confirmed that the proposal is acceptable in this regard.

- 6.20 Based on the above, and subject to the proposal being acceptable in terms of its ecological impacts, the proposed development is acceptable with regard to the functions of the Green Network in this location.

Ecology and Landscaping

- 6.21 The application has been supported by an ecology survey report and bat surveys to both the main house and barn.
- 6.22 The main building was assessed as having moderate to high potential for roosting bats while the more modern extensions have lower potential. Two bat activity surveys were carried out by Treetec in June and July 2017. A single common pipistrelle bat emerged from a ridge tile above a dormer window close to the chimney on the western gable on one occasion. Treetec classify the roost as a summer day roost of a common species of bat. Treetec recommend that the roost can be retained in place during the renovation works to the building with access being maintained when the ridge tile is reseated and an area of traditional bitumen roof lining provided beneath. The report recommends that the works occur over the winter to avoid the period when bats are most likely to be present and that, if precautionary methods of working including ecological supervision, are followed then a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence will not be required. Treetec recommend that lighting on the site should be sensitive to the location of the bat roosts both within the main building and within the associated barn.
- 6.23 The proposals include removal of a modern extension from the adjacent barn and repair of the damaged sections, bricking up of the windows and repairs to the chimney etc. The barn itself is outside the red line boundary although the line abuts the front and side elevations where improvements are proposed. There was potential for bat roosting within the historic part of the barn but negligible potential in the flat roofed extension areas. Two dusk and one dawn survey were then carried out in summer 2016. A single common pipistrelle bat emerged from under the ridge tile by the chimney in both the evening surveys. The barn is characterised as supporting a summer day roost of a low number of a common bat species. The report recommends that 2 bat boxes be provided on the site and that the roost be retained in its current location.
- 6.24 No ponds were identified in 250m of the site and so no further consideration of great crested newts is required. Swallows have nested in the barn to be renovated and mitigation for the loss of this nesting opportunity must be provided on the site. Two bird boxes and two swallow cups should be provided on the site and this can be controlled through condition.
- 6.25 The Council's Ecological Specialist has considered the proposed development and has confirmed that, subject to the imposition of conditions, there is no objection to the proposed development. Conditions will include a landscaping plan to be submitted and details of management of any public open space
- 6.26 There are two TPO trees within the site and trees located outside the red line boundary to the north of the site. A condition will be attached requesting

details of protection measures to the trees and to ensure that there are no changes in level within the root protection areas of the trees.

Highways

- 6.27 The proposed scheme would utilise the existing access off Vineyard Place to the south of the house where there is existing parking for the building. This would be used for the residents of the proposed apartments. A total of 17 parking spaces would be provided for the apartments which equates to 2.42 spaces per unit. The guidance contained within the emerging Telford and Wrekin Local Plan seeks 1.6 parking spaces per 3 bedroom dwelling, 1.4 spaces per 2 bedroom dwelling and 1.3 spaces per 1 bed dwelling. The number of spaces provided is therefore significantly above this requirement.
- 6.28 A new access is proposed to the north of Ercall Place and would replace and existing driveway to that property. The new access would serve a private road to the bungalows. Again, 17 spaces, including garage space are provided in total for the 7 bungalows. This equates to 2.42 spaces per unit which would be above the suggested standard.
- 6.29 Officers note the particular concerns raised by the occupiers of No.2 Vineyard Place in regards to the proposed new access and visibility between this and their existing driveway. Plans have been amended to widen the point of access following guidance received from the Council's Highways Officer. They are satisfied that there would be sufficient visibility at the junction with the access to be able to see vehicles emerging from the adjacent driveway and vice-versa. The Highways Officer raises no objection to the overall scheme subject to the conditions outlined in their consultation response above.

Drainage

- 6.30 There are no objections from the Council's 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.

Affordable Homes

- 6.31 The proposal falls below the 15 dwellings threshold which is the trigger for the provision of affordable housing in saved WLP policy H23. As discussed earlier in this report, significant weight is given to emerging policy HO5 which seeks 25% affordable housing contribution on schemes of 11 or more. In this instance, the applicant has supplied a confidential viability statement which has been assessed by the Council's Delivery Group Specialist. They confirm that it would not be viable in this instance for the scheme to include affordable homes.
- The values and costs associated with the proposed development are reasonable assumptions in line with market rates for the locality.

- The viability has presented 2 options, one with no affordable housing and the second with 3no. affordable units at the Local Plan Policy requirement of 25%.
- The appraisal with affordable housing would not be viable as the profit level is below the accepted benchmark whilst the non-affordable version does provide an acceptable profit in accordance with the NPPF paragraph 173.
- Therefore the applicant has demonstrated the development should not be subject to any affordable housing requirement.

Planning Obligations

- 6.32 In determining the required planning obligations on this specific application the following three tests as set out in the CIL Regulations (2010), in particular Regulation 122, have been applied to ensure that the application is treated on its own merits:
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
 - b) directly related to the development;
 - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 6.33 In addition account has to be taken of the changes to the CIL Regulations in April 2015 that now restrict the “pooling” of financial contributions to no more than five contributions to a single type of infrastructure. It is considered that the financial contributions set out below meet the relevant tests.
- 6.34 The development would generate the need for children’s play and recreation. As the proposal does not make any proposed on-site provision, in accordance with saved WPL policies LR4 and LR6 a contribution will be secured via a s106 for £600 per dwelling towards off-site recreation at Bowring Park, Wellington.
- 6.35 It is considered that the financial contributions are acceptable and accords with saved policies LR4 and LR6 of the Wrekin Local Plan and policy NE4 of emerging TWLP.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The proposed development would ensure the refurbishment and sustainable re-use of Vineyard Place as a locally listed building. The site is within a sustainable urban location close to Wellington Town Centre and would provide a mixture of apartments and bungalows. The site can be suitably accessed and drained subject to the conditions attached. Although the grassed recreation area to the north of the main house is allocated as Green Network in the emerging plan, it has been assessed that this area does not have significant ecological or amenity value and cannot be accessed by the general public. It is considered that there are a number of benefits to the proposal including the retention and refurbishment of an important local building and as such the proposal outweighs the small amount of harm created by the loss of this private recreation space. It is therefore considered

that the development is acceptable and compliant with local planning policy and the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Delivery Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to;

A) The applicant/landowners entering into a Section 106 Agreement with the Local Planning Authority, terms to be agreed by the Development Management Service Delivery Manager, relating to:

(i) Children's Play Space
- £600 per dwelling towards off-site existing children's play and recreation at Bowring Park, Wellington.

B) 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. Highway Conditions
4. Ecology Conditions
5. Drainage Conditions
6. Arboriculture Conditions
7. Development in accordance with plans

Informatives