

TWC/2018/0658

Land rear of Charlton School, Off St Pauls Drive, Dothill, Telford, Shropshire
Erection of 54no. dwellings and associated landscaping *** Amended site layout
received ***

APPLICANT

Nuplace Ltd, Kirsty Liddell

RECEIVED

08/08/2018

PARISH

Wellington

WARD

Dothill

THIS APPLICATION HAS BEEN REFERRED TO PLANS BOARD AS IT IS A MAJOR APPLICATION IN WHICH THE COUNCIL HAS A FINANCIAL INTEREST

1.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that DELEGATED AUTHORITY be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION subject to conditions and informatives.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site measures 2.41 hectares and is located in the Dothill area of north west Telford. The site sits on a strip of land to the north east of the redeveloped Charlton Secondary School and west of Whitchurch Drive. The land is currently covered by extensive areas of self-set vegetation, trees and woodland. A small part of the site encroaches into a narrow strip of woodland running alongside Whitchurch Drive which is designated as Green Network in the Telford & Local Plan.

2.2 The site is located approximately 0.5 miles north of the centre of Wellington and 4 miles north west of the centre of Telford. The wider surrounding area is largely residential in character, however, Charlton Secondary School is located immediately to the south west and the Princess Royal Hospital is located to the east beyond Whitchurch Drive. Residential properties abut the north of the site. Charlton School has an indoor gymnasium and outdoor all weather sports pitch located within close proximity of the site boundary.

3.0 PROPOSAL

3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection 54 dwellings, together with associated access, landscaping and infrastructure, on land adjacent The Charlton School, Dothill, Telford.

3.2 The proposal involves the provision of 19 specialist and 35 general needs properties, comprising a mixture of one, two, three and four bed dwellings provided in one, two and two and a half storey buildings. Vehicular access will be obtained from St Paul's Drive to the north and pedestrian access will be obtained from Whitchurch Drive at two points in the north east and south east corners.

3.3 The application has been accompanied by the following supporting documents: -

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Transport Statement
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Gap Analysis Report (Ground Investigation)
- Proposed Schedule of Accommodation

4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 W2006/0740 - Residential development (outline) – Withdrawn 16/5/14
- 4.2 W99/0398 – Proposed Development of 80 No. 2, 3 and 4 bed semi-detached/detached houses, garages, associated works and school sports hall, car parks and associated works – Withdrawn 10/2/04

5.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.1 National Guidance:
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 5.2 Telford & Wrekin Local Plan:

6.0 SUMMARY OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 6.1 Cllr Karen Tomlinson: Objects
Objects on grounds that access roads are too narrow. Suggests access is provided from Whitchurch Drive. Also raises concerns regarding impact upon North Rd/Whitchurch Rd junction.
- 6.2 Wellington Town Council: Object
Overdevelopment of site, adverse impact upon residential amenity, access not adequate, removal of trees, impact upon wildlife and local environment.
- 6.3 Highways: No objection
Raises no objection subject to conditions controlling the provision of parking/loading areas, requiring technical highway and footway construction details, and a Construction Management Plan, together with the requirement for a financial contribution of £75,804 towards the Telford Growth Point Package and highways improvement works along Whitchurch Road between the North Road and Apley Avenue junctions.
- 6.4 Healthy Spaces: Comment
Proposal includes no on-site children's play provision. Therefore requests the provision of a financial contribution of £600 per 2 bed (or larger) dwelling towards the upgrade of a nearby play area at Severn Drive.
- 6.5 Education: Comment
Request that a contribution of £99,937 is provided towards primary school provision or enhancement in the local area.

- 6.6 Affordable Housing: Comment
Confirms the growing need for specialist accommodation within the borough. Whilst accommodation of this type does not meet the definition of affordable housing, on balance, the level of accessible accommodation provided by this development represents a significant benefit to the borough.
- 6.7 Arboricultural: Comment
Recommends conditions. Requests that further tree survey work is carried out as a condition of any planning approval. Makes recommendations in respect of veteran Oak within centre of the site.
- 6.8 Ecology: Support subject to Conditions
Raises no objection subject to conditions requiring the erection of artificial nesting roosts/boxes, external lighting plan and Habitat Management Plan.
- 6.9 Drainage: Comment
Raises no objection subject to condition requiring detailed foul and surface water drainage details.
- 6.10 Shropshire Fire Service: Comment
Recommend consideration is given to information contained within “Fire Safety Guidance for Commercial and Domestic Planning Applications”

7.0 NEIGHBOUR CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 7.1 The application has received a total of 80 objections from local residents. The key concerns are summarised below, however, are available in full on the planning file:
<https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationresponses-public.aspx?ApplicationNumber=TWC/2018/0658>

7.2 Objections:

- Majority of objections concern the suitability of the access to the site
 - St Pauls Drive too narrow and often contains parked cars
 - Roads serving the site and surrounding area already congested
 - Proposed Charlton School residential development will increase traffic on Whitchurch Road, make it harder to exit St Pauls Drive
 - St Pauls Drive cannot accommodate extra traffic
 - Whitchurch Road needs traffic calming
 - Access for HGV's, delivery and emergency vehicles will be difficult
 - A better option would be to provide access from Whitchurch Drive
- Impact upon protected species and local wildlife
- Loss of open space
- Proposal will change the character and dynamics of the estate
- Will add to congestion in the area
- Housing is not affordable
- Complex drainage issues across the site

8.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 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:

- Principle of Development
- Highways and Access
- Design and Layout
- Trees, Ecology and Open Space
- Residential Amenity
- Planning Obligations

8.2 **Principle of Development**

Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the development plan consists of The Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (TWLP). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out policy guidance at a national level and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

8.3 The site is an allocated housing development site (Site H10) within the local plan, meaning that it has been identified as one of the sites intended to deliver the majority of the Council's housing supply over the local plan period to 2031. The site is listed within Appendix D as site H10 (Blessed Robert Johnson) with an identified yield of 50 dwellings. Historically, the site has been committed for residential development within the former Wrekin Local Plan site also benefits from residential consent under Section 7(1) of the New Towns Act. The principle of residential development on the site has therefore been established in policy.

8.4 The site is located approximately 1km north of Wellington town centre where a range of local services are located. The nearest bus stops to the site are located to the south on Apley Avenue which runs 6 buses an hour between Leegomery and Madeley, including a stop in Telford Town Centre. The site contains pedestrian links to footways and cycleways on Whitchurch Drive and Apley Avenue to the south. There are a number of primary schools located within the vicinity of the site and the Princess Royal Hospital is located across Whitchurch Drive to the east. The site benefits from good connectivity to surrounding footpath and cycle networks and is considered to be located within a sustainable location in terms of its proximity to goods, services and transport links.

8.5 **Highways and Access**

The proposed development will be accessed from St Paul's Drive to the north of the site which links onto St Mark's Drive and exits onto Whitchurch Road. A significant number of representations have been received raising concerns regarding the use of St Paul's Drive to access the proposed development. Concerns raised suggest that the road is too narrow and too winding to support additional development and will cause additional congestion where St Mark's Drive exits onto Whitchurch Road.

- 8.6 In light of the number of representations, Highways Officers have given significant consideration to the proposed scheme. It is noted that St Paul's Drive comprises a 5.5m wide carriageway with footways on either side which currently terminates at the north site boundary. No turning head has been provided at this point which suggests that a connection to the application site was always intended. The applicant's supporting Transport Assessment comments that *Manual for Streets* identifies a 5.5m wide carriageway as being sufficient for two large vehicles to pass. Previous guidance provided in *Design Bulletin 32* notes that a width of 5.5m is normally required to allow the largest vehicles to pass but that most vehicles accessing residential development will be cars. It also adds that a carriageway width of 5.5m will allow one service vehicle to pass another that is parked and is sufficient to allow a 3m wide lane to remain open in the event of a vehicle breaking down. As a result, officers are satisfied that the width of the carriageway in both St Paul's Drive and St Mark's Drive would be sufficient to accommodate an additional 54 dwellings.
- 8.7 It is noted that a significant number of representations have suggested that vehicular access should be obtained from Whitchurch Drive to the east. This was also raised at the pre-application stage. In response, the applicant and Highways Officers have explored the possibility of providing both the main and a secondary access directly from Whitchurch Drive, however, for a number of reasons, including proximity to the Apley Roundabout, existing arrangements and traffic flows, this has not been possible and has had to be discounted. Furthermore, given that technical advice confirms that the proposal would remain within the values typically identified as being suitably accommodated by a 5.5m wide carriageway, it is not considered that there is sufficient justification to warrant the provision of vehicular access from Whitchurch Drive.
- 8.8 It is, however, agreed that St Paul's Drive and St Mark's Drive would not be a suitable means of access for construction traffic and it is therefore agreed that a temporary construction access can be formed from Whitchurch Drive in the north east corner of the site.
- 8.9 In terms of the wider impact upon the highway network, the applicant has submitted a Transport Assessment which considers the likely trip generation from the proposed development. The report concludes that the traffic movements identified would not have a significant adverse impact upon the operation or character of the local or surrounding highways network. This has been assessed by the Council's Highways team who concur with the findings. Officers are also mindful that an application for up to 200 dwellings has also been submitted on the site of the former Charlton Secondary School, which will also generate additional demand on the local network, particularly at the Whitchurch Road/North Road and Apley Avenue/Whitchurch Road junctions. Accordingly, both developments are expected to provide financial contributions towards highways improvement works along Whitchurch Road in the extents between the North Road and Apley Avenue junctions. The proposal will be expected to contribute £48,000 towards these works. In

addition, the proposal also generates a requirement for a contribution of £27,804 towards the Telford Growth Point Package.

8.10 In summary, whilst the concerns raised by local residents in respect of the means of access to the site are noted, the Local Highways Authority has considered the proposal in detail and raise no objection subject to conditions requiring technical construction details and a Construction Management Plan and financial contributions towards local highway improvements and the Telford Growth Point Package. As such, officers are satisfied that the proposal complies with relevant highways policies within the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and NPPF.

8.11 **Design and Layout**

The layout of the site has been influenced by the location of the access and the need to avoid the constraints on site such as mature trees and ecological constraints. As a result, the main built development will be provided through the central spine of the site, leaving an area of green space at the north-west corner where the principal ecological habitats are located together with areas of Green Network to the east and south. The principal road is curved to avoid two mature trees and the curvature will also help to minimise vehicle speeds through the site.

8.12 The proposal will see 54 dwellings provided at a density of 21 dwellings per hectare (dph). The accommodation mix will provide 65% general needs and 35% special needs dwellings distributed evenly across the site. Bungalows have been provided at the north end of the site to reduce any potential impact upon neighbouring dwellings to the north, taking into account the slightly higher land levels within the site. The remainder of the site will comprise a mix of single and two storey properties which is considered in keeping with the local area.

8.13 Officers consider that the proposed dwelling designs are of a high quality, incorporating a mixed palette of materials including facing brick and render and including brick detailing and chimneys on key plots. A materials specification has been provided with the application which is considered appropriate and can be controlled by a planning condition.

8.14 The development proposes an average of 2.17 parking spaces per dwelling and therefore meets the parking standards set out within Appendix F of the Local Plan (which requires an average of 2.09 spaces per dwelling). The supporting TA forecasts that the development is likely to generate a parking requirement of 1.39 spaces, excluding visitors therefore the proposal comfortably meets this requirement. Each dwelling has the opportunity to provide secure cycle parking either within a garage, or private enclosed accessible rear garden.

8.15 Highways Officers have carried out an appraisal of the proposed layout and are satisfied that the proposal meets the necessary design criteria in terms of carriageway width, manoeuvrability and pedestrian footway provision. Swept path analysis confirms that a refuse collection vehicles can access and turn within the relevant parts of the site.

8.16 In terms of connectivity, the proposal contains two pedestrian footpath links to the surrounding footway network, in the north east and south east corners, providing sufficient connectivity to the surrounding area, in addition to the vehicular access to the north.

8.17 Officers are satisfied that the proposed layout and design is appropriate and satisfies the criteria set out in T&WLP Policies C4, C5 and BE1.

8.18 Trees, Ecology and Open Space

The existing trees and ecological habitats represent one of the most significant constraints within the site. Following concerns raised by officers over the extent of tree loss within and surrounding the site, the layout has been amended to retain the majority of trees along the south west boundary with Charlton School. This serves a dual purpose as the trees are required to act as an acoustic and visual screen from the school where a gymnasium and two outdoor, all-weather courts are located alongside the boundary. As a result of this reconfiguration, a small encroachment into the Green Network on the east boundary has occurred, however, this has been justified in a supporting Addendum to the Design and Access Statement where it is explained that the area affected contains trees of a lower quality than those to being retained along the south west boundary. In this instance, officers are satisfied that the harm resulting from the loss of the relatively small area of Green Network is minimal and would be outweighed by the retention of the mature trees along the south west boundary with the school. The proposal therefore meets the requirements of T&WLP Policy NE6.

8.19 The application has been accompanied by supporting Tree Surveys and Ecological Appraisals which consider the potential impact upon trees and ecology within the site. Whilst the proposal will require tree clearance, particularly along the eastern boundary, officers are satisfied that following the revision to the layout, the majority of mature or veteran species will be retained and satisfactorily protected. The layout also includes necessary ecological mitigation for protected species which includes an ecology/habitat zone in the north-west corner and wildlife corridors to connect to the surrounding green network. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with Policies NE1 and NE2 in the T&WLP.

8.20 Policy NE4 requires that major development contributes to the provision of multi-functional open space which serves the needs of the development and the wider community. Whilst the development includes areas of open space, these are intended as ecological zones and will not be accessible to the public. The applicant has, however, agreed to the provision of a financial contribution towards the upgrade of an off-site play area as requested by the Council's Healthy Spaces Officer. Policy NE5 requires a consideration of the management and maintenance of public open space areas and the applicant has confirmed that this will be conveyed to a private management company appointed by NuPlace.

8.21 Residential Amenity

The proposed development will be situated on land to the east of the redeveloped Charlton School where a gymnasium and two all-weather courts are located adjacent the boundary. The application has been accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment which considers the potential impact the school could have upon the amenities of future occupants together with noise levels from Whitchurch Road and the hospital to the east.

- 8.22 The report found that highest noise levels were recorded nearest to Whitchurch Drive and daytime noise levels were dominated by noise from the local road network, however, voices of students using the sports field and all-weather sports courts and noise from plant on the sports hall were also audible. In all cases, the values recorded did not exceed the criteria for outdoor amenity space and those levels would be further reduced by the forms of boundary treatment proposed for each property. Noise from the school was found to be most prevalent at break times when the outdoor areas were in use and was only be limited to daytime during school hours. The plant noise from the gymnasium was also found to occur at a very low level. The report suggests that target internal ambient noise levels can be achieved with appropriate glazing and background ventilators. As a result, it is suggested that the site is suitable for its intended use and the amenities of future occupants would not be adversely affected by adjacent land uses.
- 8.23 Officers note the findings of the report and raise no objections in this respect, subject to conditions requiring the provision of suitable acoustic boundary treatment and appropriate glazing and ventilation.
- 8.24 With regard to existing neighbours along the north boundary, bungalows will be provided in the northern part of the site to minimise any potential impact upon those properties. Separation distances between the proposed and existing properties are considered acceptable and the orientation of the proposed dwellings will not result in any unacceptable overlooking. As such, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any significant adverse impact upon nearby properties and therefore meets the requirements of T&WLP Policy BE1.
- 8.25 **Planning Obligations**
T&WLP Policy SP4 confirms that that major residential development proposals will be expected to make an appropriate contribution towards infrastructure provision.
- 8.26 Highways:
T&WLP Policy C3 requires development to mitigate site specific highway issues and to ensure that relevant cumulative impacts on local and strategic road networks are mitigated in a co-ordinated and plan led manner. In this instance, the Local Highways Authority have requested a total contribution of £75,804 towards the Telford Growth Point Package and highways improvement works along Whitchurch Road.
- 8.27 Education:

As required by T&WLP Policy COM1, the Council's Education team have calculated that, based upon the 35 general needs properties, the application generates a need for a contribution of £99,937 towards the enhancement/expansion of Wrekin View Primary School.

8.28 Open Space/Recreation:

T&WLP Policy NE4 requires major development to provide or contribute to the provision of open space which meets the needs of the development and wider area. The development does not contain any open space provision, however, the Council's Healthy Spaces Officer has requested a financial contribution of £600 per 2 bed + property is provided, towards the upgrade of the nearby Severn Drive play area.

8.29 Affordable Housing:

T&WLP Policy HO5 requires major development in the urban area to deliver affordable housing at 25% of the overall site. Policy HO7 also confirms that the Council will support proposals for other forms of residential accommodation including retirement homes to address specialist housing needs where the following criteria are met;

- i. Development is designed to meet specific needs of residents
- ii. The development is in close proximity to community and support facilities, shops and services
- iii. The development relates well to the local context in terms of design, scale and form.

8.30 The proposed development will provide 19 specialist dwellings designed to be suitable for people with specialist requirements, including elderly or disabled residents. This is a much needed type of accommodation within the local area and is supported by Policy HO7. However, the applicant has advised that the higher cost of delivering each specialist unit, in addition to the infrastructure contributions set out above, means that it will not be viable for the applicant to meet the affordable housing requirement of 25% on this site. The applicant is keen to deliver some affordable units, however, the viability position on the site means that only 2 units can be provided (4% of total site). This position has been demonstrated through the submission of a Viability Appraisal which has been reviewed and accepted by the Council's Development Delivery Group Specialist.

8.31 Whilst Policy HO7 encourages the provision of specialist housing, it does not allow it to be accepted in lieu of affordable housing as required by Policy HO5. Specialist accommodation does not meet the definition of 'affordable housing' as set out in the NPPF, therefore it will not be possible to accept the specialist units as affordable housing. Instead, a consideration of the relative benefits of specialist accommodation will need to take place.

8.32 The Council's Affordable Housing Specialist has reviewed the proposed specialist accommodation and notes that 13 units meet lifetime homes standards and 6 meet Wheelchair Housing Standards equivalents. Such a level of accessible and adaptable accommodation represents a significant benefit to the borough and therefore, whilst falling short in terms of affordable

housing provision, the scheme would contribute to wider Council priorities to enable people to live independently in the community for as long as possible. In addition this scheme will help to encourage a positive view of the potential market for accessible homes in the borough. The site location is considered to be sustainable, well connected to the surrounding area and will relate well to the local context and therefore meets the criteria set out in Policy HO7.

8.33 In this instance, officers are prepared to support the provision of specialist accommodation together with a reduced affordable housing offer, in acknowledgement that all other infrastructure contributions will be provided in full. This position has been supported by a robust viability appraisal.

8.34 Accordingly, the development will deliver the following package of infrastructure contributions and affordable housing, to be secured by S106 agreement:

-	Highways	£75,804
-	Primary Education	£99,937
-	Open Space/Recreation	£75,804
-	Affordable Housing	2 units (4%)
-	Specialist Accommodation	19 units (35%)

8.35 It is considered that the package of contributions is acceptable given the viability position and will ensure that some affordable housing is provided. In this respect, the applicant's viability appraisal meets the requirements of paragraph 57 of the NPPF and provides an acceptable level of planning obligations

8.36 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.

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 required for this application meet the relevant tests. The above obligations will be secured by a S106 agreement attached to the planning permission.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 This proposal concerns land which is allocated for housing within the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and has historically been committed for development in the Wrekin Local Plan and under Section 7:1 of the New Towns Act. The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable. Furthermore, the site is within the Telford urban area, is in a sustainable location and is well connected to the surrounding footway and cycle networks.

9.2 The proposal will provide a total of 54 units at a density of 21 dph, including 19 specialist and 2 affordable units. The design and layout of the site will be

appropriate, including areas of open space, sufficient tree protection and ecological zones and meets the appropriate standards in terms of highways layout and parking provision. Whilst local residents concerns are noted in respect of the means of vehicular access to the site, officers are satisfied that the width of the carriageway in both St Paul's Drive and St Mark's Drive would be sufficient to accommodate an additional 54 dwellings.

- 9.3 The proposal generates the requirement for financial contributions towards highways, play area provision and education together with affordable housing to be secured through a S106 agreement. The applicant proposes a reduced affordable housing offer in light of the provision of 19 specialist units and this has been justified through a robust viability appraisal. In this instance, the benefits of the specialist accommodation are noted and the reduced affordable housing offer is considered acceptable on balance.
- 9.4 There are no technical issues that would prevent the development from proceeding and no issues that cannot be mitigated against through the use of conditions. Accordingly it is considered that the proposal represents a sustainable form of development which complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, together with relevant policies within the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to the Planning Committee on this application is that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to the following:

- 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) | Highways | £75,804 |
| ii) | Primary Education | £99,937 |
| iii) | Open Space/Recreation | £75,804 |
| iv) | Affordable Housing | 2 units (4%) |
| v) | Specialist Accommodation | 19 units (35%) |
- B) The following conditions (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):-

Conditions

Time limit - Full
Foul and Surface Water drainage
SUDs Drainage
Highways details
On-site Construction
Land Contamination
Landscaping details

Landscape Management Plan
Trees – Protective Fencing
Trees – no dig method
Further Arb Method Statement for T90
Habitat Management Plan
SEMP
Erection of artificial nesting/roosting boxes
External Lighting details
Tree Protection
Materials as submitted
Parking/Turning/Loading
Approved Plans
Development in accordance with Noise Report Recommendations