

Planning Committee

6 July 2010

Reference:
APP/10/00223

Area Team:
Migrated Code

Case Officer:
Mr K Spilsbury

Ward:
Bromborough

Location: Great Eastern, NEW FERRY ROAD, NEW FERRY, CH62 1BN
Proposal: Demolition of existing public house and erection of 10 no. 2 storey semi-detached dwellings

Applicant: Worksharp Ecohomes LTD
Agent : Condy Lofthouse Architects

Site Plan:



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Development Plan allocation and policies:

Primarily Residential Area

Planning History:

OUT/2008/5586 Demolition of former public house and erection of two buildings containing a total of 30 No. apartments (Outline) REFUSED 22/08/08

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:

REPRESENTATIONS

A site notice was posted outside the site and 68 individual letters of notification were sent out.

At the time of writing this report 4 letters of support and 6 letters of objection have been received.

The 4 letters of support can be summarised as follows:

- The empty pub has been nothing but trouble due to anti-social behaviour
- There are lots of empty pubs that could be converted into flats but no developer will be willing to take this on
- If the pub is left it will fall into disrepair and will only be a matter of time before someone burns it down.
- The ship shares the same name as the so called famous ship but no building materials from the ship were used in its construction
- The building is an eyesore
- The building in its current state is devaluing house prices
- The demolition will bring much needed regeneration into the area
- The proposed plans look great and will improve the outlook of New Ferry
- The proposed monument to the great eastern is a nice touch
- Environmental health have posted notices saying there are rats on the premises so the best thing to do is knock it down and start again
- There have been so many alterations to the building it is ugly and the gardens were never kept in a good state.

The 6 letters of objection can be summarised as follows:

- The building is both historic and handsome.
- The new buildings will be a blot on the landscape
- Why can the building not be refurbished and opened as something else?
- There will be nothing left in New Ferry soon as everything is being taken away.
- Loss of history, Save this building
- There are a lot of empty flats on Wirral
- It should be preserved as part of a coastal Regeneration Scheme
- Could it not be a museum of maritime history?
- The building is a historic landmark.

A qualifying petition of objection containing 417 signatures has also been submitted by Councillor Niblock objecting to the demolition of the Great Eastern Public House.

An email of objection has also been received from Councillor Irene Williams stating: "I wish to object to the proposals to demolish the Great Eastern and then build houses on the site. This historic public house has been a much loved icon of New Ferry and cherished by local residents".

Councillor Jerry Williams has also verbally registered an objection to the scheme and the loss of the public house.

The Bromborough Society - The historic building is key feature in this part of New Ferry and should be converted to dwellings.

CONSULTATIONS

Director of Regeneration (Pollution Control) - No Objection

Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management Division) – No Objection subject to conditions.

Police Architectural Liaison Officer - No Objection

Director's Comments:

This application was deferred from Planning Committee on 1st June 2010 for a site visit.

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

The planning application is referred to Planning Committee as it is a major planning application for ten dwellings and a qualifying petition of objection has been received.

INTRODUCTION

The proposed development is for the demolition of the existing public house, the Great Eastern and the erection of ten 2 storey semi-detached dwellings.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is located within a primarily residential area as allocated within Wirral's Unitary Development Plan and as a result the erection of dwellings is acceptable in principle, subject to all other elements of the proposal complying with National, Regional and Local/Supplementary planning policies.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site currently consists of a public house set within its own grounds and fronts the junction between Shorefields and New Ferry Road. The existing building has been disused for sometime and is currently in a state of disrepair. The windows have been covered with steel shutters and the building has been vandalised. The surrounding grounds are currently overgrown. Trees, shrubs and a close board fence run along the northern boundary of the site restricting overlooking into the neighbouring properties.

There is a mixture of housing styles and designs surrounding the site, predominantly two storey semi detached dwellings and terraces.

POLICY CONTEXT

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are principle of development, highway safety and car parking, design and site layout, residential amenity, noise/pollution and landscaping issues.

The site lies within the North West Metropolitan Area as defined by Regional Spatial Strategy Policy SD1 and is within the regeneration priority area where new housing is permitted by the Interim Planning Policy, adopted by the Council's Cabinet on 20 October 2005.

The site of the development consists of a vacant public house set within its own grounds. PPS3, introduced in November 2006 indicates that the priority for development should be previously developed land, in particular vacant and derelict sites and buildings. This scheme is therefore in line with this Planning Policy Statement.

It is national policy to facilitate sustainable forms of development. PPS3 encourages the provision of more intensive housing development in and around existing centres and close to public transport nodes. The aim is to create mixed, inclusive communities, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity of a decent home through a broader range of housing (including flats) in locations where the need to travel can be reduced.

The density of the proposed development is similar to that of the surrounding residential area and is close to a range of local facilities. There is a selection of open space facilities including a sports ground, football pitch and general amenity space within walking distance of the area. There is a frequent bus service along New Chester Road. Services run at regular 15-30 minute intervals to a variety of destinations including Liverpool; New Brighton; Birkenhead and Chester. Green Lane Station and Rock Ferry Station are both within a 10 minute walk of the site, where services run at 15 minute intervals to Birkenhead, Liverpool, Ellesmere Port and Chester.

Affordable Housing

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) adopted by the Council's Cabinet on 7th February 2008 is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, to be considered alongside Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3), RSS Policy UR9 and UDP Policies HSG2 and HS6.

The Council will normally negotiate on all schemes of 15 and more dwellings and for a scheme proportion of 40% of all dwellings to be affordable. However, Members will be aware that at its meeting on 7th February 2008, Cabinet resolved that the 40% was subject to consideration of land

availability, supply and the financial viability of the development proposal.

Whilst the development is below the threshold for affordable housing it is intention of the applicant to provide 100% affordable housing on the site.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

Both PPS1 and PPS3 make it clear that high quality and inclusive design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and those proposals that fail to take the opportunity for improving the character and quality of an area should not be accepted.

The site in its present state detracts from the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The existing building, whilst considered by some to be a local landmark is in a poor state of repair and has been heavily vandalised. Following consultation with The Director of Technical Services - Building Control it has been confirmed that the building is in a rapidly deteriorating condition and has had to be secured as a result of vandalism. The Local Planning Authority considers that the benefits of the proposed residential scheme outweigh the reasons for retaining a site that has historically been a nuisance to the local residents.

The developer is proposing a piece of public art at the front of the site to acknowledge the historical significance of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's SS Great Eastern, the largest iron, steam engine ship of her time. The proposed artwork does not form part of the application as the detailed design and location of the artwork requires planning permission in its own right.

The proposed scheme is the result of a number of pre-application discussions between the Local Planning Authority and the developer. The proposed houses have been designed to address the existing street scenes of both New Ferry Road and Shorefields. The proposed corner dwelling, plot 10 has been designed to have a dual aspect on New Ferry Road and Clipper View.

The proposed dwellings are two-storey in height and are modern in design. Each dwelling has large front gardens, off street parking and private amenity space located to rear.

The surrounding area consists of a variety of housing types and ages. It is therefore considered that the modern design of the proposed dwellings will be in keeping with the character of the area and will add interest on the prominent corner location.

The site layout and building line will be consistent with the existing street scene and will provide similarly scaled dwellings with sufficient separation distances between the proposed development and the existing housing surrounding the site. It is considered that the proposed scheme will comfortably tie into the existing residential fabric of the area and in turn encourage regeneration of the area as a whole.

The scheme has been developed in accordance with Secure by Design principles. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has provided pre-application advice to the developer on specific crime reduction features within the site. These measures have been integrated within the scheme.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

Whilst the proposal does not always meet the standard interface distances employed by the Local Planning Authority it is considered that in this instance some compromise can be made due to the overall benefits that will be created as a result of the scheme. However it must be stressed that each individual case is assessed on its own merits and this relaxation of local authority standards will in no way create a precedence for future housing schemes.

The guidance suggest that unless it can be demonstrated that privacy would not be unduly affected, habitable room windows directly facing each other should be at least 21 metres apart and main habitable room windows should be at least 14 metres from any blank gable. Plots 2, 3, 4 and 5 are just short of the requirement at just 20m between the proposed plots and 6-10 Clipper View, however it can be argued that privacy will not be affected by those properties located to the rear on Clipper View as there is a large conifer hedge running along the boundary which is to be retained as part of the scheme.

During pre-application discussions with the Local Authority, advice was sought from Traffic

Management to ensure the proposed off street parking was acceptable in terms of highway safety. The advise given was to keep the access and egress into the bays away from the main junction of Shorefields and New Ferry Road to ensure safe vehicular movements into and out of the proposed spaces. As a result the house plots had to be pushed back to accommodate the spaces and therefore the standard separation distances between the rear elevations of plots 2-5 and the rear elevation of 6, 8 and 10 Clipper View have had to be relaxed.

The important reference points in terms of national design guidance for new residential developments is 'By design' and 'Better places to live'. The former provides the overall approach to design which the government seeks to encourage and enforce through the statutory planning function and the latter adds more detail to the overall framework in respect of residential design guidance. Both documents have at their heart an aspiration to support the creation of sustainable high quality places. The development does create a new sense of place, which is well related to the site and context. The relatively self-contained nature of the site, and design response, enable the development to create a distinct urban form. All of the proposed buildings are well related and there is a clear family of materials and design features which unite the development. Importantly these features are related to the context, but also create a new sense of place as mentioned earlier. The site is well defined by building frontages and is based on a coherent and logical structure. The built form links into the wider neighbourhood to provide continuity between new and old, with new development linking to rather than turning its back on the existing residential neighbourhood and urban form.

The applicant is proposing 100% affordable homes on the site and has confirmed that it will be built to code level 3 and whilst the scheme does require some compromise by the planning department it is considered that the scheme can be sustainable. Wirral Councils aspirations are to achieve 40% affordable housing on developments of 15 dwellings or more. This scheme is for 10 dwellings and provides 100% affordable housing.

Consequently the special circumstances that outweigh the harm caused by substandard interface distances are a scheme that satisfies housing need within the HMRI area and thereby adds to the regeneration of the area.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

The development provides one parking space per dwelling which is in line with the Local Planning Authorities maximum parking standard as set out in SPD4. The scheme is likely to create on street parking and as a result a condition for a traffic management scheme is required.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

Regional Spatial Strategy policy EM18 states - "all residential developments comprising 10 or more units should secure at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources, unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable.

The applicant has indicated that the proposed development will achieve Code for Sustainable Homes level 3. If members are minded to approve the application, a suitably worded condition will ensure the proposal meets this requirement.

HEALTH ISSUES

There are no health implications relating to this application.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the regeneration benefits of creating a high quality residential development of 100% affordable housing within a primarily residential area, on an existing brown field site outweigh the reasons for retaining the vacant building which is in a poor state of repair. It is considered that the residential development proposed on the site would be in keeping with the character of the area and would not introduce harm to the street scene. The proposal is acceptable in design terms and complies with HS4 of Wirral's Unitary Development Plan. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable and is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary

Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national and regional policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

It is considered that the residential development is acceptable in terms of design and will not result in a loss of residential amenity. The development therefore complies with policy HS4 of Wirral's Unitary Development Plan, Regional Spatial Strategy policies SD1 & DP3 and Planning Policy Statement 3 - Housing.

Recommended Decision: Approve

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. Before any construction commences, samples of the facing and roofing materials to be used in the external construction of this development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved materials shall then be used in the construction of the development.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy HS4 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

3. The development authorised by this permission shall not begin until the local planning authority has approved in writing a full scheme of works for the alteration of the highway required by the development; including the removal of redundant vehicle accesses, the provision of new accesses and kerbs, resurfacing of the footway, alterations to street lighting and the provision of a traffic regulation order prohibiting waiting at the junction of New Ferry Road / Shorefields. The occupation of the development shall not begin until those works have been completed in accordance with the local planning authority's approval and have been certified as complete by or on behalf of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

4. The development authorised by this permission shall not begin until the local planning authority has approved in writing a full scheme of works to provide pedestrian dropped kerbs at the junction of New Ferry Road / Shorefields, New Ferry. The occupation of any part of the development shall not begin until those works have been completed in accordance with the local authority's approval and have been certified in writing as complete by or on behalf of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

5. Prior to the commencement of development details of the proposed public art designation-focal point relating to the Great Eastern and IK Brunel as indicated on Drawing No. 09-103-10 shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full within a time frame to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of amenity

6. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on drawing number 09-103-10.

Reason: In the interests of secure-by-design

7. No development shall take place until details of earthworks have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas, including the levels and contours to be formed and showing the relationship of proposed mounting to existing vegetation and surrounding landform. Details of soil stripping, storage and replacement shall be included where appropriate. The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure landscape features are properly considered and protected and to accord with Policy GR5 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

8. A landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development or any phase of the development, whichever is sooner, for its permitted use. The approved landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: To ensure landscape features are properly considered and protected and to accord with Policy GR5 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

9. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on the plans received by the Local Planning Authority on 14th May 2010.

Reason: In the interest of amenity

10. No development shall commence until details of the proposed measures to be incorporated within the building to achieve 10% of the predicted energy requirements of the site from renewable sources have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and operated as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of minimising the demand for energy from non-renewable sources in accordance with RSS Policy EM18.

Last Comments By: 22/04/2010 18:13:17

Expiry Date: 03/06/2010

