

# Planning Committee

28 June 2012

**Reference:**  
**APP/11/01528**

**Area Team:**  
**North Team**

**Case Officer:**  
**Mrs S Day**

**Ward:**  
**Seacombe**

**Location:** Seacombe Ferry Hotel, VICTORIA PLACE, SEACOMBE, CH44 6NR  
**Proposal:** Construction of 20 new dwellings comprising two houses and 18 apartments with car parking.  
**Applicant:** Plant Building Contractors  
**Agent :** Craig Foster Architects

## Site Plan:



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**Development Plan allocation and policies:**  
Primarily Residential Area

Coastal Zone  
Urban Greenspace

**Planning History:**

DEM/11/00821 - Demolition of Seacombe Ferry Hotel - Prior approval not required.

**Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**

**REPRESENTATIONS**

Having regard to the Council's Guidance on Publicity for Applications, neighbour notifications were sent to the occupiers of 29 neighbouring properties and a Site Notice was also displayed.

A letter of objection was received from 17a Ferryside.

Two petitions have been submitted, one a none qualifying petition from 24 individual properties and a qualifying petition from 25 separate addresses.

The objections raised by the above relate to the following:-

1. Proposed building will be too high and overbearing
2. Loss of privacy to existing properties
3. Too many dwellings proposed
4. Increase in number of residents will increase noise and disturbance
5. Increase pressure on sewers leading to flooding.

**CONSULTATIONS**

Director of Technical Services ( Traffic Management Division) - No objection subject to condition relating to alteration to TRO signage.

Director of Regeneration, Housing and Planning (Housing Strategy) - The proposed development will provide affordable housing in an area where the need for type of tenure and accommodation has been identified. In addition, the accessible accommodation will meet the provision for local needs identified from the Disabled Persons Housing Register.

**Director's Comments:**

**REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The application is a major development of 20 residential units which under the adopted scheme of delegation, must be considered by committee.

**INTRODUCTION**

The proposal is a full application for a four storey building containing 18 apartments and two one and a half storey dwellings. 16 off street parking spaces are proposed and 20 covered cycle spaces. The application is submitted on behalf of Wirral Methodist Housing and is for affordable social housing.

**PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

As the site is a brownfield site located within a primarily residential area. New residential accommodation is acceptable in principle subject to UDP Policy HS4 Criteria for New Housing Development and SPD2, self Contained Flat Development. The site is within a regeneration priority area identified in the Council's Interim Planning Policy for New Housing Development.

**SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

The application site consists of a vacant corner plot at the junction of Seacombe view and Seacombe Promenade. The site was until recently occupied by the now demolished Seacombe Ferry Hotel, a two storey public house with a car park to the north of the building accessed from Seacombe Promenade. The grassed area adjacent to 8 Seacombe View was also previously developed, with demolition having taken place some years ago. The application site is fairly level but the surrounding properties are at a higher level. Whilst the dwellings immediately around the application site are two storey, there are 5 storey flat developments and a high rise block of flats within the vicinity of the site. The site is primarily residential and is within an identified regeneration area.

## **POLICY CONTEXT**

The proposal is for the erection of flats and is assessed primarily against the following policies.

### **Wirral Unitary Development Plan**

Policy HS4 - Criteria for new housing development. This requires that the proposal in general terms must relate well to adjacent properties and not result in a detrimental change in the area or to the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Policy TR9 - Sets out the requirement for off street parking provision within new development and road safety and traffic management considerations.

Policy GR5 - This policy establishes the requirement for new developments to make a positive visual statement through new landscaping and the protection of existing landscape features.

### **Supplementary Planning Document 2: Designing for Self-Contained Flat Developments and Conversions**

This establishes more specifically the considerations which should be applied to new build flats in terms of design, amenity space and parking.

**Interim Planning Policy for New Housing development-** Directs new residential development to identified regeneration priority areas.

### **Regional Policy**

RSS policies set out the need to provide an annual average of 500 new homes per year in Wirral whilst addressing the need for affordable housing provision and the re-use of brownfield sites. RSS would also promote the regeneration of the Inner Area, in which this site is located.

**The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** supports sustainable housing development which encompasses good design and widens the choice of high quality homes. Development should and make a positive contribution to an area and use opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area.

The proposed development represents a sustainable regeneration opportunity by the re-use of a brownfield site within an existing residential area. The site has good access to existing transport and community facilities and the proposal for 100% affordable housing would contribute towards meeting the needs identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

The design of the building, the provision of landscaping and parking space, together with the relationship to existing properties meets the criteria of the UDP policies HS4, TR9 and GR5.

## **APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES**

The development has two distinct elements. Units 1 and 2 are self contained dwellings for occupancy by one person and a carer. They have been designed as stand alone units with their own entrance, parking and amenity space. They are two storey to the front elevation and largely single aspect with only a rear entrance door on the rear elevation. This part of the site is at a similar level to the dwellings to the rear and whilst one of the dwellings achieves the 14m interface distance, it is not considered that the 2m shortfall for the other dwelling is significant given the limited height of the proposed buildings.

The remainder of the site is to be occupied by the four storey flat development. This building has been developed as two wings with a central single staircase incorporating a lift. Vehicular access is taken from Seacombe Promenade using the same access as the former pub. Parking would take place to the north of the site and in this area part of the building has an undercroft to enable vehicles to access part of the car park through the building. The building is positioned towards the frontage of the site to maximise distances to existing dwellings to the north and west.

The position of the building takes advantage of its prominent south east facing position next to the river and its design is strong and contemporary. The materials to be used will consist of coloured cladding, render and glass. The massing of the building has been developed to maximise solar gain whilst keeping the height as low as possible. As the adjacent houses along Seacombe Promenade are in an elevated position in relation to the site, the effect is not of a four story building adjacent to a two storey building, but more of a four storey building adjacent to a three storey building.

Sunlight and daylight indicators have been submitted which indicate that the impact of the building on adjacent properties is most likely to be significant in the early morning, lessening throughout the day.

Whilst the flats do not have the full amount of amenity space required by SPD2, it is felt that the proximity to the Promenade and the open space this includes is sufficient to relax this requirement and ensure the positive regeneration benefits which will result from this development. The boundary to the development fronting Seacombe Promenade will be landscaped with new tree planting, grassed areas and low level landscaping.

### **SEPARATION DISTANCES**

Due to the proximity of surrounding dwellings, the flats have been designed to have their main outlook to the frontage, which also makes the most of the views available. Windows on the rear elevations have been kept to the minimum and include bedroom, bathroom and corridor windows. The bedroom windows do not look into windows of the adjacent property and are 13.5m from the adjacent garden. The north elevation includes living room windows which overlook the garden of 17 Ferryside at a distance of 11m. Whilst this would normally be acceptable for adjacent two storey dwellings, as there is a height difference it is recommended that these windows are either limited aspect or obscurely glazed.

### **HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS**

The proposal uses an existing access which does not result in any highway problems subject to a condition relating to a revised traffic order.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES**

The site is a brownfield site in a sustainable location adjacent to a bus interchange and ferry terminal. The building has been designed to maximise solar gain and have a roof which can accept the installation of solar panels. The materials used proposed will have a high thermal efficiency

### **HEALTH ISSUES**

There are no health implications relating to this application.

### **CONCLUSION**

The proposed development represents the re-use of a brownfield site to provide 20 affordable homes which accords with the advice in NPPF. The design and siting of the building takes advantage of its unique position without resulting in a loss of amenity for existing properties. The development includes parking, landscaping and amenity space to a standard which satisfies the relevant UDP policies. The development is in a regeneration priority area identified for new residential development and the re-use of a previously developed site and the provision of affordable housing weigh in favour of the development and accord with advice given in the NPPF.

### **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:-

The proposed development represents the re-use of a brownfield site to provide 20 affordable homes. The design and siting of the building will not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding uses. The development includes parking and landscaping to standards which satisfy the relevant UDP policies HS4, TR9 and GR5 and Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG2. The development is in a regeneration priority area identified for new residential development, the re-use of a previously developed site and the provision of affordable housing weigh in favour of the development and accord with advice given in the NPPF.

**Recommended            Approve**  
**Decision:**

**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. Details of materials for all external work including samples, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before any work is commenced. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved.

**Reason:** To ensure a satisfactory development which does not prejudice the amenity of the locality and accords with UDP Policy HS4.

3. The proposed landscaping shall be completed before the accommodation hereby approved is occupied and thereafter shall be maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance and that the proposed development enhances the visual amenity of the locality.

4. Before the development is brought into use, the bathroom and corridor windows in the western elevation shall be obscurely glazed and non opening up to a height of 1.7m above the internal floor level and retained as such thereafter.

**Reason:** In the interests of the privacy of occupants of adjacent dwellings.

5. None of the dwellings hereby approved shall be occupied until details of replacement signage explaining the restricted vehicular access to the site has been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The approved signage shall be erected before the dwellings are occupied.

**Reason:** In the interests of highway safety.

**Further Notes for Committee:**

**Last Comments By:** 27/04/2012 08:09:06  
**Expiry Date:** 20/06/2012