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ITEM APP/2007/6254 WARD Rock Ferry

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**Location:** Land north of and including 353-355 Old Chester Road Rock Ferry Wirral CH42 2DT

**Proposal:** Erection of 12 no. self contained apartments (amended description).

**Applicant:** CHK Developments  
110a Vyner Road South  
Bidston  
Wirral

**Agent:** Bryson Design Limited  
Maritime House  
14-16 Balls Road  
Oxton  
Wirral  
CH43 5RE

**Development Plan allocation and policies:** Wirral Unitary Development Plan  
PPS1 -Delivering Sustainable Development  
PPG3 - Housing (March 2000)  
PPG13 - Transport  
Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West 2004  
Policy DP1  
Policy HS4  
Policy HS13  
SPD2 - Designing for self contained flat development and conversions

**Planning History:** 20037492  
Erection of two semi-detached houses and a 2 storey building containing two flats  
Approved  
31.12.03

**Representations and consultations received:** REPRESENTATIONS

A site notice was displayed on a lamp post near the site. A total of 18 letters of notification have been sent to properties in the area. At the time of writing this report two emails have been received from the occupier of 231 Bedford Road requesting additional information. This occupier also has concerns regarding overlooking.

CONSULTATIONS

Director of Regeneration - Housing & Environmental Protection Division has no objection to the proposal.

Director of Technical Services - Traffic Management Division no objections

Merseyside Cycling Campaign object to the proposal on the grounds that there is inadequate provision for cycle parking.

**Directors comments:** PROPOSAL  
The application seeks approval for the erection of 12 self contained apartments.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT  
The site is situated within a Primarily Residential Area. Therefore development is acceptable in principle subject to the provisions of Policy HS4, HS13 and SPD2. The proposed development is within the area where new housing is allowed under the interim housing policy, as defined by Policy SD1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS  
The site is located at the crossroads of Old Chester Road and Bedford Road in Rock Ferry, by virtue of this it is considered to be in quite a prominent location. The site is rectangular in shape and the longest side runs adjacent to Old Chester Road. The site currently lies empty but it would appear that some type of structure once occupied the site although there is no indication as to what type of building this was. On the day of site visits No. 353 and 355 were currently in the process of being demolished. These buildings are not listed nor is it considered that they have any architectural merit. Demolition is permitted under the (General Permitted Development) Order 1995

#### POLICY CONTEXT

In terms of national planning guidance and RPG13, the securing of efficient use of brownfield land in urban areas, an objective the council fully supports should be achieved without causing unacceptable harm to the appearance and character of those areas. PPG13 (Transport) paragraph 16 states in order to promote sustainable development principles set out under PPS3 (Housing); development proposals should "avoid the inefficient use of land", generally encouraging housing development between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare net. However, the greater intensification of sites in town centre areas is encouraged when linked to nearby quality public transport links.

The proposed development of 12 apartments equates to a density ratio of 145 dwellings per hectare. Whilst this could be regarded as an over dense development, there are good quality services within easy walking distance and excellent public transport provision exists nearby such as major bus routes and a well connected train station. The higher density can be therefore justified as acceptable here.

Unitary Development Plan policies HS4 and HS13 and associated SPD2 indicate that proposals for new residential development are acceptable in principle in Primarily Residential Areas where the circumstances of the site allow it and the proposal complies with the detailed criteria of these policies. The site is also identified by the Interim Housing Policy as being appropriate for new residential development.

#### HEALTH ISSUES

There are no health implications relating to this application.

#### APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

The application has been amended several times at the request of the Local Authority as originally there were certain aspects of the proposal that were unacceptable.

The internal arrangement of rooms was originally deemed inappropriate resulting in substandard living accommodation and adverse overlooking onto neighbouring properties. For example, primary windows serving bedrooms and living areas would have overlooked the neighbouring property and the lack of adequate separation distances would have meant that rooms would have been dark and totally undesirable. The amendments have now addressed these issues and primary bedrooms and living space now have a reasonable outlook with no adverse overlooking.

To reduce the possibility of crime SPD2 advises that the main entrance to the building should be located in the front elevation and possible access to individual flats from within the building were ever possible. This has now been achieved.

Furthermore, the original submitted scheme did not provide enough amenity space for future residents. Amendments were requested to omit some parking and replace the area with soft landscaping. The loss of parking can be justified as there is a good bus route on Bedford Road and Old Chester Road and there is a train station within easy walking distance. There are 6 parking spaces proposed.

The building lines that surround the site have been respected and the proposed flats would not appear obtrusive in the streetscene. They would be 2 storeys with accommodation in the roof; this is considered to be a suitable scale that complements the character of the surrounding area.

#### HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

Director of Technical Services - Traffic Management Division has no objection to the original plans subject to conditions. 50% parking provision is provided. Since the site is well served by public transport (on a bus route and short walking distance from railway station) and the traffic signalled junction of Bedford Avenue and Old Chester Road is protected by Not At Any Time waiting restrictions, this is considered to be acceptable.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

The site lies within ready access of good public transport links, reducing reliance on the private car. The site itself is currently empty but re-use of a brownfield site is in keeping with the Government's Agenda for sustainable development. The density of the proposed development is also in keeping with national and regional guidance.

**Summary of Decision:** The proposed development consisting of 12 apartments on this site represents a suitable form of development. The development is believed to be a suitable option to revive this part of Rock Ferry. It is considered that the proposal is of such a scale that relates well to the surrounding properties in terms of scale and density and the built form is complementary to the local environment. It is considered that the proposal would contribute to regeneration of the area and would meet many of the requirements of HS4, HS13 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and SPD2.

**Recommendation:** **Approve**

**Condition(s):**

- 1 Full planning permission: standard commencement date. (C03A)
- 2 samples of the materials to be submitted and approved prior to commencement (C59B)
- 3 Pedestrian visibility splays of 2.4m x 2.4m to be provided (C61C)
- 4 Cycle parking scheme to be submitted and completed prior to occupation (C61L)
- 5 Detailed landscaping scheme to be agreed prior to commencement (C71A)
- 6 Replacement of diseased planting for a period of 5 years from completion. (C71G)
- 7 Landscaping works to be carried out in accordance with the approved details as set out in Condition 6. (C71J)
- 8 Development according to plans received on 12.9.07. (C24C)
- 9 Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced, a datum for measuring land levels shall be agreed in writing. Full details of existing and proposed ground levels and proposed finished floor levels and adjoining levels off site shall be taken from that datum and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, notwithstanding any such detail shown on previously submitted plan(s). The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details

**Reason for conditions**

- 1 Standard (CR86)
- 2 In the interests of visual amenity. Policy HS4 of the UDP (CR66)
- 3 Highway safety (CR13)
- 4 To promote more sustainable forms of transport. Policy TR12 of the UDP (CR69)
- 5 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 6 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 7 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 8 For the avoidance of doubt. (CR33)
- 9 To protect the amenity of neighbouring properties and to ensure a satisfactory development having regard to policies HS4 of the Wirral UDP.

**Last Comments By:** **12 September 2007**

**56 Day Expires On:** **09 October 2007**

**Case Officer:** **Mr G McGowan**