
ITEM	OUT/2007/6067	WARD Birkenhead and Tranmere
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Location: Unused Land formerly 50-94 Whitford Road & land between 45 Whitford Rd and 40 Fountain St Tranmere, Wirral, CH42 7HZ

Proposal: Erection of 56 dwelling houses.

Applicant: Lovell Nelson House Park Road Altrincham Cheshire WA14 5DL	Agent: DK-Architects 26 Old Haymarket Liverpool Merseyside L1 6ER
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Development Plan allocation and policies: National Policies

PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS3: Housing
PPS22: Renewable Energy
PPG13: Transport

Regional Policies

RSS Policy DP1: Economy in the Use of Land and Buildings
RSS Policy DP2: Enhancing the Quality of Life
RSS Policy DP3: Quality in New Development
RSS Policy UR1: Urban Renaissance
RSS Policy UR4: Setting Targets for the Recycling of Land and Buildings
RSS Policy UR6: Existing Housing Stock and Housing Renewal
RSS Policy UR7: Regional Housing Provision
RSS Policy UR9: Affordable Housing

Local Policies

UDP Policy URN1: Development and Urban Regeneration
UDP Policy HS4: Criteria for New Housing Development
UDP Policy HSG2: Affordable Housing
UDP Policy HS6: Principles of Affordable Housing
UDP Policy HS9: Mobility Housing/Access and Design/Building Regulations Approved
Document M Access to and use of buildings 2004 Edition, Section 6
UDP Policy GR5: Landscaping and New Development
UDP Policy GR6: Greenspace within New Family Housing Development
UDP Policy TRT1: Provision for Public Transport - Para. 15.5
UDP Policy TR9: Requirements for Off-Street Parking
UDP Policy TR10: Cycle Routes
UDP Policy TR11: Provision for Cyclists in Highway and Development Schemes
UDP Policy TR12: Requirements for Cycle Parking
UDP Policy TR13: Requirements for Disabled Access
UDP Policy REN1: Principles for Renewable Energy

Planning History: No relevant planning history.

Representations and consultations received: Representations:

4 Site Notices were erected and a Press Notice issued.

Consultations:

Director of Regeneration (Housing & Environmental Protection Division): no objection.

Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management Division): no objection.

Director of Technical Services (Highway Maintenance): no objection.

English Heritage: no objection. The application should be determined in accordance

with national and local policy guidance.

CABE comment: we are consulted about more schemes than we have the resources to deal with and, unfortunately, we will not be able to comment on this scheme. Please note that this literally means 'no comment' and should not be interpreted as tacit endorsement of the scheme.

Directors comments: Proposal

The proposed development is an OUTLINE application for the erection of 56 dwelling houses.

Scale, landscaping and appearance are reserved matters for subsequent approval. However layout and means of access are to be considered for determination now.

Principle of Development

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West is part of the development plan for Wirral under the terms of Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and should be used in conjunction with the Unitary Development Plan [UDP] policies where relevant. Section 38 also states that; 'if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.'

RSS Policy DP1, in line with PPS3, states that the LPA will be concerned to ensure that: (i) 'Full and effective use is made of land within the urban areas'. In the application context, full and effective use of land has been further clarified by the preparation of a Masterplan for Church Road and its wider area which includes this application site. This has been subject to lengthy public consultation in accordance with PPS1, and has identified the site for comprehensive clearance and residential redevelopment.

The site is within the North West Metropolitan Area as defined in Policy SD1 of RPG13 (RSS), within which a significant proportion of development and urban renaissance resources are to be focused. This has been given expression by the Government's commitment of Housing Market Renewal Initiative funding with the aim of restructuring housing markets.

Whilst Policy DP1 sets out a sequential approach, including the re-use or conversion of empty buildings, this is qualified by the need to take account of local circumstances and the need for the effective use of existing buildings and infrastructure. In the context of the application proposal, the local circumstances are the inclusion of the site within the HMRI area and the identification of the site through the Masterplan as requiring comprehensive redevelopment.

RSS Policy UR6 echoes the need for an understanding of local housing markets, in order to adopt a concerted and comprehensive approach to influencing housing supply across all tenures and values, in the interests of improving the quality of the Region's housing stock. Policy UR6 specifically lists the HMRI Districts, including Wirral and refers to a comprehensive approach to housing renewal, clearance and urban regeneration. Local Authorities should: 'consider designating substantial local areas for comprehensive regeneration, possibly including demolition and clearance, as part of a broader course of action to regenerate local communities...'

In support of the need expressed in RSS Policy UR1 for the urban renaissance of the HMRI areas within Wirral, a Masterplan has been prepared for the Church Road which has been through the Council's decision making process, (the site forms part of the wider area included within the Masterplan highlighted). The Masterplan was endorsed and adopted by Housing and Community Safety Select Committee in May 2005 and is therefore adopted policy and a material consideration when determining planning applications.

The proposal to re-develop the Church Road Area is consistent with the intentions of

National and Regional Policy and of the Masterplan to deliver a site for redevelopment to enable the comprehensive housing market restructuring needed in the area.

Local Policy

The Church Road Master Plan has been adopted by the Council and as such can be used as a material consideration in the determination of applications for that area.

The entire site is subject to Policy HS4, criteria for New Housing Development. In line with National and Regional Policy, particularly reflecting policy set out in PPS1 and PPS3; 'good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.'

In the context of Church Road Masterplan Area, this is exactly the type of opportunity that is being made available and the developer should be aware that the Council will expect a high quality development that achieves a good mix of housing to reflect the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular families and older people. To this end, the Council has worked with the developer, architects, stakeholders, English Heritage and CABA to ensure that throughout the development of the scheme, including public and private places, there is a high level of quality design with a good mix of different types of housing available to different tenures, and that the layout makes efficient and effective use of the land available to deliver these high quality outcomes.

The Council has also commissioned and completed a Housing Needs Assessment. The preliminary results of which will be used to inform the housing needs of existing and new residents in the Borough and therefore assist with the appropriate type of housing provision in the future.

Site and Surroundings

The site is located 1km south of Birkenhead Key Town Centre. The site lies to the north of local centres of Rock Ferry and New Ferry.

It comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land which is approximately 1.12 ha in area and is home predominantly to a number of terraced properties aligned along north to south and east to west streets.

The site is bounded by Borough Road, (WEST) Whitford Road (NORTH), Fountain Road (SOUTH) and Derby Road to the Far East.

The site is currently cleared awaiting future development.

Health Issues

There are no health implications.

Appearance and Amenity Issues

The following section describes how the proposed design incorporates the development principles that have been set out under the Church Road Masterplan.

It is considered that the urban form/design principles employed by the applicant reflect the requirement to provide a development of the highest design quality, which stimulates the senses of its users, provides well enclosed spaces; and is legible, safe and secure.

The urban form of the buildings proposed is positioned in such a way as to define the streets and spaces through establishing strong building lines.

Density mixture

The overall scheme comprises 56 dwelling houses, which provides an average

density of 50 dwellings per hectare.

Such a density is lower than that which exists on the site at present; however, the scheme comprises a high quality open space/public realm framework and conforms to current planning policy guidelines, as well as the existing grain of the area. This density also meets broadly with the requirement for density contained within PPS3: Housing.

In terms of the overall mix of residential property types. It is not indicated at this outline stage as to the number of bedrooms and general size of these properties. The intention is through the associated design code retain a certain level of flexibility, allowing a range of house types, property sizes and tenures.

Frontages

The principal functions of the main frontages to the buildings proposed clearly define what is public and what is private and avoid the creation of ambiguous spaces that undermine the character and quality of the public realm.

For streets to be safe, lively, attractive and easy to navigate, it is crucial to orient and concentrate principal building entrances and windows along the public highway. The proposed layout is considered in accordance with these core principles.

Within the Streets and spaces each new dwelling has direct pedestrian access at street level; roadways have been laid out to give easy access to garage or in curtilage parking.

Scale and Massing

Emphasising spaces, nodal points and vistas, and providing enclosure and character were key design principles which influenced the potential scale and massing of the proposed development.

There has been a requirement to respect the visual impact of this development to its surroundings. The houses proposed will vary between 2 to 3 storeys in height which is considered appropriate to the area.

Legibility

A key principle governing the design of the HMRI Masterplan was to provide a legible environment which is easy to comprehend by first time users. The proposed development is considered to achieve this key element by providing the following:

- It provides emphasis to the entrance of the site by including gateway buildings which announce the site and what lies beyond.
- The layout of the buildings enables views along the roads affected without obstruction.
- The Home Zone at the centre of the scheme provides a strong focal point and heart to the development. Open views into the space from the southwest and northeast provide strong visual permeability, and the space itself forms an orientating feature.
- It provides a clear hierarchy of routes within the site defined through widths, enclosure and landscaping treatments.

Landscaping Private Space

Private garden space has been provided where possible to the rear of houses at ground level. There is sufficient space available for the provision for both landscaping and boundary treatment.

Amenity

When considering impacts upon privacy and the amenity of neighbouring residents, the development proposed meets with all necessary separation distances employed by the Council. It is therefore considered any other loss of light or overshadowing caused by the proposed development would likely be within acceptable limits.

Environmental Impact Assessment

As this development is an urban development project greater than 0.5HA, it falls within the scope of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and therefore the Local Planning Authority is required to screen the application to consider whether an Environmental Impact Assessment should be carried out. In this respect the guidance suggests that in addition to the physical scale of such developments, particular consideration should be given to the potential increase in traffic, emissions and noise. EIA is unlikely to be required for the redevelopment of land unless the new development is on a significantly greater scale than the previous use or the types of impact are of a markedly different nature or there is a high level of contamination.

It is for the LPA to come to a judgement on whether the proposal is likely to have significant effects. In this case, the main environmental impact is likely to be related to traffic or noise. The Director of Regeneration (Housing and Environmental Protection) and the Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management) have not raised any issues which might need to be addressed in an Environmental Statement. On balance therefore, an EIA is not necessary in this instance.

Health Issues

There are no health implications relating to this application.

Highway Implications

The Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management) comments that this application for 56 dwellings would replace existing/previous use of approximately 67 dwellings plus some commercial use and therefore it is expected that an overall reduction in traffic generation and parking demand would be apparent when compared to previous/existing uses.

It is therefore considered that there are no sustainable grounds for objection to this application in terms of highway safety or congestion.

However, the details of the proposed road layout fronting 71 to 89 Fountain Street are unclear on the supplied plans and therefore a condition is requested to allow this aspect of the proposals to be developed to the satisfaction of the Director of Technical Services.

Environmental/Sustainability Issues

Sustainability and environmentally friendly new housing developments should be the benchmark in line with PPS3, PPS1 [together with the consultation PPS on Climate Change] and the recently launched 'Code for Sustainable Homes', which sits alongside the planning system.

The Council has signed up to the Nottingham Declaration and is currently preparing a 'Strategy for Climate Change' for the Borough. In the latest report on 'Developing Local Planning Guidelines for Sustainable Development', which advocates the role of Planning in assisting with delivering Climate Change benefits in new developments, the Council will use this and build upon advice contained within its recently adopted Statement of Community Involvement to encourage developers to meet early with Planning and Building Control Officers to discuss the best way to secure environmental and sustainable measures in new developments before lodging an application.

The Council has and will continue to work with the developer of this scheme to deliver 'Very Good' Eco-homes standard or alternatively, and preferably, 'Level Code Three' housing as set out in the above Code to ensure that the proposed homes are of a good quality and are sustainable throughout their lifetime.

The application site is located in an area that has good public transport accessibility and there are local facilities available that are in reach by other means than the private car. This should contribute to cutting carbon emissions and the development overall

should look to viably and readily draw at least 10% of its energy supply from decentralised energy supply systems based upon renewable and low-carbon forms of energy supply, or where there is a clear potential for this to be realised.

Materials, from where they are sourced and their effective and economic use in the construction of the new buildings will be equally important and could be measured through either Building Control regulations or the Code Level Three standards. This should ensure that each building has met the required 10% for renewable energy in new developments as set out in PPS1.

Summary of Decision:

The proposal would enhance and complement the intention to comprehensively restructure the housing market through the re-development of the area in accordance with the Church Road Masterplan.

The proposal accords with National, Regional and Local Policy and would greatly benefit the overall aims for the regeneration and urban renaissance of the area.

The granting of outline planning permission for the re-development of this site would enhance the potential for the re-development of the site currently being assembled in terms of delivering the scope of restructuring required in the HMRI area.

Failure to deliver this scheme would cause harm to the overall structural and environmental regeneration of the area. This would be contrary to Policy UR6 of RSS.

One of the Government's main objectives, in PPS3 is that there should be greater choice of housing and that this should reinforce social distinctions. The Masterplan has evolved with full community and stakeholder involvement, a key principle of PPS1, to produce a vision for improving the quality one of the most socially and economically deprived areas of Wirral.

The implementation of the scheme set out in the outline planning application would succeed in restructuring the local housing market and meeting identified housing need. The size of the units proposed within the development would improve the choice for existing and/or new residents and will significantly regenerate and revitalise the area.

Overall, it is considered that the outline housing development proposed would not introduce a significant amount of harm to the street scene or to the character of the area. The proposal is acceptable in design terms and complies with HS4 of Wirral's Unitary Development. Therefore it is deemed acceptable.

Recommendation: Approve

Condition(s):

- 1 Outline (C51A)
- 2 Outline Standard date for submission of reserved matters. (C51D)
- 3 Outline Standard time limits. (C51C)
- 4 samples of the materials to be submitted and approved prior to commencement (C59B)
- 5 Cycle parking scheme to be submitted and completed prior to occupation (C61L)
- 6 A datum for measuring land levels shall be agreed in writing with the LPA. All details of floor levels and relationship to highways shall be taken from the datum and submitted to and agreed in writing before the development is commenced. (C61K)
- 7 Scheme of land drainage and surface water drainage to be submitted and approved prior to commencement. (C61N)
- 8 Floodlighting details to be submitted and agreed before use. (C63A)
- 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 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 be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 10 Detailed landscaping scheme to be agreed prior to commencement (C71A)
- 11 Replacement of diseased planting for a period of 5 years from completion. (C71G)
- 12 Landscaping works to be carried out in accordance with the approved details as set out in Condition 12. (C71J)
- 13 Remove permitted development for gates, walls and fences (C57A)

- 14 Remove permitted development for all extensions. (C57C)
- 15 Remove permitted development for external cladding (C57F)
- 16 Remove permitted development for additional buildings. (green belt) (C57G)
- 17 Any subsequent reserved matters application submitted to the Local Planning Authority must comply and be in accordance with all aspects of the content of the accompanying design code to this application hereby approved.

Reason for conditions

- 1 Standard (CR51)
- 2 Standard (CR86)
- 3 Standard (CR52)
- 4 In the interests of visual amenity. Policy EM6 or HS4 of the UDP (CR66)
- 5 To promote more sustainable forms of transport. Policy TR12 of the UDP (CR69)
- 6 Highway safety (CR13)
- 7 To ensure satisfactory land drainage and to prevent flooding. (CR70)
- 8 To ensure that satisfactory details of floodlighting are submitted and approved, and to ensure the adequate protection of local amenity, having regard to Policy HS4 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.
- 9 To ensure a satisfactory appearance and avoid overlooking having regard to HS4 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.
- 10 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 11 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 12 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 13 To maintain the character of the area. Policy HS4 of the UDP (CR60)
- 14 To maintain the character of the area. Policy HS4 of the UDP (CR61)
- 15 To maintain the character of the area. Policy HS4 of the UDP (CR63)
- 16 To protect the privacy of residents. Policy HS11 of the UDP (CR62)
- 17 In the interests of Residential Amenity. Policy HS4 of the Wirral UDP.

Last Comments By: 16 August 2007

56 Day Expires On: 23 October 2007

Case Officer: Mr N Culkin