

Planning Committee 15 November 2007

ITEM	LBC/2007/6806	WARD Bromborough
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Location: Sunlight Lodge Lane Port Sunlight Wirral CH62 5EZ

Proposal: Change of use to hotel, erection of extensions to existing building and erection of two new buildings and associated works

Applicant: Leverhulme Hotel Ltd
c/o Paddock Johnson Partnership
33 Boundary Road
Port Sunlight
Wirral
CH62 5ER

Agent: Paddock Johnson Partnership
33 Boundary Road
Port Sunlight
Wirral
CH62 5ER

Development Plan allocation and policies: Wirral Unitary Development Plan
Primarily Residential Area
Conservation Area
Policy HS15 - Non-residential Uses in Primarily Residential Areas
Policy CH1 - Development Affecting Listed Buildings and Structures
Policy CH2 - Development Affecting Conservation Areas
Policy CH9 - Port Sunlight Conservation Area
Policy TLR1 -
Policy TL1 - The Protection of Urban Tourist Resources
Policy TL2 - Criteria for Urban Tourism
Policy TL7 - Criteria for Hotels and Guest Houses
Policy GR5 - Landscaping and New Development
Policy GR7 - Trees and New Development
Policy TR9 - Requirements for Off Street Parking
Policy TR12 - Requirements for Cycle Parking
RSS Policy DP3
RSS Policy EC9
RSS Policy ER3
RSS Policy ER4
Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres
Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

Planning History: There is no relevant planning history.

Representations and consultations received: Representations:

A Site Notice was erected and a Press notice issued

49 letters were sent through the neighbour notification process of which 2 letters of objection were received objecting on the grounds that works appear to have commenced on site.

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 Division): no objection

Directors comments: Proposal

The proposed development comprises the conversion of the existing Sunlight Lodge into a boutique hotel incorporating 15 no. suited rooms, along with ancillary services and accommodation. The proposal also includes 3 no. new build blocks incorporating conference and function facilities, further hotel accommodation and vehicular storage. The site measures approximately 0.83 hectares.

The site currently consists of the existing Sunlight Lodge block with Lodge Lane to the North and open space to all sides (currently overgrown).

The proposals include for Lodge Lane to become a 'private' access road to serve the new hotel, and the existing buildings of Manor Lodge and Philip Leverhulme Lodge. The road will remain as a cul-de-sac, as existing and be accessed by a secured gate allowing entrance to anyone approaching, but exit will be controlled by keypad number. The boundary treatment will remain substantially unchanged, maintaining the original hedge for the entire boundary and 'thinning out' the current, overgrown trees and shrubbery in the spirit of the newly drafted Conservation Plan for Port Sunlight, allowing key views and transparency of the site from points in and around the village.

Site and Surroundings

The application falls within Port Sunlight Village which is located on the Western side of the A41, adjacent to Bebington on the Wirral. The village is an important example of a worker's settlement and garden city founded by William Lever who operated a local soap factory. Much of the housing and public buildings are listed as being of special architectural interest and as a result the village has also been designated as a conservation area by the Local Planning Authority.

The overall character of the area is as a 'Garden Village' with housing as the main land use, but also significant public/community buildings. Sunlight Lodge was originally built as a hospital and after various conversions as a training centre and nursing home has now become vacant and derelict. The site itself still retains all of its original features, and its extensive mature gardens. It is bounded by three roads, Lodge Lane, Pool Bank and Church Drive, with green open space to the South.

The site is bounded on three sides by residential properties, with sheltered accommodation on the North boundary. To the South is Church Drive Primary school built around the same time as the Cottage Hospital.

The Cottage Hospital was built in 1907, containing 12 beds and two cots. It was introduced to provide the residents/workers of the village with free health service. This continued until the introduction of the National Health services in 1948. The building was converted into a training centre for the employees of Unilever in 1950, closing in 1984 and converted into an elderly person's home, which eventually closed, leaving the building derelict for the last 6 or 7 years.

The building itself was designed by famed Liverpool Architects, Grayson & Ould, who also designed Church Drive Primary School, and The Bridge Inn at the same time. Consisting mainly of two-storeys, with one-storey wings and the later additions of cantered 4-bay lower wings with large small panel glazed doors and steps.

Policy Context

The site is designated as a Primarily Residential Area and Conservation Area in the Unitary Development Plan.

Relevant Development Plan criteria for assessing the above application can be found at RSS Policies DP3, EC9, ER3 & ER4 and UDP Policies HS15, CH1, CH2, CH9, TLR1, TL1 TL2, TL7, GR5, GR7, TR9 & TR12, along with SPD4 and SPG16, 17, 23 and 42. National Planning Policy is set out in PPS6, PPG15.

There also is a statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest and pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area under sections 66 & 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Account should also be taken of guidance produced by English Heritage on enabling development. This can be a material consideration to weigh in favour of an application for development at this site.

Principle of Development

RSS Policies DP3, EC9, ER3 & ER4 require good design and expect development plans to facilitate growth and investment in tourism whilst protecting the built heritage and neighbours amenity.

The application is at odds with UDP Policy TL7, which directs hotels with public facilities to commercial locations within the urban area. Hotels are also identified as a town centre use and are subject to the sequential tests in National Planning Policy PPS6. Nevertheless, the Port Sunlight Conservation Village is recognised as an urban tourist resource under UDP Policy TL1. Existing facilities include the Lady Lever Art Gallery, a theatre, a heritage and archive centre and Hulme Hall conference centre. The proposed development offers the opportunity to enhance the attractiveness of this resource as well as enabling benefits that gain conversion and a viable use for the existing listed building. In terms of accessibility, the site is within 450 metres of New Ferry Town Centre and area is served via a railway station with regular trains from Liverpool and Chester and a regular bus service from Birkenhead. These factors, can weigh significantly in favour of the proposal when balanced against the objectives of TL7 and PPS6.

UDP Policies TL2, CH1, CH2 and CH9 permit proposals that are of a nature and scale appropriate for preserving or enhancing the character and setting of existing listed buildings and the Conservation Area itself.

The proposed landscaping, tree felling (including oak & beech) and planting have been assessed for compliance with GR5 and GR7 in consultation with the Arboricultural officer.

Road safety, traffic management issues and the operation of maximum parking levels are considerations for assessing off street car parking provision at this site under Policy TR9 and SPD4. Policies TR12 and SPG 42 set out the terms for assessing provision for cycle facilities.

Health Issues

There are no health implications relating to this application.

Appearance and Amenity Issues

The building, formerly the Cottage Hospital and then Nursing Home, is in the ownership of the Port Sunlight Village Trust and their proposals for conversion of the building into flats (granted in 2003) were unable to be implemented. The trust has involved Leverhulme Hotel Ltd in seeking a specialist hotel facility for the building and to aid and enhance tourism to Port Sunlight.

The proposal would involve an extension to the main Cottage hospital block, an additional bedroom block, a block for garaging with staff accommodation over and parking within Lodge Lane with a new entrance off Central Road.

The site lies within the core of Port Sunlight Village Conservation Area. The building is listed Grade II. Open views to the site are obtained from the west over the open space separating Central Road from the Lady Lever Art Gallery. These views are partly screened by the trees on that open space and the trees bordering Lodge Lane and Central Road. Though there is further open space to the south the boundary hedges and trees, and the avenues bordering the footpaths provide a dense canopy that largely obscures the site. Similarly, boundary trees and hedging partially obscure the main building from the east from the open land between Lodge Lane and Corniche Road. The outpatient's entrance wing directly abuts Lodge Lane and is viewed in the close context of the new residential apartments of Philip Leverhulme Lodge immediately to the north. The site is relatively contained by its green boundaries of privet hedging and trees and forms an enclave in the village core.

The extension to the original block is located at the rear. The roof continues the rear extension of the original building and is sympathetic in terms of materials and form. A more modern entrance "fan" faces to the rear of the site. It is expected that this will become a secondary entrance for functions and a setting for photographs.

The bedroom block will be in partial sight from the direction of the Lady Leverhulme Art Gallery and environs. The design has tried to pick up the themes of vernacular architecture in the village but by the use of zinc to give the designs a contemporary

twist which will indicate in future the time of their construction.

The garage and staff block is of a smaller scale and has been designed more closely within the canons of the vernacular tradition as befits a service quarter. Roof materials and pitch are intended to match the prevailing ones in the village.

The parking areas on Lodge Lane will be set behind a new entrance from Central Road and behind a landscaped boundary from Pool Bank. The closure of Lodge Lane to prevent "rat-running" in the late 1970s was not particularly sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area. It is intended to provide a privet hedge boundary spanning across the line of the road at its point of closure. In effect, this will continue the line of boundary hedging facing on to Pool Bank and will enhance the Conservation Area. On Central Road the new entrance and flanking planting will demarcate the parking area and screen parked cars.

Trees and Landscaping

The provision for both landscaping and boundary treatment relates well to existing urban surroundings. The space set aside adequately meets with the requirements of providing a private associated amenity space in accordance with the principles set out under PPS1: Delivering sustainable development.

A full tree survey has been submitted which intends to reinstate the original landscaping and ornamental planting was apparent. The only trees to be felled are self seeded and not part of the original design. All other trees will be protected and maintained via appropriate measures of mitigation attached as conditions to this recommendation.

Highway/Traffic Implications

The Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management) has raised no objection to the proposed development.

However they have asked that should committee be minded to approve this application, further details would be required for the main access from Church Drive to be widened to 5.5m with 3m radii minimum. A Sight line would also be required which is 2.4m x 45m with visibility splays of 2.4m x 2.4m. The footway shown on Church Drive is below minimum width of 2m. Details of gates would also need to be agreed. All of the requirements requested can be dealt with via appropriately attached conditions.

The access road to Block B from Hospital Road is excluded from this application and will be submitted as a separate application.

Environmental/Sustainability Appraisal

The proposal will secure the repair of the original building and provide a use which will help attract visitors to Port Sunlight and improve the quality of their visit. The additional blocks have been carefully designed to fit in sympathetically with the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed building. The boundary treatments will also help integrate the development into the context of that part of the Conservation Area in which the site lies.

Summary of Decision: It is considered that the residential development proposed would not introduce a significant amount of harm to the street scene or to the character of Port Sunlight Conservation area. The proposal is acceptable in design terms and complies with, PPG15: Planning and Historic Environment; RSS Policies DP1 and DP3; and Policies CH1, CH2, and CH9 of Wirral's Unitary Development and therefore is deemed acceptable.

Recommendation: **Approve**

Condition(s):

- 1 A scheme of works to be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority showing details of all mechanical extraction/ventilation units, air conditioning units, chillers and cooler systems. The scheme should include the sound

- power levels for each piece of equipment. All works to be completed before commencement of business.
- 2 A scheme of works to be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority showing details of the glazing provision for the function room. All the works to be completed before commencement of business.
- 3 Detailed landscaping scheme to be agreed prior to commencement (C71A)
- 4 Replacement of diseased planting for a period of 5 years from completion. (C71G)
- 5 Landscaping works to be carried out in accordance with the approved details as set out in Condition 4. (C71J)
- 6 Full permission statutory commencement time limit. (C03A)
- 7 Materials and sample panel to be submitted and approved prior to commencement (C59D)
- 8 Cycle parking scheme to be submitted and completed prior to occupation (C61L)
- 9 No trees to be lopped, topped or felled without prior consent. (C71L)
- 10 Agreement to be reached on site prior to development commences on tree protection measures. (C71M)
- 11 Land drainage scheme to be submitted and agreed. (C63B)
- 12 Floodlighting details to be submitted and agreed before use. (C63A)
- 13 Prior to the commencement of development full details of all CCTV to be used is to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Upon receipt of written approval all details approved must be implemented in full prior to the opening of the development hereby approved and maintained as such thereafter.
- 14 Prior to the commencement of development full details of all gates and boundary details are to be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Upon receipt of written approval all details approved must be implemented in full prior to the opening of the development hereby approved and maintained as such thereafter.
- 15 Development according to plans received on 24th October 2007. (C24C)
- 16 No works or development shall take place until a scheme for the protection of the retained trees (section 7, BS59837, the Tree Protection Plan) has been agreed in writing with the LPA. This scheme shall include [include those that are pertinent]:
- A; a plan to a scale and level of accuracy appropriate to the proposal that shows the position, crown spread and Root Protection Area (para. 5.2.2 of BS5837) of every retained tree on site and on neighbouring or nearby ground to the site in relation to the approved plans and particulars. The positions of all trees to be removed shall be indicated on this plan.
- B; the details of each retained tree as required at para. 4.2.6 of BS5837 in a separate schedule.
- C; a schedule of tree works for all the retained trees in paragraphs (a) and (b) above, specifying pruning and other remedial or preventative work, whether for physiological, hazard abatement, aesthetic or operational reasons. All tree works shall be carried out in accordance with BS3998, 1989, Recommendations for tree work.
- D; written proof of the credentials of the arboricultural contractor authorised to carry out the scheduled tree works.
- E; the details and positions (shown on the plan at paragraph (a) above) of the Ground Protection Zones (section 9.3 of BS5837).
- F; the details and positions (shown on the plan at paragraph (a) above) of the Tree Protection Barriers (section 9.2 of BS5837), identified separately where required for different phases of construction work (e.g. demolition, construction, hard landscaping). The Tree Protection Barriers must be erected prior to each construction phase commencing and remain in place, and undamaged for the duration of that phase. No works shall take place on the next phase until the Tree Protection Barriers are repositioned for that phase.
- G; the details and positions (shown on the plan at paragraph (a) above) of the Construction Exclusion Zones (section 9 of BS5837).
- H; the details and positions (shown on the plan at paragraph (a) above) of the underground service runs (section 11.7 of BS5837).
- I; the details of any changes in levels or the position of any proposed excavations within 5 metres of the Root Protection Area (para. 5.2.2 of BS5837) of any retained tree, including those on neighbouring or nearby ground.
- J; the details of any special engineering required to accommodate the protection of retained trees (section 10 of BS5837), (e.g. in connection with foundations, bridging, water features, surfacing)
- K; the details of the working methods to be employed with the demolition of buildings, structures and surfacing within or adjacent to the RPAs of retained trees.
- L; the details of the working methods to be employed for the installation of drives and paths within the RPAs of retained trees in accordance with the principles of "No-Dig"

construction.

M; the details of the working methods to be employed with regard to the access for and use of heavy, large, difficult to manoeuvre plant (including cranes and their loads, dredging machinery, concrete pumps, piling rigs, etc) on site.

N; the details of the working methods to be employed with regard to site logistics and storage, including an allowance for slopes, water courses and enclosures, with particular regard to ground compaction and phytotoxicity.

O; the details of the method to be employed for the stationing, use and removal of site cabins within any RPA (para. 9.2.3 of BS5837).

P; the details of tree protection measures for the hard landscaping phase (sections 13 and 14 of BS5837).

Q; the timing of the various phases of the works or development in the context of the tree protection measures.

17 The following activities must not be carried out under any circumstances:

a, No fires shall be lit within 10 metres of the nearest point of the canopy of any retained tree.

b, No works shall proceed until the appropriate Tree Protection Barriers are in place, with the exception of initial tree works.

c, No equipment, signage, fencing, tree protection barriers, materials, components, vehicles or structures shall be attached to or supported by a retained tree.

d, No mixing of cement or use of other materials or substances shall take place within a RPA, or close enough to a RPA that seepage or displacement of those materials or substances could cause them to enter a RPA

e, No alterations or variations to the approved works or tree protection schemes shall be carried out without the prior written approval of the LPA.

18 No equipment, machinery or materials are to be brought on the site for the purpose of the development until all the trees to be retained have been protected by fences or other suitable means of enclosure to the distance of the outermost limit of the branch spread or as detailed in section 5, Table 2 of BS5837:2005, "Trees in Relation to Construction", whichever is the further from the tree. With regard to this proposal the protective fencing shall be at least 2.0m high, comprising a scaffolding framework, (as detailed in section 9.2.2. of BS5837:2005), supporting a minimum of 20mm exterior grade ply or other approved robust man-made boards as shown in BS5837:2005, Figure 2, or such alternative as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

19 No works or development shall take place until a specification of all proposed tree planting has been approved in writing by the LPA. This specification will include details of the quantity, size, species, position and the proposed time of planting of all trees to be planted, together with an indication of how they integrate with the proposal in the long term with regard to their mature size and anticipated routine maintenance. In addition all shrubs and hedges to be planted that are intended to achieve a significant size and presence in the landscape should be similarly specified. All tree, shrub and hedge planting included within that specification shall be carried out in accordance with that specification and in accordance with BS 3936 (parts 1, 1992, Nursery Stock, Specification for trees and shrubs, and 4, 1984, Specification for forest trees); BS4043, 1989, Transplanting root-balled trees; and BS4428, 1989, Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces).

20 If within a period of five years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, [or becomes, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective] another tree of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason for conditions

- 1 In the interests of residential amenity. Policy HS15 of the Wirral UDP.
- 2 In the interests of residential amenity. Policy HS15 of the Wirral UDP.
- 3 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 4 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 5 In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Policy GR5 of the UDP (CR79)
- 6 Standard (CR86)
- 7 To ensure that the development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area. This condition is imposed having regard to policies CH2 (Development affecting Conservation Areas) and Policy HS15 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.
- 8 To promote more sustainable forms of transport. Policy TR12 of the UDP (CR69)

- 9 To protect trees which are of significant amenity value to the area. Policy GR7 of the UDP (CR80)
- 10 To ensure site works adequately protect the trees. Policy GR7 of the UDP (CR81)
- 11 To secure adequate land drainage, and the adequate protection of local amenity, having regard to Policy WA3 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.
- 12 To ensure that satisfactory details of floodlighting are submitted and approved, and to ensure the adequate protection of local amenity, having regard to HS15 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.
- 13 In the interests of residential amenity. Policy HS15.
- 14 In the interests of residential amenity. Policy HS15.
- 15 For the avoidance of doubt. (CR33)
- 16 To ensure that the Arboricultural work is carried out to a satisfactory standard. Policy GR7 of the UDP (CR82)
- 17 To protect trees which are of significant amenity value to the area. Policy GR7 of the UDP (CR80)
- 18 To protect trees which are of significant amenity value to the area. Policy GR7 of the UDP (CR80)
- 19 To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality.
- 20 To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the appearance of the locality.

Last Comments By: 25 October 2007

56 Day Expires On: 23 November 2007

Case Officer: Mr N Culkin