

Planning Committee

31 March 2010

Reference:
APP/09/06285

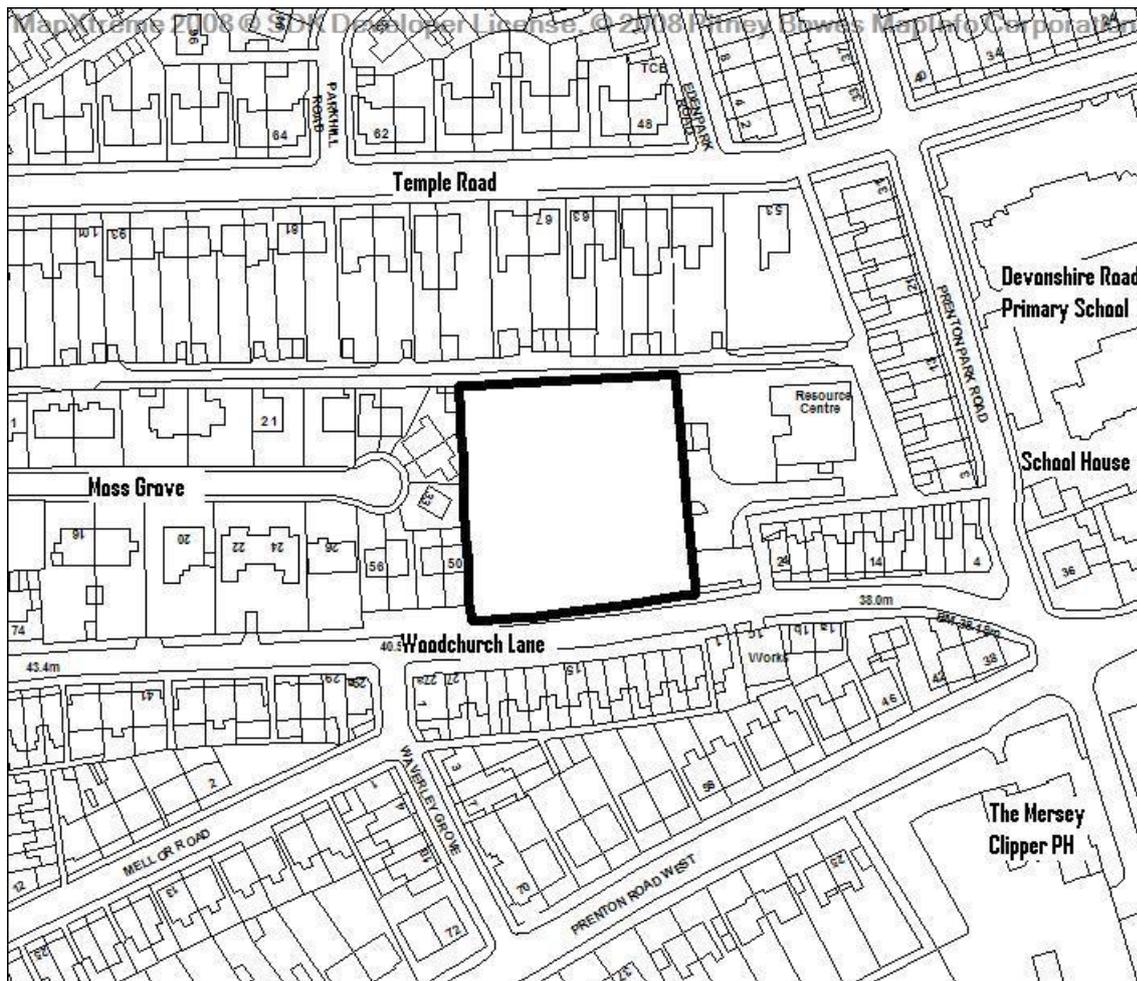
Area Team:
East

Case Officer:
Mr K Spilsbury

Ward:
Prenton

Location: Land adj. 50 Woodchurch Lane, Prenton, Wirral, CH42 9PH
Proposal: Erection of 8 no. self contained flats and 6 no. houses.
Applicant: Lisa Newman
Agent : Mr Alfred Plant

Site Plan:



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Development Plan allocation and policies:

Primarily Residential Area

Planning History:

APP/4300 - Use of land for a temporary period for market gardening - **A/C 12/02/1976**

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:

REPRESENTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the entrance to the site. A total of 47 letters of notification have been sent to properties in the area. At the time of writing this report representations have been received from the occupiers of: 3, 5, 11, 13, 15, 17, 22, 24, 25 Woodchurch Lane; 61, 69, 73, 75 Temple Road and; 29 Moss Grove.

The objections can be summarised as follows:

- Reduced car parking in the area
- Object to social housing/council housing
- Increased traffic and the potential for accidents
- No need for additional housing in the area
- Construction work will cause disruption
- New houses would not be in keeping with the character of the area.
- Social housing will lower the value of properties
- Loss of privacy
- Noise pollution
- Loss of light
- Overlooking of private amenity space
- Houses have too many bedrooms and will cause over population
- Loss of green/open area
- Loss of existing disabled parking space
- Lack of consultation with owners
- Insufficient time for residents to provide comments
- Covenants on the land are being ignored by the council
- Drainage problem on the site and its effect upon neighbouring properties

A qualifying petition of objection has also been received from 49 separate households, concerned with parking issues and the volume of traffic and noise which will effect the residents of Woodchurch Lane and the effect of the scheme on the residents of Temple Road in terms of loss of light to the rear of properties, access issues to properties and increased noise volume and - Loss of light to rear of dwellings, noise and the volume of traffic for the access road on Moss Grove. All residents object to social housing and state that the scheme is not in keeping with the properties that face the site.

CONSULTATIONS

Director of Regeneration (Pollution Control) – No Objection

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

The Director of Regeneration (Housing Strategy) – No Objection

Director's Comments:

This application was deferred from Planning Committee on 11th March 2010 for a site visit.

REASON FOR REFERRAL

The application was taken out of delegation by Councillor Frank Doyle stating the application raises issues regarding the interim housing policy and the application does not meet with criteria. The development is in a Greenfield site and the approval of this scheme would set an unhelpful precedent that could undermine the interim housing policy.

INTRODUCTION

The proposed development is for the erection of 6 dwelling houses fronting onto Woodchurch Lane with a small development of 8 self contained flats on the rear part of the site, with access provided to these new units via a new short roadway. The development is a partnership between the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral and Wirral Partnership Homes to build affordable housing in an area that has been highlighted by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for need.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is located within a Primarily Residential Area in Wirral's Unitary Development Plan and is therefore acceptable subject to HS4 – Criteria for New Housing Development, TR9 – Requirements for Off Street Parking, SPD 2 - Design for Self Contained Flats and the Interim Planning Policy: New Housing Developments adopted for Development Control purposes by the Council on 20 October 2005.

Whilst Councillor Doyle raises concern that the proposal will be located within a Greenfield site the Local Planning Authority considered that this is not the case and the site is fact Brownfield. This is defined in PPS3. 'Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. The site previously housed the Devonshire Centre building and the proposed scheme is within the curtilage of the former building.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site is currently open grass land, surrounded by residential properties and a small single storey resource centre to the east. The frontage of the site onto Woodchurch Lane is bounded by steel railings and small trees with two storey terraced dwellings facing the site. The gradient of the land falls from east to west and as a result the two storey semi detached properties located to the west are set slightly higher than the resource centre to the east. The properties backing onto the site have long rear gardens and are screened from the site by an approximately 2m high fence. There are a variety of housing styles and designs in the area but the building line is relatively consistent running along Woodside Lane.

POLICY CONTEXT

This site is designated as a Primarily Residential Area within the Council's Unitary Development Plan but also lies within the area subject to the restrictions on new housing development. The aim of the policy is to focus new housing development into the Housing Market Renewal Initiative Areas in Rock Ferry, Tranmere, Birkenhead and Seacombe and other regeneration priority areas. As this site is outside the Regeneration Priority Area the applicant must demonstrate a housing need in the area. Planning approval is being sought to develop a total of 13 affordable housing units, comprising of the following:

- 8 x 2 bed flats
- 4 x 2 bed houses
- 2 x 3 bed houses

Following consultation with The Director of Regeneration - Housing Strategy and an analysis of Wirral 2007 SHMA for the Prenton Ward it is indicated that there is a net annual need of 75 affordable housing units, with a clear indication for 2, 3 and 4 bed affordable units required to meet need.

In the Prenton ward there are a total of only 557 units of social (affordable) housing with a further 545 units of affordable housing located in the nearby Oxtton ward. This is out of a total of 22,664 units of affordable housing for the Borough.

Analysis of Wirralhomes data for 2008 – 2009 indicates that in the Prenton Ward only 7 x 2 bed affordable housing units were advertised with on average 29 expressions of interest for each one. In addition only 4 x 3 bed units were advertised with on average 202 expressions of interest for each one. No 4 bed units became available during this time.

This localised data and the general data from Wirral SHMA clearly indicates the need to develop and provide affordable housing in the Prenton Ward to meet the changing need and demands of Wirral population.

The proposal is subject to policy HS4 of Wirral's Unitary Development Plan. It is considered that the proposals are of a scale which relates to the surrounding properties and will not result in a detrimental change in the character of the area. The provision of landscaping and boundary treatments will ensure the development relates to the surrounding area.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

The proposed houses are sited in a single terrace block which roughly follows the existing street

pattern and building line. The dwellings are two storey in height with active frontages onto Woodchurch Lane. Each dwelling house has its own private amenity space which includes a generous front garden which respects the existing building line. The rear gardens face north and are set out as a courtyard with a single car parking bay provided within the rear curtilage of each house. The proposed apartments are located within their own grounds to the rear of the site, and are two storey in height. A new adopted road and turning head will follow the western boundary of the site to provide access to the apartments. A landscape strip of dense shrub planting will provide a buffer between this new road and the existing houses adjacent. The dwellings have been sited so as not to encroach upon the local amenities of the surrounding properties. It is considered that the proposed habitable room windows will not result in overlooking of the adjacent properties and the proposed scheme is located a sufficient distance from any of the surrounding dwellings to result in overshadowing or dominance. Boundary treatment has been agreed with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer and all properties will be built to secure by design standards.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

Habitable room windows directly facing each other within the site are at least 21 metres apart. The dwellings located to the rear of the site are over 30m from the proposed apartments and the habitable room windows located in the rear elevation of 29 and 31 Moss Grove are at least 14 metres from the blank gable of the apartments. The properties facing the site on Woodchurch Lane are 21m from the proposed habitable windows of the new dwellings. It is therefore considered that the separation distances employed by the local planning authority have been achieved on and around the site.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

The Director of Technical Services (Traffic Management/Highway Maintenance) has no objection to the proposed development subject to the applicant amending the resident parking scheme including alterations of the existing bays in Woodchurch Lane to allow vehicle access and providing tactile paving and traffic signage as necessary. The proposal would result in a loss of a 25m length of resident parking bay on Woodchurch Lane, however, this is not considered sufficient reason for objection on highway safety grounds.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to these proposals.

HEALTH ISSUES

There are no health implications relating to this application.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the residential development proposed is acceptable in terms of the Council's Policies and guidelines would not introduce harm to the street scene or to the character of the area. The proposal is acceptable in design terms and complies with policies HS4 of Wirral's Unitary Development and Regional Spatial Strategy policies SD1 & DP3. The development is therefore deemed acceptable subject to conditions and is recommended for approval.

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:-

Having analysed the localised data for Prenton and the general data from Wirral SHMA it clearly indicates the need to develop and provide affordable housing in the Prenton Ward to meet the changing need and demands of Wirral population. The proposed residential development is considered acceptable in terms of all Local, Regional and National Planning Policies.

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/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 occupation of the development hereby permitted shall not commence until a full scheme of works to amend the existing Tranmere Rovers Residential Parking Scheme has been submitted to and agreed in Writing with the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be completed in full and retained as such thereafter unless otherwise agreed in writing with 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 vehicle access from the highway into the development site, tactile paving and traffic signage as necessary. 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. If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted, and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority for, an amendment to the remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with. The development shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved strategy.

Reason: To ensure a safe form of development that poses no unacceptable risk of pollution to the water environment pursuant to policy PO5 of Wirral's Unitary Development plan.

Further Notes for Committee:

1. Condition 3 will require the processing of a Traffic Regulation Order with associated road markings and traffic signs, carried out at the developer's expense. The Developer should contact the Director of Technical Services - Traffic Management Division for information on a Traffic Regulation Order (0151 -606- 2101)

Last Comments By: 17/02/2010 16:57:18

Expiry Date: 25/03/2010