

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
(ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2011 – SCREENING OPINION**

**PHASED DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 48 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS
AND A MEDICAL CENTRE, ON LAND AT BRIDGE COURT**

Thank you for your request for a screening opinion, submitted 03rd July 2013, in relation to the above proposed development - including the following drawings and information:

Dwg No	Dwg Title	Scale	Size	Rev.(*NB.1)
AR-WS-XX-PL-200-001	Location Plan	1 to 1250	A3	/
Nov-12	Schedule of proposed external facing material finishes / colours	nts	A4	/
AR-WS-XX-PL-100-001	Existing Site Plan (including existing topographical survey)	1 to 250	A0	A
United Utilities dated 16.05.11	Extract from map of public sewers - Grange Road West	1 to 1250	A3	/
AR-WS-XX-PL-100-002	Proposed Site Plan	1 to 250	A0	B
AR-WS-XX-PL-100-003	Proposed Site Plan, Part A	1 to 100	A0	C
AR-WS-XX-PL-100-004	Proposed Site Plan, Part B	1 to 100	A0	B
6200 SP (90) 01	Landscape Proposals	1 to 200	A0	D
TPP-01	Tree Protection Plan	1 to 500	A1	/
AR-XX-00-PL-251-001	Proposed Apartment Ground Floor Plan	1 to 50	A1	/
AR-XX-01-PL-251-002	Proposed Apartment First Floor Plan	1 to 50	A1	/
AR-XX-02-PL-251-003	Proposed Apartment Block Second Floor Plan	1 to 50	A1	/
AR-XX-03-PL-251-004	Proposed Apartment Third Floor Plan	1 to 50	A1	/
AR-XX-RF-PL-240-001	Proposed Apartment Roof Plan	1 to 50	A0	/
AR-WS-XX-EL-	Proposed	nts	A3	/

251-006	Apartment Visual 1				
AR-WS-XX-EL-251-007	Proposed Apartment Visual 2	nts	A3	/	
AR-XX-XX-EL-251-001	Proposed Apartment Elevations	1 to 100	A0	/	
AR-XX-00-PL-200-001	Proposed Health Centre Level 0 Floor Plan	1 to 100	A1	A	
AR-XX-01-PL-200-001	Proposed Health Centre Level 1 Floor Plan	1 to 100	A1	/	
AR-XX-02-PL-200-001	Proposed Health Centre Level 2 Floor Plan	1 to 100	A1	/	
AR-WS-XX-EL-251-008	Proposed Health Centre Visual 1	nts	A3	/	
AR-WS-XX-EL-251-009	Proposed Health Centre Visual 2	nts	A3	/	
AR-XX-XX-EL-251-004	Proposed Health Centre Elevations, Sections & Roof Plan	1 to 100	A0	A	
Jun 2013	Design & Access Statement	nts	A3	/	
9W9060 Issue 02B	Transport Assessment	nts	A4	/	
9W9060 Issue 02B	Travel Plan Framework	nts	A4	/	

The information submitted has been considered in the light of the above regulations (the 2011 EIA Regulations). Consultations have been undertaken with Natural England, Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, Wirral Wildlife, the Environment Agency, the Highway Authority, and with the Head of Service for Environment and Regulation (Environmental Protection) to seek advice in response to your request for a screening opinion.

The application site comprises an area of approximately 0.95 hectares of land, currently having a mix of used – partly vacant (previously having supported residential units), and partly in use for open air recreation. Residential/residential care uses, leisure uses, retail uses (including a petrol station) and highways bound the site. The site is on land designated as a Primarily Residential Area and land designated as Urban Greenspace within the adopted Unitary Development Plan.

The development proposal is for 48 no. apartments, with associated landscaping, fencing and highways infrastructure, and a three-storey medical centre.

The Local Planning Authority considers that the development proposal falls under Schedule 2 of the 2011 EIA Regulations, under category 10 Infrastructure Projects, subcategory (b) Urban Development Projects. As the area of the site exceeds the applicable threshold set out in Schedule 2 (which is 0.5ha), the proposal is a Schedule 2 development.

Schedule 2 Class 10(b) - Urban Development Projects

According to Circular 02/99, EIA should be undertaken for Schedule 2 development in three main types of case:

1. For major developments which are of more than local importance;
2. For development in environmentally sensitive location; and
3. For development with complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects.

The Circular notes that 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 clarified that developments proposed are more likely to be EIA if the site area of the scheme is more than 5 hectares; would provide a total of more than 10,000 m² of new commercial floorspace; or would have significant urbanising effects in a previously non-urbanised area (e.g. a new development of more than 1,000 dwellings).

In this instance, the site area of the proposal is not above the 5 hectares above which the guidance suggests that EIA is more likely to be required. The proposal is not considered to have a significant potential for increased traffic, emissions or noise, is not considered to have a more than local importance, and does not have potentially hazardous environmental effects.

The use proposed is of a similar nature to the previous use of part of the site, and to uses in the near vicinity (a medical centre currently operating in the Concourse building to the west of Orrysdale Road). The use proposed does not imply a major intensification of use, nor is there evidence that the site is likely to be unusually high in levels of contamination present.

It is also necessary to consider whether the location of the development might give rise to significant environmental effects. Schedule 3 of the Regulations provides a list of areas that should be considered as 'sensitive' for the purposes of EIA screening.

The proposed location of this development is on a previously developed site in an existing urban context. Part of the site is designated as Urban Greenspace, but this has no significance when judging sensitivity. Neither the site itself nor its immediate surrounding area has any other protective designation or meets any other of the specified criteria for sensitivity. Whilst a Tree Preservation Order is established in relation to trees immediately adjoining the site, similarly, this legislative protection is not considered to result in a determination that the site is 'sensitive' for the purposes of EIA screening. The site is identified by the Environment Agency as being potentially susceptible to flooding from surface water – the EA advises that this matter can be dealt with through discussions with the applicant, and this susceptibility is not considered to give rise to significant environmental effects.

Further afield, the town of West Kirby abuts the Dee Estuary, which contains nationally and internationally designated sites for nature conservation but this

development is considered unlikely to be a source of significant environmental effects on these sites or the interest features for which they are notified. The location of the development should not therefore be considered 'sensitive' for the purposes of EIA screening and there is no reason to require EIA on the basis of location.

Considering protected species, correspondence with Wirral Wildlife, MEAS and Natural England confirms that there is no evidence of significant populations of protected species within the site, likely to affect to an extent sufficient to require an EIA.

In view of the above reasons the Local Planning Authority considers that the proposals do not constitute EIA development.

The Circular notes that for the purposes of determining whether EIA is required, a particular planning application should not be considered in isolation if, in reality, it is properly to be regarded as an integral part of an inevitably more substantial development. In this instance this is not understood to be the case. The Local Planning Authority does not consider these proposals to be an integral part of a more substantial development. Given this, the above conclusion drawn is considered to be sound.

Matthew Rushton
Principal Planning Officer
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