

Planning Committee

26 November 2015

Reference:
APP/15/01320

Area Team:
South Team

Case Officer:
Mrs C Parker

Ward:
**Pensby and
Thingwall**

Location: Barncroft, LARCHWOOD CLOSE, PENSBY, WIRRAL
Proposal: 21 Extra Care apartments including support facilities, car parking and landscaped gardens

Applicant: Wirral Partnership Homes T/A Magenta Living Limited
Agent : Pozzoni LLP

Site Plan:



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Development Plan allocation and policies:

Primarily Residential Area

Planning History:

Location: Barncroft, LARCHWOOD CLOSE, PENSBY
Application Type: Full Planning Permission
Proposal: 28 Extra care apartments including support facilities, car parking and landscaped garden.
Application No: APP/14/01527
Decision Date: 23/02/2015
Decision Type: Withdrawn

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:**REPRESENTATIONS**

Having regard to the Council's Guidance for Publicity on Planning Applications, 116 notifications were sent to neighbouring properties and a site notice was displayed. At the time of writing this report a qualifying petition of objection with 109 signatures has been received stating the following concerns:

1. Residents have health issues and benefit from the calm, secluded situation
2. Barncroft is used as a therapy centre
3. Assessment should be carried out on the ecological and environmental impact of the proposal
4. Impact on wildlife and bat roosts
5. Additional pressure on inadequate drains
6. Parking in the area would be reduced

Individual letters of objection have been received from the occupiers of Pensby Hall, 5 Pensall Drive, 34 Meadow Walk and 22 Larchwood Close objecting to the proposal due to:

1. There are bat roosts in the trees
2. Increase in traffic
3. Disruption caused by construction
4. In filling of open spaces
5. Development is out of character

Heswall Society - The proposal is a significant improvement, however object as further changes could be made to reduce the impact on Pensby Hall.

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Environment & Regulation (Pollution Control Division) - No objection

Head of Environment & Regulation (Traffic & Transportation Division) - No objection

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) - A further assessment of trees for bat roost potential is required.

United Utilities - No objection subject to conditions relating to drainage

Director's Comments:**REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

A qualifying petition with 109 signatures has been received and under the Council's Scheme of delegation, the application is required to be considered and determined by Planning Committee.

INTRODUCTION

The proposal is a full application for a new building to provide 21 extra care apartments including

support facilities, car parking and landscaping at the site of Barncroft, Larchwood Close, Pensby. The application is a resubmission of a previously withdrawn proposal on the same site (APP/14/01527). This proposal has been amended to reduce the footprint and scale of the building to take account of the proximity and setting of the adjacent Grade II listed Pensby Hall.

The proposal will provide an extra care facility for over 55's, which will contribute to the demand for units across Wirral. There is currently a shortage of units and the applicant, Magenta Living, in partnership with the Council has a contract with the Homes and Communities Agency to deliver 400 affordable housing units of this type within Wirral.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is within a Primarily Residential Area where the principle of a residential development is acceptable subject to the Planning Policies set out below.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The access to the site is from Larchwood Close, which is a 'no through' road and the existing building, Barncroft is located adjacent to the east. The site is bounded to the north and west by residential properties and Pensby Hall, a Grade II Listed Building is located to the south. Barncroft currently operates as a care home/retirement facility and the proposed development seeks to provide an extra care provision of affordable housing units.

The site is the existing garden area of Barncroft and is grassed with trees mainly located along the perimeter of the eastern boundary. There are a few trees close to the boundary with Pensby Hall and a chain link type fence that is relatively open in nature allowing views into the site of Pensby Hall. There are several trees located to the west of the site; some are in poor health with some self-seeded scrub and shrubs. More mature trees are located along the western boundary that contributes to the wooded character of this part of the site. There is a Tree Preservation Order on the site and as such, the mature trees will be retained with additional planting proposed to enhance the wooded character of the area.

POLICY CONTEXT

Wirral Unitary Development Plan

Policy URN1 – Development and Urban Regeneration outlines that in considering development proposals, the local planning authority will be concerned to ensure that full and effective use is made of land within the urban areas.

Policy HSG2 - Affordable Housing makes provision to negotiate with developers and housing associations to encourage affordable housing units within proposals. The proposal will provide 100% affordable housing units either offered for rent at a figure that is a maximum of 80% of the market rent, shared ownership or an equity loan scheme.

Policy HS4 - Criteria for New Housing Development states that proposals should be an appropriate scale that relates well to surrounding property, in particular with regard to existing densities and form of development. The development should not result in a detrimental change in the character of the area and should provide appropriate landscaping and boundary treatment that contributes to a secure environment.

Policy HS7 - Sheltered Housing - States that proposals should be of a scale that relates well to surrounding property and should otherwise comply with Policy HS4.

Policy GR5 - Landscaping and New Development states that in order to secure the protection and enhancement of visual amenity, effective landscaping schemes should be considered.

Policy GR7 - Trees and New Development states that in assessing the protection to be given to trees on development sites the Local Planning Authority will consider the general health, structure, size and life expectancy of trees, their visual value within the locality and their value for nature conservation and will require that buildings, structures and hard surface areas are sited in order to substantially preserve the wooded character of the site or of the surrounding area and provide for the protection of trees of greatest visual or wildlife value.

Policy CH1 - Development Affecting Listed Buildings and Structures - states that development likely to affect a listed building or structure should be of a nature and scale appropriate to retaining the character and design of the building and its setting.

Policy NC7 - Species Protection - states that development which would have an adverse effect on wildlife species will not be permitted unless the LPA is satisfied that the protection of species can be secured through the use of planning conditions and/or planning obligation. An ecology survey has been submitted and assessed as being acceptable by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service. Further conditions are proposed to ensure protection of protected species.

It is considered that the layout and scale of the proposed building relates well to surrounding residential properties and would not result in a detrimental change in the character of the area in accordance with Policies HS4 and HS7. The design, layout and scale of the new building will not detract from the setting of the listed building, Pensby Hall having regard to Policy CH1. The proposal includes a tree survey which sets out that the trees to be removed offer minimal value in terms of their contribution to the character of the area. It is considered that the removal of the trees that are in poor health is acceptable. Furthermore, the proposal includes a landscaping proposal that show a retained tree line with additional planting to maintain the wooded character of the site. This is in accordance with Policy GR7.

Supplementary Planning Document SPD2 – Designing for Self Contained Flat Development and Conversions

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports sustainable housing development which encompasses good design and widens the choice of high quality homes. Development should make a positive contribution to an area and use opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area. Local Planning Authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community and identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations to reflect local demand.

Waste Local Plan

Development Management Policies in the Joint Waste Local Plan for Merseyside and Halton are also applicable. Policy WM8 requires development to incorporate measures for achieving efficient use of resources; Policy WM9 also requires development to provide measures for waste collection and recycling, including home composting. This can be addressed through the use of relevant planning conditions.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

The site is currently a grassed amenity space adjacent to the Barncroft building with the majority of trees located around the edge of the site. The existing building is a plain, purpose built care home that has little architectural merit. The proposed building will be located within close proximity to the existing building to form an 'L' shape creating a central courtyard and parking area. The layout of the building has been influenced by the need to retain a tree line to the west of the site in order to maintain the wooded character of the area. The building will be located 23 metres away from the southern boundary with Pensby Hall. The reduction in the footprint of the building compared to the previous application that was withdrawn, is a significant improvement. The length of the elevation facing Pensby Hall has been reduced and the mass, scale and design of the roof line has been amended to soften the impact. This elevation has been set back to be in line with the existing Barncroft building and introducing gable features to be set back within the elevation help to reduce the visual impact on Pensby Hall. The use of dormer windows and materials including buff bricks create a more domestic appearance that helps to blend with the residential character of the area.

Objections have been received stating that the development is out of character and would infill an open green area. It is acknowledged that the site is grassed with some landscaping, however it is not designated as open greenspace and a landscaping plan has been submitted to show the provision of adequate planting and this will be secured by imposing a condition.

The Heswall Society have recognised that determining the application is a matter of balancing various

considerations and suggest that a reduction on the roof pitch would further reduce the impact on Pensby Hall.

The building has been designed around the need for achieving ceiling heights to accommodate particular equipment, which influences the pitch of the roof. However, the design considerations help to reduce the impact. For example, the building will be constructed in brick with the first floor windows partly set within the roof space. The window designs vary with a variation in sill size and this combined with the articulation of the elevations, use of gable features, will break up what could otherwise be perceived as a long elevation. In addition, the elevation facing Pensby Hall will be at least 42 metres away and it is considered that the combination of the reduced scale of the building and improved design features reduce the impact on the setting and character of the Grade II Listed Building.

Objections have been received stating that the existing residents benefit from the calm, secluded location and that increase in traffic and disruption due to construction would be an issue. The development would provide an extra care facility to support and provide accommodation for local people. It is not envisaged that the existing residents of Barncroft would be unduly affected. There could be some disruption due to construction however this is not a planning reason to refuse the application. Objections relate to the impact on wildlife, including bat roosts. A further survey will be carried out and conditions are recommended for the consideration of protected species. The issue of inadequate drainage has been raised and a condition is proposed to secure proper drainage and to prevent the risk of flooding and pollution.

It is considered that the layout, scale and design of the proposed building is acceptable having regard to the impact on the occupiers of adjacent properties, the character of the area and the setting of the Grade II Listed Pensby Hall.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

Detail here the separation distances achieved. Habitable room windows directly facing each other should be at least 21 metres apart. Main habitable room windows should be at least 14 metres from any blank gable. If there are differences in land levels or where development adjoins that of different ridge height, such as three-storey development adjacent to two-storey property, a greater separation should be provided. For every metre difference in ridge height (or part thereof) the above distances should be increased by 2 metres.

The proposed building will be two storeys in height. There are bungalows to the east of the site in Meadow Walk. The first floor windows in west elevation facing the bungalows will be 24 metres away at the nearest point, increasing to 25 metres. There are two-storey houses to the north in Larchwood Close and the part of the proposed building facing the houses is mainly blank with a non habitable window located 16 metres away. The south elevation faces towards Pensby Hall and is located between 42 and 45 metres away. As such, the usual separation distances are achieved.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

There are no Highway Implications relating to this proposal.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

As set out above, a landscaping plan and tree survey has been submitted with the application that sets out the trees to be removed with additional planting proposals. The trees to be removed are assessed as being in poor health and do not contribute to the character of the area. As a result, their loss is not considered to be harmful to the character of the area. The mature trees that offer more contribution within the site will be retained and along with additional planting will ensure that the wooded character of the area will be enhanced.

An ecology survey has been assessed as acceptable in accordance with Policy NC7. A further bat survey is required to assess the bat roost potential of the trees. It should be noted that the presence of bats does not normally prevent the grant of planning permission, provided that the mitigation and/or compensation measures submitted are satisfactory.

The proposed building has been designed to achieve the latest low carbon emissions and energy efficiency targets for building regulations. The site layout and design principles maximise the use of daylight and passive solar energy with control systems in place to achieve energy savings.

HEALTH ISSUES

The proposal is an extra care facility, which aims to contribute to the current demand and the likely growth in this demand due to the ageing population of Wirral with the combination of housing support and care needs. This scheme forms part of a programme of Extra Care Schemes across the borough which are being part funded by both the Council and Homes and Communities Agency to enable more residents with additional support needs to be supported within their localities. There is need for this type of specialist accommodation in this area and such a provision supports both Wirral's strategic housing and social care priorities.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development will provide an extra care facility to meet an identified shortage of housing units of this type in the area. Access to existing transport and community facilities exists and the proposal for 100% affordable housing meets a Borough wide need. The proposed development will not result in any harm to the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent houses and is in keeping with the pattern of development and character of the area. The scale, layout and design of the building will not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Building. The proposal therefore accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and UDP Policies URN1, HS4, HS7, GR5, GR7, CH1 and NC7 and SPD2 and Waste Local Plan Policies WM8 & 9.

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 policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

The proposed development will provide an extra care facility to meet an identified shortage of housing units of this type in the area. Access to existing transport and community facilities exists and the proposal for 100% affordable housing meets a Borough wide need. The proposed development will not result in any harm to the amenities of the occupiers of adjacent houses and is in keeping with the pattern of development and character of the area. The scale, layout and design of the building will not have a detrimental impact on the setting of the adjacent Grade II Listed Building. The proposal therefore accords with the National Planning Policy Framework and UDP Policies URN1, HS4, HS7, GR5, GR7, CH1 and NC7 and SPD2 and Waste Local Plan Policies WM8 & 9.

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. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on 2 October 2015 and listed as follows: 14F098/001 dated Jul 14, 14G106/001 and 14G106/002 dated Aug 14, Barn/03 dated Sept 15, P4086 - 001B, P4086 - 002A, P4086 - 003G, P4086 - 004H, P4086 - 005D, P4086 - 006C, P4086 - 007F and P4086 - 008B dated September 2015

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to define the permission.

3. The hard and soft landscaping scheme shown on plan reference numbers P4086 – 008B and Barn/03 dated September 2015 hereby approved shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants that within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective shall be replaced with others of a species, size

and number as originally approved in the first available planting season unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy HS15 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

4. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the proposed ground levels and proposed finished floor levels as shown on the approved plans, P4086 – 005D, P4086 – 006C dated September 2015, 14F098/001 dated Jul 14, 14G106/001 and 14G106/002 dated Aug 14 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance and avoid overlooking having regard to Policy HS4 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

5. BEFORE ANY CONSTRUCTION COMMENCES, samples of the facing and 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 Policies, HS4 and HS7 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

6. NO DEVELOPMENT SHALL TAKE PLACE until a Site Waste Management Plan, confirming how demolition and construction waste will be recovered and re-used on the site or at other sites, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Plan shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development would include the re-use of limited resources, and to ensure that the amount of waste for landfill is reduced to accord with Policy WM8 of the Waste Local Plan.

7. PRIOR TO THE FIRST OCCUPATION OF THE RESIDENTIAL UNITS, arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse, and vehicle access thereto, shall be made within the curtilage of the site, in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: to ensure a satisfactory appearance and adequate standards of hygiene and refuse collection, having regard to Policy WM9 of the waste local plan

8. Before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought onto site, a 1 metre high fence or other barrier as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, shall be erected around the outer limit of the crown spread of all trees, hedges or woodlands shown to be retained on the approved plan. Such fencing shall be maintained in a satisfactory manner until the development is completed. During the period of construction, no material shall be stored, fires started or trenches dug within these enclosed areas without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent damage to the trees/ hedges in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Policy GR7 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

9. Foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems.

Reason: To secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution.

10. PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANY DEVELOPMENT, a surface water drainage scheme, based on the hierarchy of drainage options in the National Planning Practice Guidance with evidence of an assessment of the site conditions (inclusive of how the

scheme shall be managed after completion) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The surface water drainage scheme must be in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) or any subsequent replacement national standards. In the event of surface water draining to the public surface water sewer, the pass forward flow rate to the public sewer must be restricted to 5l/s.

Reason: To promote sustainable development, secure proper drainage and to manage the risk of flooding and pollution. This condition is imposed in light of policies within the NPPF and NPPG.

11. Montbretia is an invasive species and if found on the site, full details of a scheme for its eradication shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any building works are commenced. The scheme shall include details that the Montbretia is mechanically grubbed up and buried by a depth of at least 1 metre within the boundary; a timetable for implementation and clearly identify the extent of the Montebretia on a scaled plan. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To eradicate Montbretia from the development site, to prevent the spread of the plant through development works and to accord with the aims of Policy NC7 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

12. No tree felling, scrub clearance, hedgerow removal, vegetation management or ground clearance shall take place during the period of 1 March to 31 August inclusive unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If it is necessary to undertake works during the bird breeding season then all buildings, trees, scrub and hedgerows shall be checked by an appropriately experienced ecologist to ensure no breeding birds are present. If present, details of how they will be protected shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation having regard to Policy NC7 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan.

Further Notes for Committee:

Last Comments By: 06/11/2015 08:58:43

Expiry Date: 01/01/2016