

Item 2 **10/00525/FULMAJ**

Case Officer **Liz Beard**

Ward **Clayton-le-Woods and Whittle-le-Woods**

Proposal **Erection of 2 No Two Bedroom, 9 No Three Bedroom
affordable houses with associated landscaping and car
parking.**

Location **Land 45m South West Of 1 Swallow Court Clayton-Le-Woods
Lancashire**

Applicant **Adactus Housing Association Ltd**

Consultation expiry: 28 July 2010

Application expiry: 28 September 2010

Proposal

1. The proposal is for 2 no. two bedroom and 9 no. three bedroom houses, which are all affordable houses. Access is proposed from Birchin Lane, with the houses laid out in two cul-de-sacs.
2. The site is situated off Birchin Lane and covers 0.35 hectares. The site is bounded by residential properties along Birchin Lane to the east and along Chorley Old Road to the west, including the Dog Inn public house. The northern boundary of the site is adjacent to a public footpath, beyond which lies St Helens Work Cottages and residential properties on Swallow Court. To the south the site bounds a parcel of vacant land, which adjoins onto Chorley Old Road at the Dog Inn Bridge.
3. The land is overgrown, although many of the trees and shrubs have been felled and removed. Some trees remain adjacent to the boundary and along the green corridor. The site forms part of the former Walton Summit stretch of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal which was filled in during the 1960's.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that this application is granted full planning approval.

Main Issues

5. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:
 - Principle of development.
 - Design and appearance.
 - Impact on the neighbours.
 - Highways and parking.
 - Drainage.
 - Environmental Improvements/Landscape Features.

Representations

6. 11 letters of objection have been received where the following issues are raised;
 - Wrong location for building affordable housing.
 - If properties to be built must be fewer in number and of a type that fits in with the surrounding area and its residents.
 - Create extra traffic on Birchin Lane
 - Increase in extra traffic in particular at junction of Chorley Old Road and Birchin Lane.
 - No enough facilities like schools to build new houses.
 - Sewerage and drainage systems have a history of problems opposite the proposed development.
 - This is a small quiet residential area whose character will be spoilt by this development for affordable housing.
 - Traffic generation would enhance the hazard for pedestrians.
 - With all the back garden building that goes on it has already taken away the character of the village.
 - Putting eleven houses in such a small space would be completely out of character with the current dwellings and have a detrimental effect on the immediate vicinity.

- There has been a significant reduction in birds and bats in the area since the land was cleared in 2008.
 - There are enough affordable houses in the area.
 - No footpaths on Birchin Lane.
 - To build properties behind cottages would invade privacy.
 - The area would be better as a conservation area with a parking area to ease the congestion on Birchin Lane.
 - No room for construction vehicles to access this area without causing serious congestion.
 - Design of the houses is not in keeping with the area.
 - The site was a canal years ago and would not be suitable for houses.
 - Site should be used as a continuation of the canal walk.
 - Extra 20 to 30 motor vehicles using Birchin Lane.
7. Whittle-le-Woods Parish Council state that while councillors are in agreement that there does need to be affordable housing available for the children of people abiding in the area, and that this site may well be suitable for housing, there are a few concerns. This development is 30% bigger than the previously agreed one which means there will be considerably more traffic and car parking in an area which is already overstretched. Traffic on Birchin Lane in particular will be massively increased. Overdevelopment of the site both now and in the future, is another concern. The area on plans earmarked for 'future development' caused particular concern and queries. It would be greatly hoped that priority will be given to children of residents when allocating houses.
8. Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council object as the proposal is over-development of the area and there are road safety issues, as there is a sharp bend on Birchin Lane which is particularly hazardous. Also, vehicles exiting onto Chorley Old Road is already an issue and additional cars would increase problems at this junction.

Consultations

9. British Waterways state that the site lies on the line of the former Walton Summit Branch of Leeds and Liverpool Canal. Whilst British Waterways currently has no plans to restore this section of waterway, this can not be ruled out at some time in the future. British Waterways is pleased to note the inclusion of a footpath along the line of the canal.
10. The Environment Agency have no objection providing that an appropriate condition is provided in relation to a surface water regulation system. They are satisfied that the controlled waters at this site are of low environmental sensitivity and that development does not pose an unacceptable risk to them.
11. The Architectural Design and Crime Reduction Advisor states that should planning permission be granted for this development then he will be working with the developer/architects to ensure that the agreed standard as per the application form provided to me are completed as agreed.
12. Chorley's Conservation Officer states that the site is adjacent to the listed 'Dog Inn Bridge' on the site of the southern section of the Canal. Nothing of the bridge remains, even the sub-road structure has gone. The character of the area is varied, however, the traditional building style is that of a fine grain with small terraced, limited semi-detached and perhaps one detached house built in the same general style as the terraces. The scale and type of proposed houses does appear to have respected the fine grain of traditional buildings. Whilst it would have been appropriate to build a row of terraced houses the undulating topography of the site does not allow this. The use of rendered elevations with stone (art stone) detailing would further help to link this new development with the character of the old.
13. United Utilities state that they have no objections to the proposal providing that in accordance with PPS25 surface water should not be allowed to discharge to foul/combined sewer. This site must be drained on a separate system, with only foul drainage connected into the foul sewer. Surface water should discharge to the soakaway as stated in the application form and may require the consent of the Environment Agency. Public sewers slightly encroach the northern section of this site and we will not permit building over them. We will require an access strip width of 6 metres, 3 metres either side of the centre line of the sewer which is in accordance with the minimum distances specified in the current issue of 'Sewers for Adoption'. Deep rooted shrubs and trees should not be planted in the vicinity of the public sewer and overflow systems.
14. Lancashire County Council (Highways) have not made any comments on this application.
15. Chorley's Waste & Contaminated Land Officer state that due to the past processes and activities upon and adjacent to the above site, there is potential for ground contamination. Therefore no development shall take place until a ground investigation is submitted.

16. Lancashire County Council (Planning Contributions) have suggested a S106 contribution for £5,280 for Waste Management in line with their Policy Paper 'Planning Obligations in Lancashire'.

Assessment

Principle of Development

17. The application site lies within the main settlement of Whittle-le-Woods where there is a presumption in favour of appropriate development subject to normal planning considerations. The principle of developing the site for residential development was established with the granting of application 08/00338/FUL for 8 three bedroomed semi-detached and 1 no. 4 bedroomed detached dwellings with new access in June 2008.

Design and Appearance

18. Policy HS4 states that proposals for residential development will be permitted providing they respect the surrounding area in terms of scale, design, layout, building style and facing materials.
19. There is a mix of small terraced, some semi-detached and detached houses which are two storey. All the traditional buildings date from the 19th or early 20th Century, with a general style which are stone or rendered elevations. The more recently built properties, within the area, which date from the latter part of the 20th Century, have made no attempt to be sympathetic with their setting.
20. The proposal is for a total of 11 dwellings, comprising of 2 no. two bedrooms and 9 no. three bedroom houses, which are all two storey. The scale and style of the proposed houses appear to have respected the fine grain of the traditional buildings within the area.
21. The layout of the development comprises of two cul-de-sacs and there is a green corridor proposed to the rear of the site. The two houses along the front of the site are at an angle, from the existing houses on Birchin Lane. These reflect the bend in the road, and fit in with the existing streetscene.
22. Each dwelling will have its own driveway provision. There is sufficient amenity space provided and the privacy distances are met. Areas for the storage of bins are also shown.
23. The scale, design, layout and building style of the proposed dwellings are appropriate to the plot size and location and the development fits in with the site surroundings and other development within the area.

Impact on the Neighbours

24. Plots 9 and 11 are sited closest to the existing residential development. These are facing sideways onto the dwellings with no habitable room windows on the elevations. The distances of 14.4m and 19.9m between the proposed and existing properties complies with the Council's standards for privacy distances.
25. Plot 5 backs onto St Helen's Work Cottage, where there is a distance of 21m shown. Again this complies with the Council's standards in relation to privacy distances. All the appropriate privacy distances are met both in relation to the existing and proposed dwellings, as well as all the proposed housing.

Highways and Parking

26. The proposed development will be accessed off Birchin Lane. Although the access is on a bend in the road the visibility splay is of an appropriate standard and will not compromise highway safety. The width of the roads is sufficient in view of the scale of development and will create a shared surface use for vehicles and pedestrians. The road layout will comprise of two cul-de-sacs, which are not too great in length therefore meaning that vehicles cannot gain too much speed.
27. There are two car parking spaces provided within the curtilage of each plot which is an appropriate number of spaces for houses of this size and should not result in on-street parking on Birchin Lane. Also, the development site is in near to Chorley Old Road where there is a regular bus service.

Drainage

28. There has been some concerns raised, by neighbours, in relation to drainage in the vicinity of this site. United Utilities have been consulted as part of this application, and have not raised any objections in relation to drainage providing that a separate system for foul and surface water drainage is provided. They also require an access strip to be provided either side of the sewer in accordance with the minimum distances specified in the current issue of 'Sewers and Adoption'.

Environmental Improvements/Landscape Features

29. Policy EP12 states that environmental improvement schemes will be pursued in areas of need enhancement. One of the reasons the site is identified as an environmental improvement area is to create a linkage with other amenity spaces in the north and south to provide a 'useable' green corridor along the stretch of the former canal. The green corridor is shown on the layout plan and will provide such a link. The green space is considered sufficient in accordance with policies EP12 and EP13, which do not require the whole site to be retained as open space. This area of green space will be maintained by the Council.

30. Due to the site being a former canal the Council's Conservation Officer suggested that some form of interpretation board could be provided, adjacent to the scheme, to provide some information about the area. The applicant has agreed to provide this, and a condition can be added accordingly.

Overall Conclusion

31. The proposal is acceptable in terms of scale and layout, neighbour amenity, highway safety and provides environmental improvements within the scheme and the area. It is therefore recommended that the application is approved.

Other Matters

Public Consultation

32. Adactus Housing carried out a consultation exercise in relation to the above scheme. The applicant stated that a leaflet was posted and four residents provided the following comments:

- Birchin Lane is too narrow and congested at present, Chorley Old road also too dangerous.
- The houses will not be in keeping with the area.
- Development will enhance the risk of flooding.
- Lack of facilities in the community (doctors, dentists, schools).
- Note need for affordable housing.
- Consider site over-developed-would like to see smaller development re concerns for traffic and parking.
- Note that area was originally covenanted to be a green corridor.
- Roads too congested.
- Concern re council housing affecting values.
- Against any further houses being developed in the area.
- Against development of site originally.
- Concerns re privacy relating to a 3 storey house.
- Concerns re problem families.
- Strongly opposed to development.

Funding

33. The Head of Strategic Housing advises that National Affordable Housing grant funding has been received. This funding was allocated prior to the redistribution of government funding and this is dependant on there being a start on site by the end of September.

Planning Policies

National Planning Policies:

PPS3, PPS23 and PPS25

Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review

Policies: GN1, GN5, HS4, HS6, EP12 and EP13.

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- Statement of Community Involvement
- Design Guide

Chorley's Local Development Framework

- Policy SR1: Incorporating Sustainable Resources into New Development
- Sustainable Resources Development Plan Document
- Sustainable Resources Supplementary Planning Document

Planning History

08/00103/FUL Residential development consisting of 8 no. 3 bedrooomed semi-detached and 1 no. 4 bedrooomed detached dwellings with new access. Withdrawn 3 April 2008.

08/00338/FUL Residential development consisting of 8 three bedroom semi-detached and 1 No.4 bedroom detached dwellings with new access. Approved with conditions June 2008.
