

Item 4c **13/00907/FUL**

Case Officer **Mr Ian Heywood**

Ward **Lostock**

Proposal **2 storey extension to provide 18 no. bedrooms to Croston Park Nursing Home**

Location **Croston Park Nursing Home Town Road Croston
LeylandPR26 9RA**

Applicant **Park Lane Healthcare Ltd**

Consultation expiry: 24 December 2013

Application expiry: 22 January 2014

Proposal

1. 2 Storey Extension to provide 18 no. bedrooms to Croston Park Nursing Home.

Site Description

2. The application site comprises a 46 bed care home which consists of the former Rectory to the Church of St Michael and All Angels, which was converted to its current use in 1987, and an extension added in 1988. The Rectory was listed at Grade II in 1952 and the church, to which it was associated, is also listed – grade II* in 1967 – is located 25 metres to the south west of the current building. 35 metres to the west of the site is Church Street, which is lined with grade II listed buildings. Also 35 metres (and more) from the site to the north west are located further listed buildings located on Town Road. The whole area is within the Croston Conservation Area, first designated in 1969 and the Article 4 Direction area, which was created in 1981 and amended in 1993. The building, its location and most of the buildings surrounding the site are all designated heritage assets as defined by Annex 2 to the Framework, being listed buildings located within a conservation area.
3. A number of mature and semi-mature trees line the western, south western and northern extremities of the site.
4. The area of the site upon which the development is proposed is currently a lawned area with some small scale formal planting.
5. Resident accommodation within the second floor area of the care home that was the former Rectory is compromised in terms of accessibility by uneven floors, a multitude of level changes, restricted head heights resulting from the structural and historic roof timbers intruding into the accommodation – a result of the conversion works in the late 1980s – and restricted doorways.
6. The original, listed, building has already been massively enlarged when the care home was extended in the late 1980s. Whilst the original building was undoubtedly very large, probably too large to ever return to being a single dwelling, it would appear to have been not large enough to create a sustainable business – to provide sufficient financial returns to cover the very considerable sums that would have been required to restore and convert the listed building.
7. Whilst the original (1722) southern, principal entrance, elevation of the listed building remains intact, much of the remainder, including the interior, has been altered successively from the Victorian period up to the late 1980s, culminating with the works to convert the building to create the care home one sees today.

8. The site is within Flood Zone 3, however the site itself, according to the Environment Agency, has not been so affected for some years.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that these applications are granted full planning permission and listed building consent.

Main Issues

10. The main issues for consideration in respect of this planning application are:

- Principle of the development
- Impact on the neighbours
- Design and impact upon the significance of designated heritage assets
- Trees and Landscape
- Ecology
- Flood Risk
- Traffic and Transport
- Contamination and Coal Mines
- Drainage and Sewers

Representations

11. 5 letters of objection have been received. These cite the following material planning grounds for objection:

- Loss of amenity for neighbours
- Impact upon listed buildings and Croston Conservation Area
- Impact on trees – visual amenity
- Increased propensity to flooding in the surrounding area

Response to objections

12. The grounds for objection are, to some extent, founded on the false assumption that the proposed creation of 18 new rooms for residents will increase the capacity of the care home and will thus increase pressure on parking, will increase the number of vehicle movements for staff, visitors and deliveries and create additional issues of noise and light pollution. The facts of the matter are that the new accommodation will, together with the closure of rooms on the second floor that are no longer suitable for use within a modern care home facility, result in simply maintaining the current number of beds available for residents. The net effect is that resident numbers will not change as a result of the proposed development. This being the case, it is considered that overall the amenity currently enjoyed by neighbouring properties will not be materially degraded, but that suitably worded conditions can be used to ensure this is the case.
13. The design of the proposed extension has been chosen to be sympathetic yet subservient to the listed building and to those that surround it. The applicant's case states that without the proposed extension the number of available rooms for residents will be such that the site is no longer sustainable and will have to close. This will not only have an impact for the existing residents, many of whom are local to the area and will have to find alternative accommodation elsewhere, but also local employment. It will leave a listed building without a sustainable use and will be therefore prone to neglect, decay and potentially complete loss in the future.
14. There is no intention to remove any trees from the site – the precise location being chosen for this very reason. However suitably worded conditions will secure this such that the amenity value afforded by the trees is maintained.
15. The applicant has submitted a flood risk assessment which includes measures that are incorporated into the design. The Environment Agency has confirmed that the proposed development will have no impact upon flooding in this area.
16. **Croston Parish Council** – No comments have been received

Consultations

17. **Lancashire County Council (Ecology)** No comments have been received
18. **The Environment Agency – Is** satisfied with the applicant's Flood Risk Assessment and the mitigation measures contained therein.
19. **Lancashire County Council (Highways)** No comments have been received
20. **United Utilities** – No objection, subject to conditions/informatives

Applicants Case

21. Croston Park Care Home is registered for 46 residents made up of single and double rooms. The applicant has provided evidence from the Care Quality Commission to show that of the accommodation provided currently only 23 meet the current standards. Six rooms within the second floor, within the former Rectory building, fall into this category, equating to five doubles and one single, which equals 11 residents. Other accommodation within the existing care home fails to meet the requirement for providing en-suite rooms.
22. The proposed extension is designed to replace the beds within the second floor of the former Rectory that no longer meet the required standard and to provide further accommodation to replace other rooms within the existing care home that will be lost by conversion to en-suites for existing rooms that do not current have this facility The net result overall will be that the number of bed spaces provided will be on a par with that which currently exists.

Assessment

Principle of the development

23. The site is located in the Green Belt, where new development, such as that proposed, falls to be considered inappropriate and therefore, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. However, where the demonstration of very special circumstances can overcome this inappropriateness and any other harm that development might otherwise cause to the special character and openness of the Green Belt, development maybe considered to be acceptable.
24. In this instance these very special circumstances relate to securing a sustainable future for a designated heritage asset. Without the proposed extension the amount of available accommodation will fall, because of changes to the standards for accommodation required by the Care Quality Commission. A significant proportion of the current accommodation no longer meets those standards and cannot, because of the nature of this listed building, be modified in an acceptable way to meet those standards. This reduction in capacity may well result in a non-sustainable business, which in turn will mean that the business may have to close.
25. From the information provided by the applicant it is considered that the assumptions concerning the viability of the business are justified.
26. The proposed new development will simply allow the current level of accommodation, in terms of bed numbers to be maintained and the standard of that accommodation be improved to meet the requirements of the Care Quality Commission.
27. Alternative uses for the building are extremely limited. It is simply too large to be considered for a single dwelling and the option of conversion to apartments is considered to be too damaging to the historic fabric as the impact upon the significance of the listed building would be too great to be considered to be acceptable.
28. Furthermore, consideration must also be given to the potential loss of employment opportunities within the area. It is considered that maintaining the current use of the building will maintain current employment levels within the area.
29. It is therefore considered that very special circumstances do exist here that override the inappropriateness of the proposed development by providing a secure future for a designated heritage asset.

Impact on the neighbours

30. As the amount of accommodation provided at Croston Park Nursing Home will not change as a result of the proposed development, it is considered that the relationship to the amenity of neighbours will also remain unaltered.
31. There are, of course, specific issues such as the changes to the relationship of the buildings on the site to their neighbours if the proposed extension was constructed. Whilst the development will then be much closer to other neighbouring properties, the separation distances, at not less than 35 metres to those to the west of the site and not less than 22 metres to those to the north of the site, are within the Council's guidelines and will therefore remain acceptable. There are no windows to habitable rooms within the elevation that will face the rear of the neighbouring properties on Church Street, in fact there is only one window in this elevation, which is at the first floor and which serves a stair well. As for properties on Town Road, to the north of the site, windows at first floor level will be no less than 23 metres distant. In both cases direct views to/from neighbouring properties are currently and will remain partially screened by trees.
32. Suitably worded conditions will be attached to any permission such that they safeguard any trees within the site are protected and any light pollution created by the new building is minimised.

Design and impact upon the significance of designated heritage assets

33. The proposed design, including the choice of materials, has been arrived at in consultation with the Council such that it is sympathetic yet subservient to the designated heritage asset. It will be respectful to the building yet at the same time be readable as a contemporary extension. The proposed extension is also, therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of the impact not only upon this specific designated heritage asset, but also on its setting, those other designated heritage assets that surround it and the conservation area in which they are all located.
34. Conditions will be attached that secure the details of materials, external joinery and finishes to be utilised in the proposed extension.

Trees and Landscape

35. It is not proposed to undertake any work to significant trees within the application site. However to ensure this and to protect trees that adjoin the site, suitably worded conditions will be attached to any permissions granted to secure this. Furthermore any works to other trees within the site not included within the details of the application are protected from unauthorised works by virtue of their location within a conservation area.

Flood Risk

36. The applicant has provided a Flood Risk assessment that accompanies the application. The proposed development has also been assessed against the Environment Agency's consultation and mitigation template and in both cases is found to be acceptable. The Environment Agency have further confirmed that they are satisfied with the submitted FRA and proposed mitigation measures. A suitably worded condition will ensure compliance with these mitigation measures such that the proposed development will have no material impact upon the risk of flooding in this area.

Traffic and Transport

37. As the occupancy level for the site as a whole will not change as a result of the proposed development, it is considered that there will be no material impact upon the status quo in terms of highways safety and parking. The site currently provides the requisite level of parking for this size of residential care home facility, however a suitably worded condition will ensure that this is maintained.

Drainage and Sewers

38. United Utilities have commented that, subject to Grampian conditions which are to be attached to any permission granted, they have no objections to the proposed development.

Overall Conclusion

39. Very special circumstances have been forwarded in support of the proposed development that outweighs both the inappropriateness of the development and any other harm caused to the special character of the Green Belt. It is considered that the proposed extension is acceptable in terms of impact upon the amenity of neighbouring residents and it is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon the significance of designated heritage assets. It will protect trees within and immediately adjacent to the site and will have no impact upon the current level of flood risk in this area. The proposed development will have no material impact upon highways safety or parking and it is considered to be acceptable by United Utilities.

40. The applications are therefore recommended for approval.

Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 'The Framework':

Sections 9 – Protecting Green Belt Land

Section 10 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Section 12 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Emerging Chorley Local Plan 2012 - 2026:

ST4 – Parking Standards

BNE6 – Light Pollution

BNE8 – Protection and enhancement of heritage assets

BNE10 - Trees

Adopted Central Lancashire Joint Core Strategy DPD Policies:

Policy 16: Heritage Assets

Planning History

Ref: 95/00241/LBC **Decision:** PERLBC **Decision Date:** 24 May 1995
Description: Listed Building Application for the partial demolition, reconstruction and realignment of wall to facilitate provision of new vehicular access and improved visibility splays from 74 Town Road,

Ref: 07/00918/TCON **Decision:** PERTRE **Decision Date:** 4 October 2007
Description: Felling of Chestnut tree (T1) and crown lifting and thinning of Chestnut tree (T2) within Croston Conservation Area

Ref: 08/00450/TCON **Decision:** PERTCN **Decision Date:** 25 June 2008
Description: Tree works to include felling of 12 trees in grounds of Residential Home (within Croston Conservation Area),

Ref: 92/00422/LBC **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 4 August 1992
Description: Single storey extension to provide nursing care wing

Ref: 92/00421/FUL **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 4 August 1992
Description: Single storey extension to provide nursing care wing

Ref: 91/00779/LBC **Decision:** REFFPP **Decision Date:** 18 February 1992
Description: Listed building application for two-storey extension to form nursing care wing

Ref: 91/00778/OUT **Decision:** REFOPP **Decision Date:** 18 February 1992
Description: Outline application for two-storey extension to form nursing care wing

Ref: 89/00410/LBC **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 2 August 1989
Description: Listed building consent for two additional windows on west elevation

Ref: 88/01029/LBC **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 21 February 1989
Description: Alterations to provide additional bedrooms

Ref: 88/00987/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 21 February 1989
Description: Alterations including fire escape to use second floor as rest home bedspaces

Ref: 87/00396/COU **Decision:** WDN **Decision Date:** 21 July 1987
Description: Change of use from rectory to rest home and alterations to provide services fire precautions and emergency means of escape

Ref: 87/00565/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 20 October 1987
Description: Change of use to rest home

Ref: 87/00564/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 20 October 1987
Description: Change of use to rest home

**Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission
Conditions**

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission. *Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

| Title | Drawing Reference | Received date |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Proposed ground Floor plan | 13:03:15 | 18.11.2013 |
| Proposed First Floor Plan | 13:03:16 | 18.11.2013 |
| Proposed Second Floor plan | 13:34:20 | 17.12.2013 |
| Proposed Site and Roof Plan | 13:03:18 | 18.11.2013 |
| Proposed Elevations | 13:03:17 | 18.11.2013 |
| Parking Arrangements | | 17.12.2013 |

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning

3. Prior to the commencement of development samples of all external facing and roofing materials (notwithstanding any details shown on previously submitted plan(s) and specification) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be undertaken strictly in accordance with the details as approved. *Reason: To ensure that the materials used are visually appropriate to the locality.*
4. Before the commencement of any works, full details of the proposed rainwater goods to be used on the building shall have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works undertaken on site should be strictly in accordance with the approved details. *Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the building*
5. Prior to any works commencing details of the proposed fenestration (windows, doors and other joinery), to include full details at a scale of not less than 1:10 shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall then be undertaken strictly in accordance with the details as approved. *Reason: To maintain the integrity of the historic building*
6. During the construction period, all trees to be retained shall be protected by 1.2 metre high fencing as specified in paragraph 8.2.2 of British Standard BS5837:2012 at a distance from the tree trunk equivalent to the outermost limit of the branch spread, or at a distance from the tree trunk

equal to half the height of the tree (whichever is further from the tree trunk), or as may be first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No construction materials, spoil, rubbish, vehicles or equipment shall be stored or tipped within the area(s) so fenced. All excavations within the area so fenced shall be carried out by hand. *Reason: To safeguard the trees to be retained*

7. Any trees that show signs of deteriorating health within a period twelve months after the construction process for the proposed development shall be replaced within the next available planting season and approval for the replacement shall have been received in writing from the local planning authority. *Reason: To safeguard trees within the site area and the visual amenity of the area.*

8. Before the development hereby permitted commences, the applicant shall have submitted to and received approval in writing from the local planning authority, full details of how the recommendations proposed in the Alan Wood and Partners Flood Risk Assessment dated November 2013 are to be implemented. Thereafter these recommendations shall be implemented in full. *Reason: To mitigate against the possibility of flood risk to the proposed development and the surrounding area.*

9. Prior to the commencement of any development, plans and particulars showing a scheme of foul sewers and surface water drains, shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Such works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details concurrently with the rest of the development and in any event shall be finished before the building is occupied. *Reason: To ensure a satisfactory means of drainage.*

10. Details of any lighting to be installed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any such installation is carried out. The installation shall then be implemented precisely in accordance with these agreed details which shall then not be varied. Furthermore, no additional external lighting shall be installed without the express written permission of the Local Planning Authority. *Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the area and to minimise the possibility of inconvenience to nearby residents*

11. All windows in the west facing elevation of the extension hereby permitted shall be fitted with obscure glass and obscure glazing shall be retained at all times thereafter. The obscure glazing shall be to at least Level 3 on the Pilkington Levels of Privacy, or such equivalent as may be agreed in writing by the local planning authority. *Reason: In the interests of the privacy of occupiers of neighbouring property.*

12. The parking and associated manoeuvring facilities shown on the plans hereby approved shall be permanently retained for that purpose (notwithstanding the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995). *Reason: To ensure provision of adequate off-street parking facilities within the site.*