

Item 3o **15/00040/FUL**
Case Officer **Caron Taylor**
Ward **Coppull**
Proposal **Residential development of 8 no. two-storey affordable dwellings (2 houses and 6 apartments) and associated access and parking**
Location **Garages At Longfield Avenue Coppull**
Applicant **Adactus Housing Association**
Consultation expiry: **29th January 2015**
Decision due by: **24th February 2015**
Recommendation
That the application is approved.

Representations

Coppull Parish Council state they have no objections to the proposal.
No neighbour representations have been received.

Consultees

Consultee	Summary of Comments received
Lancashire County Council Highways	<p>The proposed layout shows direct frontage vehicle accesses to Longfield Avenue. Given the shape of land, the layout may seem an efficient use of land, however, the parking arrangement will encourage reversing of vehicles onto the road. This alone will not constitute ground for highways objection to the proposed development, but in the absence of footway, this may compromise pedestrian safety.</p> <p>Longfield Avenue is not a bus route; however, The Heys and Spendmore Lane are bus routes, with bus stops located within a short distance of the site and residents will access these bus stops by walking. Walking, cycling and use of public transport are important modes of travel that offer more sustainable alternatives to the car and make positive contribution to the overall character of a place, public health and tackling climate change through reductions in carbon emissions. Therefore, new developments are required to make appropriate provisions to help encourage modal shift from the private car, so as to contribute to the sustainable aims of the County Council.</p> <p>There are footways on both sides of Longfield Avenue, except the section between 38 and 135 Longfield Avenue on its western side. The section without footway includes the site frontage, but the proposed development does not include provision for a footway. In the interest of sustainability, there is need for a</p>

	<p>footway to facilitate walking to the bus stops.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that, for the proposal to be acceptable, a 2m wide footway is required from the end of the existing footway, south of 38 Longfield Avenue, in the southerly direction for the full length of the site boundary. As this is an essential requirement to ensure sustainable development, Highways may seek and objection to the proposal if the footway cannot be delivered.</p> <p>The plan submitted shows that the required number of parking spaces has been provided on site, however, the applicant proposes additional 4no spaces at the southern end of the site marked 'car parking for local residents'. They would question the need for the additional spaces given that the site seems to be in a sustainable location where people can walk, cycle, and use public transport. Providing more public car parking spaces in the area will make no positive contribution to the quality of life, but will only encourage people to rely on private cars leading to vehicle emissions. The additional spaces therefore seem contrary to the County Council's aim of tackling climate change and helping people to choose more sustainable ways of travelling. As such, this aspect of the proposal would be unacceptable.</p> <p>There are no highway objections to the proposal in principle; however, for highway safety and sustainability reasons stated above, unless the footway can be delivered, I would recommend that you resist approval of the application. They recommend conditions if it is approved.</p> <p>You will appreciate that the essential mitigation works include highway alterations remote from the application site. These may impact on people who aren't fully aware of the implications on their property of the proposed development. I strongly recommend that you extend your consultation for this application to affected properties so that these people have an opportunity to contribute to the planning processes.</p>
Council's Ecology Advisor	<p>The application site is not of substantive ecological value. It is not designated for its nature conservation value and is considered to have only low potential to support any specially protected species or habitats. The development will not cause significant harm to the 'wildlife corridor' function of the adjacent railway line. They therefore have no objections to the scheme on nature conservation grounds. They support the proposals put forward in Section 4 of the UES Ecology Assessment Report of January 2015 for enhancing the ecological value of the site</p>
Council's Conservation Officer	<p>Has no objection to the proposed development. They consider that the proposed development will preserve the setting of the listed building, Coppull Ring Mill (now known as Coppull Enterprise Centre) and sustain the significance of this designated heritage asset.</p> <p>In this case the proposed development site is situated approximately 30 metres, at the closest point, to the east of a grade II listed building, Coppull Enterprise Centre. This building is defined by Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) as a designated heritage asset.</p>

	<p>The West Coast Main Line (WCML) railway and its associated infrastructure separate the site from the listed building. Two-storey residential development dating from the 19th and 20th Centuries occupies much of the area immediately to the south and east of the listed building.</p> <p>Whilst the separation distance between the proposed development site and the listed building is relatively small, the perceived separation is much greater as a result of the position of the WCML between them. Furthermore there is an established relationship between the listed building and neighbouring residential properties. Additional residential development would therefore, in my opinion, merely continue an existing theme, especially is the site is effectively a small gap in an area that has already been developed for housing.</p> <p>The design and scale of the proposed development continues the established format within the area and in their opinion maintains an acceptable relationship to both surrounding properties and the listed building.</p>
Council's Contaminated Land Officer	States the applicant has submitted a Phase 1 desk study report, by Sutcliffes (Ref LG27530), which they have reviewed. They are satisfied with this report in making an initial appraisal of the site and agree with the recommendation for a Phase 2 intrusive investigation (and any necessary remediation measures) to be carried out prior to any development.
Police Architectural Liaison Officer	Request the scheme is conditioned that the scheme is built to Secured by Design security standards. They also recommend security features be incorporated.
United Utilities	United Utilities have no objection to the proposed development provided that conditions are attached to any approval requiring foul water to be drained on a separate system and surface water restricted to existing runoff rates.
Network Rail	See body of report.

Assessment

Background information

1. The application site is a long triangular piece of land between Longfield Avenue, Coppull and the railway line. The northern section of the site is hardstanding with parking on having previously been garages, now demolished. To the south the site is laid to maintained grass. There are three trees on the site, two against the railway line and another on the grassed area.

Principle of the Development

2. The proposal is located on land allocated as amenity greenspace under emerging Local Plan Policy HW2: Protection of Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreational Facilities. The proposal therefore needs to be assessed against the criteria of this policy.
3. The policy requires alternative provision to be made under criterion a) unless the proposal meets all of criteria b) to e). The proposal is assessed against these criteria below:

b) It can be demonstrated that the loss of the site would not lead to a deficit of provision in the local area in terms of quantity and accessibility.

There is a deficit of amenity greenspace in Coppull. The loss of this site would therefore increase the deficit. The proposal is therefore contrary to this criterion.

c) The site is not identified as being of high quality and/or high value in the Open Space Study.

The site is assessed as being of high value, therefore the proposal is contrary to this criterion.

d) It can be demonstrated that retention of the site is not required to satisfy a recreational need in the local area.

The site is part of a larger area of amenity greenspace, the loss of this part of the site would have little impact on the recreational use of the site.

e) The site does not make a significant contribution to the character of an area in terms of visual amenity.

The site does provide some visual amenity to the properties facing it but as stated above it is part of a larger part of amenity greenspace which will be retained and therefore the loss of a small area will not impact on the visual amenity of the area unacceptably.

4. The proposal does not meet all of criteria b) to e) therefore alternative provision is required to satisfy criterion a), however the Council will accept a financial contribution for this rather than expecting the developer to find alternative open space. The site area is approximately 594m². The provision cost of amenity greenspace, as set out in the Open Space and Playing Pitch SPD, is £8 per m². The cost of providing amenity greenspace of an equivalent size would therefore be £4,752. The applicant has been advised of this and has agreed to pay it. This will be secured through a legal agreement.

Design, Layout and Appearance

5. The properties will be laid out so they front onto Longfield Avenue as do the existing properties to the north, with their rear elevations facing the railway line.
6. There are a range of properties in the immediate area of a 1960s/70s design. To the north are dormer bungalows, opposite the site are rear elevations and gardens of two-storey red brick terraced properties under a tiled roof with horizontally proportioned windows, some clad in wood with others having replaced this with uPVC.
7. The proposed properties, although two houses and six apartments will take the form of two-storey dwellings in three groups. Their height will match that of the two-storey properties opposite and they will be constructed of brick with the use of cladding boards as a feature material similar to those used in the houses opposite.
8. The design, layout and appear is therefore considered acceptable.

Impact on Nearby Properties

9. The nearest properties affected by the proposal are 38 Longfield Avenue to the north and numbers 51-61 opposite the site.
10. Number 39 is a semi-detached dormer bungalow which has a ground floor and first floor window in its side (south elevation) facing towards the application site serving habitable rooms. The ground floor window is separated from the site by a close-boarded fence on the boundary. There will be approximately 11.6m between the first floor window and the blank gable end of plots 1 and 2 (flats). The Council's interface distance guideline for this relationship is 12m, however this relationship is considered acceptable as the distance between the bungalows to the north of the site is characterised by a distance less than this and there is only an additional 0.4m required in respect of the spacing standards. The proposal is therefore seen as a compromise between safeguarding the amenity of this property as much as possible and ensuring the development is in keeping with the pattern of development in the immediate area.

11. The properties opposite have their rear elevations and gardens opposite the site. The proposal complies with the Council's interface distance of 10m between first floor windows and the garden boundary and 21m between first floor windows.
12. There are no properties immediately to the south and the railway line is to the west.
13. The proposal is considered acceptable in relation to neighbouring properties.
14. The site bounds with the West Coast Main Line (railway) and a noise assessment has therefore been submitted with the application. The report recommends mitigation measure to bedrooms that have a direct line of sight to the railway and also recommends upgraded glazing to certain rooms to achieve acceptable noise levels, this can be controlled by condition.
15. In terms of noise from the railway to the rear gardens the acoustic report states that the noise in the rear/side garden of the buildings will reach 62dB LAeq. The Council's Environmental Health Officer states that it is 'desirable' that the external noise levels do not exceed 50dB LAeq, with an upper guideline value of 55dB LAeq, so will exceed the guidelines, The guidance does however speak about compromise between elevated noise levels and other factors that determine if this development in such an area is warranted but in any case the development should be designed to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels in these amenity areas.
16. In relation to noise there are no European or national noise limits which have to be met. The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning decisions should aim to:
 - avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development;
 - mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions;
17. No guidance is given on what a significant impact is. There is a British Standard (BS8233:2014 Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings) that states: It is desirable that external noise level does not exceed 50 decibels with an upper guidelines of 55 decibels in noisier environments. It goes onto say that:

It is also recognised that these guidelines values are not achievable in all circumstances where development might be desirable. In higher noise area, such as city centres or urban areas adjoining the strategic transport network, a compromise between elevated noise levels and other factors might be warranted. In such situations, development should be designed to achieve the lowest practicable levels in these external amenity spaces, but should not be prohibited.
18. In this case the site is adjacent to the strategic transport network in the form of the West Coast Main Line and is therefore in a higher noise area. Therefore it is considered that the test for noise in this case is that the development is designed to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels. Mitigation measures have been proposed in respect of the dwellings themselves, the higher noise levels relate to the proposed external garden areas. To reduce noise to acceptable levels a 3.5m high acoustic fence would have to be erected against the railway boundary, however it is not considered this would be acceptable to the occupiers of the proposed properties in terms of the impact it would have to their outside space, but also how it would appear visually in the wider area.
19. A 2.1m acoustic fence would only provide mitigation in the garden area immediately behind the fence as the trains are elevated in relation to the site, however the garden areas are relatively small in size so it is considered reasonable to require this height of acoustic fence on the boundary to provide some noise mitigation. It has been confirmed by the applicant's acoustic consultant that a higher fence (lower than 3.5m) will not reduce noise levels beyond that achieved by a 2.1m fence due to the level of the railway

line in relation to the proposed properties. Taking into account that the site is immediately adjacent to the strategic transport network it is considered the proposal has been designed to achieve the lowest practicable levels as set out in the guidance and the implementation of the fence will be controlled by a condition.

Impact on a Listed Building

20. Coppull Enterprise Mill a grade II listed building is to the west of the site, however it is separate from the application site by the West Coast Mail Line (railway). Although the proposed properties will be visible from the building and indeed there are close views of the listed building from the application site, the relationship is considered acceptable as the proposal will be viewed in the context of existing residential properties to the north and east. The relationship with the listed building is therefore considered acceptable.

Traffic and Transport

21. The proposal complies with the Council's standards under ST4 of the emerging Local Plan 2012-2026 as it provides one parking space for properties with one bedroom and two spaces for those with two bedrooms.
22. Lancashire County Council Highways have asked for a 2m footway across the frontage of the site to encourage walking to public transport. This has been discussed with the applicant, however it is not possible to provide a full 2m footway due to the tightness of the site, a 1m wide footway has however been shown on the plans. There is no footway across the frontage of the site at present and while a 2m footway would be preferred it is considered the provision of a 1m footway is sufficient as there are 2m wide footways immediately to the north and opposite the site. In addition the proposed footway of 1m would not link into another footway to the south, it will only serve the proposed properties. This issue also has to be weighed against the material consideration that this is a scheme that will provide affordable housing in the area.
23. Part of the site is hardstanding where garages previously stood and is currently used as parking for the local residents. There are approximately 12 spaces. The proposal would result in the loss of these spaces. The applicant has proposed to incorporate 4 parking bays for existing residents in the southern part of the scheme. Although this will not replace all the parking bays to be lost, it is not considered that there is a parking problem in the area as the bungalows to the north benefit from driveways for off-road parking and parking for the properties opposite is provided in a turning head area near the front of the properties. There is also on-street parking available in lay-bys to the south on Longfield Avenue. The impact of the loss of the parking spaces is not therefore considered so severe that the application could be refused on these grounds.

Levels

24. The proposed levels have been provided and are considered acceptable. They can be secured by a condition.

Ecology

25. The Council's ecological advisor considers the site has low ecological value. An ecological report submitted with the application advises measures that can increase this as part of the development and these will be the subject of a condition.
26. There are trees on the site, two of which are within the application boundary that are to be felled as part of the proposal, however it is not considered they would warrant a Tree Preservation Order.

Contamination and Coal Mines

27. A Phase 1 desk study report has been submitted with which the Council's Contaminated Land Officer is satisfied, subject to a Phase 2 intrusive investigation (and any necessary remediation measures) to be carried out prior to any development. This can be conditioned.

Drainage and Sewers

28. United Utilities have no objection to the proposed development provided that conditions are attached to any approval requiring foul water to be drained on a separate system and surface water restricted to existing runoff rates. A drainage scheme has been submitted with the application showing foul water draining separate to surface. The matter of the surface runoff rate of the proposal compared to existing rates has been put to the applicant and will be updated on the addendum.

Other

29. The Police Architectural Liaison Officer has requested a condition that the scheme is conditioned to be built to Secured by Design standards. It is not considered that this can be conditioned as it is not a planning requirement, however the applicant advises that the properties will be built to this standards and they have already made an application.
30. Network Rail originally asked for the fence at the rear of the gardens to be set 1m off the boundary with the existing railway fence. This was not considered acceptable as it was considered it would have left a gap between the existing fences that would become a magnet for litter and a therefore a maintenance issue. Following discussions with Network Rail they have agreed that the proposed fence can be erected immediately adjacent to the existing fence which is considered acceptable. They also request conditions in relation to construction close to the railway.
31. Policy 27 of the Core Strategy requires schemes to be built to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes rising to Level 6 in January 2016 and also requires a 15% reduction in carbon emission through decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy sources or by adding additional building fabric insulation measures. The applicant is proposing to undertake a fabric first approach which will generate the same U-values for both Code 3 and Code 4 houses and helps to address fuel poverty by reducing energy consumption. However, they are not proposing to build the scheme so it achieves full Code 4 Level as this required renewables to be installed on the properties, they set out in the application submission why renewable technologies are not appropriate for the scheme as being provided by a Registered Provider (including maintenance issues and that because the scheme would be grant funded they cannot also get feed in tariff and it does not therefore benefit residents as they cannot sell back electricity to the grid). The reasons put forward by the Registered Provider in relation to the Code Level are accepted and a condition is proposed controlling this. A condition is proposed given the special circumstances put forward by the applicant relating to their circumstances as a Registered Provider that the properties are built and occupied as affordable units.

Section 106 Agreement

32. The National Planning Practice Guidance was updated by Government on 28th November 2014 in respect of contributions for affordable housing and tariff style planning obligations. These measures were introduced to support small scale developers by reducing disproportionate burdens on developer contributions. The updated guidance confirms that such contributions should not be sought from small scale and self-build development. In particular, the guidance states that contributions should not be sought from developments of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floor space of no more than 1000m².
33. This development is for eight dwellings, which is below the 10 unit threshold and also has a combined gross floor space of less than 1000m².
34. In the case of this development there is no evidence at this time, which is directly related to the development, to seek a contribution towards public open space contrary to the national guidance.
35. It is noted that even if a contribution towards the off-site provision of public open space were required it is likely that this would impact on the viability of the proposed development by virtue of the scheme providing social rented housing units. As such a case for the non-payment of the public open space contribution would be required to confirm this.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

36. The proposed development is CIL chargeable, however, social housing relief has been sought on the basis that the development is for affordable housing.

Overall Conclusion

37. The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

Planning History

38. There is not planning history relevant to the above scheme.

