

Item	07/00383/COU	Permit Full Planning Permission
Case Officer	Mrs Nicola Hopkins	
Ward	Brindle And Hoghton	
Proposal	Change of use of residential dwelling house (C3) to Residential rehabilitation centre (C2)	
Location	Withnell House Rest Home Bury Lane Withnell ChorleyPR6 8BH	
Applicant	Inward House Projects	

Proposal The application relates to the change of use of a single dwelling house (Use Class C3) into a residential rehabilitation centre (Use Class C2). Until August 2005 the premises fell within Use Class C3 as the premises was a nursing home. Planning permission was granted in 2005 to convert the premises into a single residential dwelling house and this permission has been implemented. Therefore planning permission is required to change the use back into the C3 use class.

There are a few alterations proposed as part of the application which include erecting new fences and replacing a number of upvc doors and windows to the existing annex.

The centre will accommodate up to 30 clients most of whom will be resident at the property for anything between 6 and 9 months. There will be approximately 13 members of staff based at the site working on a shift rota. The proposal incorporates the erection of new fences located close to the annex to provide a secure play area for the children of the residents. The remainder of the site will remain unaltered, garden areas, woodland and pasture.

Part of the building will be for women and women with children while the main building will accommodate clients described as Treatment Naïve (Treatment Naïve describes individuals who have not yet become embroiled in the treatment system e.g. substitute prescribing, maintenance prescribing often for considerable periods of time, before being offered the option of Residential Rehabilitation).

Each client will have an in-depth assessment prior to entering the programme. The assessment includes a full risk assessment to ensure their stability for the programme. Clients must be drug and alcohol free before commencement. Clients will have undergone a detoxification as an inpatient or by a community detoxification in the weeks prior to entering the project.

The staff at the premises will work on a rota basis. The first shift will work from 8.45am till 4.45pm the second shift from 4.30pm till 10pm. One member of staff on a waking night duty. The supporting documents stated that 5-10 visitors will attend the premises between Monday and Friday. These will be staff from local colleges coming to deliver lessons, Social Workers visiting their clients and visitors from other agencies. At weekends clients are allowed visits from close family members. The majority of the visits will be on a Saturday between 2pm and 5pm. No more than 5 clients may have a visit on any one day.

Planning Policy

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts

Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development within Rural Areas

Policy 6- Joint Lancashire Structure Plan

Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review:

GN5- Building Design and Retaining Existing Landscape Features and Natural Habitats

GN9- Transport Accessibility

TR4- Highway Development Control Criteria

DC1- Development in the Green Belt

DC7A- Conversion of Rural Buildings in the Green Belt

Conversion of Rural Buildings SPG.

Planning History

5/4/542- Conversion to Residential Hotel & Restaurant. Approved October 1968

5/4/740- Extension to provide additional lounge and bedrooms at Withnell House. Approved January 1973

9/80/253- Extension (conference room/ lavatories/ cloaks). Approved April 1980

9/89/218- Extension to form additional bedrooms. Approved May 1989

9/89/901- Bedrooms and sitting room extension. Approved November 1989

9/90/933- Erection of a conservatory to the rear. Approved November 1990

9/92/190- Outline application for the erection of 1 dwelling. Refused April 1992.

05/00695/COU- Change of use from Class C2 to domestic dwelling. Approved August 2005.

Applicant's Case

The agent for the application has submitted a Transport Assessment and a Planning, Design and Access Statement in support of the application. The documents are very detailed and set out how the rehabilitation centre will operate. The following conclusions have been forwarded by the agent:

- The proposal represents an entirely appropriate re-use of an existing dwelling and annex which had, until only recently, been used for many years as a nursing home for the elderly.
- The proposed development will involve only minor alterations which would have no adverse impact and would hence preserve the openness of the Green Belt. Due to its low key nature, the scheme will have no material impact on the amenities of nearby residents
- The use will involve relatively low levels of trip generation, not dissimilar to those that would be expected of a large dwelling house.
- The applicants intended use will not only secure the long term future of the property in a manner which is consistent with its rural, Green Belt location, it will also provide a new residential centre for Inward House Projects to further their valuable work in assisting those people who are seeking to reintegrate into society as part of their recovery from the problems associated with substance abuse.
- It is considered that the proposals represent appropriate development which accords with development plan policy and therefore for which planning permission should therefore

be granted.

Representations

Councilor Iris Smith has raised concerns in respect of the security implications of the proposal and the potential impact on the nearby residents.

70 letters of objection have been received from neighbouring residents raising the following concerns:

- Will detract from and be incompatible with the nature, character and demographics of the area
- Proposed facility is near a local primary school and children's home.
- There is no analysis of the risk and social costs regarding potential failures of the rehabilitation exercise
- No details regarding the prevention and management of anti-social behaviour
- Government statistics highlight the link between drug and alcohol abuse and increased crime which would have a significant impact on the community
- Concerns about the ongoing drug use and the impact on the local GP budget
- Fear of increased crime and public safety. Impact on the policing resources which are currently poor within the area.
- Occupants will be convicted criminals sent to the centre as an alternative to prison. Attendance is mandatory and residents will not want to be there. The centre will not be secure and the convicted criminals will be able to walk out whenever they feel.
- Residents often relapse and the centre will result in an rise in drug suppliers visiting the area to do business
- Assume the Council will investigate the impact of such rehabilitation centres on the locality and the impact on children within the area.
- Where will the staff come from?
- Increases the residents sense of insecurity and impact on the elderly residents
- Introduce significant amounts of undesirable people to this quiet and peaceful residential area.
- Extra traffic and parking problems, public transport is non-existent to this site.
- These facilities would be more suited to urban areas
- Impact on surrounding property prices
- Impact on the Green Belt
- Residents will be free to roam about and not restricted to the premises- security issues
- The comparison with the Lancaster project is flawed as the two developments are of different scales and the demographics are different.

In addition to this a petition has been submitted objecting to the proposal which contains 60 signatures.

1 letter of objection has been received from Cunningham Planning who state they are working on behalf of over 100 residents. The letter lists the following objections:

- Sustainability of the proposed use in respect of the volume of traffic generated as the site is only accessible by private vehicle.
- Impact on the Green Belt- centre will accommodate a large number of people who will use the surrounding grounds clearly this will have a greater impact on the Green Belt than the present use.
- Impact on residential amenity- a number of residents have concerns about the way in which the site will be occupied.

- Fear of crime adds to the residents concerns which is a material planning consideration
- Intensification of the site.
- Is this type of facility needed? and will the clients be able to enter and leave the premises as they wish?
- Ever present risk that the occupants will return to their former lifestyles.
- Proposal is contrary to National and Local Policies and Guidance
- If the authority are minded to grant planning permission then a condition should be imposed limiting the number of occupants to a number significantly below that proposed and the permission should be temporary to assess the viability of the proposal.

Consultations

Lancashire County Council (Highways)- Given the level of traffic proposed it would be difficult to object to the principle of the development. The Engineers only concern is vision to the right on exiting the access and would seek to reduce the level of the hedge/ vegetation to a maximum of 1 metre in height for at least 100 metres to the south of the access.

Chorley Community Safety Partnership- No observations

Director of Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment (Environmental Services)- No comments

Assessment

The proposal relates to the change of use of the premises to accommodate a residential rehabilitation centre for people with substance misuse problems. The premises are currently used as a single residential dwelling house.

The property is located within the Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development and where development will only be permitted if the development is considered appropriate or if very special circumstances can be demonstrated which outweigh the harm the development will have on the Green Belt.

The main issues to consider in respect of the proposal is the impact of the change of use on the Green Belt. In particular the impact of the development on traffic generation within the area.

Impact on the Green Belt

Reuse of an existing building within the Green Belt can be considered to be an appropriate form of development with preference given to the reuse of buildings for commercial or business uses. The property is a substantial building and capable of conversion without major alterations or extensions. There is an existing access drive to the premises which is accessed off Bury Lane and the proposal which relates mainly to a change of use will not result in loss or damage to wildlife habitats.

As such it is considered that the proposed change of use accords with the requirements of Policy DC7A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review and will not impact on the openness or character of the Green Belt.

Traffic and Highway Implications

The premises is currently a single residential dwelling house and the change of use of the premises to accommodate a residential rehabilitation centre has the potential to generate a significant amount of additional traffic. This additional traffic has the potential to adversely impact on the Green Belt.

The agent for the application has submitted a Transport Assessment in respect of the proposed new use. The premises is partly accessible by public transport as there are bus routes close to the site however there is not a bus stop within the immediate vicinity of the site. The traffic statement states that as the staff work on a rota basis and the external staff/ social workers will have a travelling role then the majority of these people will access the premises by car.

The site therefore results in a low non-car accessibility scoring however the agent for the application has stated that a high accessibility is not necessary for the proposed use of the site. It is estimated that the maximum daily vehicular trip demand will be 17 movements in and 17 out of the site.

The Highways Engineer at Lancashire County Council has assessed the submitted Transport Statement and given the traffic level proposed does not consider that the proposed change of use will have an adverse impact on highway safety or traffic generation within the area. As such it is not considered that the traffic generated from the premises will have an adverse impact on the surrounding Green Belt area.

The Highways Engineer has raised concerns in respect of the visibility when exiting the site and has suggested that the vegetation along to the highway boundary of the site (to the south of the access junction) is reduced in height to 1 metre for 100 metres from the access junction. This will be attached to the recommendation as a condition.

Additionally the sustainability of the proposal is a consideration. Clearly the application site is located within a rural location which although there are nearby bus routes will be mainly accessed via private vehicle. The key aspects of the Government's sustainability principles relate to reducing the need to travel and where travel is necessary increasing the use of public transport and modes other than the private car.

The agents for the application have admitted that due to the location of the site the centre will be mainly accessed by private vehicle although when the residents leave the centre for outside treatment etc they will be transported via a minibus.

It is considered that although the centre will be mainly accessed via car which does not accord with sustainability principles the volume of traffic which will be generated by the centre will not be to a degree which impacts on either highway safety or the surrounding Green Belt. In addition to this the traffic generated from the premises will be mainly from visitors to the premises and not the residents themselves it is not considered that the volume of traffic generated will be significant enough to warrant refusal in respect of sustainability.

Community Safety Issues

A number of letters of concern have been received from neighbouring residents objecting to the proposed change of use. One of the main sources of concern is the fear of crime and security issues raised in respect of the clients who will be attending the premises.

Chorley Community Safety Partnership were consulted in respect of the proposal and the Architectural Liaison Officer has no objection to the scheme. Therefore the proposed change of use is considered to be acceptable in respect of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use is considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt and it is not considered that the level of vehicular movements generated by the premises will have an adverse impact on the character of the Green Belt. As such the proposal accords

with Government advice contained in PPG2: Green Belts, Policy 6 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and Policies DC1 and DC7A of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

There is a significant number of objections raised in respect of the proposed change of use which mainly relate to the crime and safety implications of the proposal. The scheme however can only be assessed in respect of the relevant Planning Policies which are set out above. The Architectural Liaison Officer has no objections to the scheme and it is not considered that the proposed use will impact on crime within the area or the amenities of the neighbouring residents.

**Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission
Conditions**

1. This consent relates to the following plans:

Plan Ref.	Received On:	Title:
3739-101S1	26 th April 2007	Site Location Plan
3739-04S1	26 th April 2007	Existing Site Layout
3739-05S1	26 th April 2007	Proposed Site Layout
3739-03	28 th March 2007	Existing and Proposed Elevations
3739-01	28 th March 2007	Existing Floor Plans
3739-02	28 th March 2007	Proposed Floor Plans

Reason: To define the consent and to ensure all works are carried out in a satisfactory manner.

2. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. Before the development hereby permitted is first commenced, full details of the position, height and appearance of all fences and walls to be erected (notwithstanding any such detail shown on previously submitted plans) shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The building shall not be occupied or land used pursuant to this permission before all walls and fences have been erected in accordance with the approved details. Fences and walls shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details at all times.

Reason: To ensure a visually satisfactory form of development and in accordance with Policy No. GN5 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.

4. The development hereby permitted shall not commence until the hedgerow/ vegetation 100 metres to the south of the access junction, along the boundary of the site with Bury Lane, has been reduced to 1 metre in height. The hedgerow/ vegetation shall be retained at a maximum height of 1 metre at all times thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, to ensure adequate visibility can be achieved when exiting the site and in accordance with Policy TR4 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Council Local Plan Review.

5. The premises shall be used for residential rehabilitation centre and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class C2 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order).

Reason: To protect the character of local area and in accordance with Policy No. DC1 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review.
