

Item No. 16

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| APPLICATION NUMBER | CB/16/04840/REG3 |
| LOCATION | Croft Green Sheltered Housing, Croft Green, Dunstable LU6 1EG |
| PROPOSAL | Demolition of existing sheltered housing (bedsit) Nos 22-38 Croft Green and reprovision of 24 sheltered housing apartments including communal accommodation, new parking and landscaping design to the Croft Green site |
| PARISH | Dunstable |
| WARD | Dunstable Northfields |
| WARD COUNCILLORS | Cllrs Freeman & Warren |
| CASE OFFICER | Debbie Willcox |
| DATE REGISTERED | 19 October 2016 |
| EXPIRY DATE | 18 January 2017 |
| APPLICANT | Central Bedfordshire Council |
| AGENT | |
| REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE | The Council is the applicant and an objection has been received. |
| RECOMMENDED DECISION | Regulation 3 - Recommended for Approval |

Summary of Recommendation:

The proposed development would not detrimentally impact upon the character and appearance or wider streetscene nor would there be any significant adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents. The proposal would not result in any highway, parking or other issues. The proposal would result in a high quality scheme providing sheltered accommodation for older people. The scheme by reason of its siting and design is in conformity with Sections 6, 7 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review 2004, and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

Site Location:

The site is located in the Northfields area of Dunstable which lies to the west of the town centre. The site is accessed from Croft Green (road) which leads to Croft Green (crescent). The wider area of Croft Green is predominantly residential and offers mixed low density housing.

The Croft Green Sheltered Housing development comprises a square arrangement of bungalows around a central green area with a bedsit block on the north eastern side. The site is generally level with a slightly raised area in front of the bungalows on the eastern side. Vehicular access runs around the perimeter of the green area and serves all of the residential blocks on the northern side of Croft Green (crescent). To the north east of the development are the rear gardens of dwellings in Beech Green.

The Application:

The application seeks consent for the demolition of the existing sheltered housing bedsits at Nos 22-38 Croft Green and the reprovion of sheltered housing apartments including communal accommodation, new parking and landscaping design to the Croft Green Site.

The proposal includes the demolition of a building containing 9 flats, referred to below as the bedsit block, and the erection of a building containing 24 new flats, representing an increase in provision of 15 flats. The existing bungalows would be retained.

The existing development at Croft Green comprises a 33 unit sheltered housing scheme built between 1945-1965 within three blocks of bungalows and one bedsit block. The bedsit block contains 8 x bedsit flats, 1 x two-bed flat, a laundry room, wardens office and communal lounge. To the rear of the block is a large, enclosed, under utilised communal garden. The bedsit block has reached the end of its useful life and is prioritised for redevelopment as its communal heating system is uneconomical to repair and the available bedsit accommodation is below the expected space standards. The communal facilities serve the wider Croft Green community.

The application therefore proposes the demolition of the existing bedsit block and erection of a state of the art facility in its place providing 16 x 1 bedroom apartments with a floorspace of 54m² and 8 x 1/2 bedroom apartments of 68m² with associated communal and ancillary accommodation. The accommodation would be in the form of sheltered housing for older people the salient features of which are:

- independent self-contained flats designed to wheelchair user standards
- flats with fully fitted kitchens, shower room, bedroom(s) and lounge
- communal lounge for social activities
- lift access to all floors
- communal laundry
- wheelchair/scooter recharging store
- guest accommodation
- non-resident building manager

The proposed new building would reprovide communal facilities for the whole Croft Green community, which during the construction period would be provided from one of the vacant bungalows.

The central part of the new building would be three storey with the building then reducing to two storey on either side, stepping down to the existing bungalows. The internal layout of the building would include an entrance foyer, residents lounge, scooter storage, guest overnight room, laundry and managers office, at ground floor level. Improved outdoor spaces would also be provided to the rear of the new building in the form of communal gardens.

The accommodation would be provided in the following form:

| | 1 bed (54m ²) | 1/2 bed (68m ²) | Total |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Ground floor level | 7 | 1 | 8 |
| First floor level | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Second floor level | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>16</i> | <i>8</i> | <i>= 24 flats</i> |

All flats would have their own private external space comprising patios on the ground floor and balconies on the upper floors. These spaces can be an enclosed winter garden using a fully glazed sliding screen.

The energy centre and overspill scooter/cycle store would be located in a single storey, flat roof rear projection to the central part of the main building.

Refuse would be stored in two bin stores on the opposite side of Croft Green (crescent) to serve the existing bungalows.

Ten standard parking spaces and a minibus parking space would be provided at the front of the development. A further 11 spaces would be provided around the central green.

The application is very similar to that granted planning permission in 2014 under reference no. CB/1404056/REG3. The scale, massing and footprint of the building is predominantly unchanged with only the addition of the energy centre as a single storey element rather than being a stand alone building being changed. The internal layout has been rearranged to allow an additional parking space and there are also small changes to the parking and landscaping.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport

Section 6 - Delivering a wide choice of quality homes

Section 7 - Requiring good design

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

Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review Policies

BE8 Design Considerations

R12 Protecting Recreational Open Space

T10 Parking - New Development

(Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, the age of the plan and the general consistency with the NPPF, policies BE8 & R12 are still given significant weight. Policy T10 is afforded less weight).

Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire (June 2014)

At the meeting of Full Council on 19th November it was resolved to withdraw the Development Strategy. Preparation of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has begun. A substantial volume of evidence gathered over a number of years will help support this document. These technical papers are consistent with the spirit of the NPPF and therefore will remain on our web site as material considerations which may inform further development management decisions.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide: A Guide for Development (2014)

Relevant Planning History:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Application Number | CB/14/04056/REG3 |
| Description | Demolition of sheltered housing (bedsit) Nos 22-38 Croft Green and reprovion of sheltered housing apartments including communal accommodation, new parking and landscaping design to the Croft Green Site |
| Decision | Planning permission granted |
| Decision Date | 19/12/2014 |

Consultees:

Dunstable Town Council No objections.

Highways Officer The proposal is for the creation of 24 self contained flats for the elderly with the provision of 21 parking spaces to serve these flats and the existing 12 bungalows which are to remain. This proposal involves the demolition of an existing care home and a block of 8 garages. The access road serving the current site and bungalows is private.

In accordance with the authority's standard for the new provision 30 parking spaces would be required, while for the existing provision 9 spaces would be required.

Considering the existing 12 bungalows which are to remain and in accordance with the authority's standard, 48 parking spaces should be provided in total.

The transport statement goes into some detail as to the existing and proposed demand. It also goes into some details as to the existing on road provision and availability of this provision.

I cannot fault the report in relation to the details of the perceived demand in relation to the available information and for that reason I would not recommend that the application should be refused on the basis of under parking provision

In a highway context I recommend that the supplied conditions be included if planning approval is to be issued.

Tree & Landscape
Officer

I have examined the plans and documents associated with this application, namely the plan drawing "Landscape Proposal" (Dwg No. AA5060/2009), the "Design and Access Statement", which are both dated September 2016 and prepared by PRP, and also the "Arboricultural Statement" (Ref. No. CBA10277v4), dated October 2016 as prepared by CBA, which includes the appendices "Tree Survey Plan" and "Tree Protection Plan". I also have referred to my previous Pre-Application Advice consultation response made in 2014 (Ref : CB/14/02919/PAPC) when determining this application.

For referral purposes, I have duplicated below in italics the relevant design approach, as quoted by the applicant in their Design and Access Statement, which relates to the treatment of existing trees :-

"Access to the existing green is largely compromised by a dense coverage of trees which hinder the use of the space for generally amenity or communal gatherings. The new Community Green will be open in character, framed by a number of better quality retained trees which help to enclose the green and visually connect the existing square to the west. The retained trees also provide an historical connection and a sense of maturity."

I question the validity of this claim, and would argue that the existing trees themselves promote a "sense of place" and give a degree of intimacy to any passive relaxation. It is recognised that the loss of trees within the new Community Green amount to 7 No "C" Category, 7 No. "B" Category and 2 No. "U" Category. This represents a substantial loss of trees from the existing central green. and whilst the majority are clearly being removed on account of their low quality, poor condition or to directly facilitate development, I question the removal of 4 No category "B" trees, namely trees 16, 21, 23 and 26, even when recognising the design aspirations for the site. These 4 trees are good quality Lawson Cypress specimens, and their loss will completely remove all the Lawson Cypress historically associated with this site, which previously contributed to its pleasant "parkland" atmosphere.

The retention of these four trees will therefore greatly improve the historical connection, by keeping an element of contrasting coniferous specimens, which would greatly reinforce the degree of maturity to the scheme, but without disrupting any new building, road or parking layout of the site, and could easily be incorporated into a revised Tree Protection Plan. The indicative line of new trees being proposed on the "Landscape Proposal" drawing would then need to be moved southeastwards, to allow for the retained trees to be kept, requiring new planting positions closer to the new pedestrian route linking east to west through the central space, but where they would be much more effective in creating an attractive avenue along the pathway, and promote a pleasing vista effect.

I should state that the landscaping shown on the "Landscape Proposal" drawing is indicative only, and a condition requiring specific details of specimens and

sizes will be needed. However, of some concern is the indicative plant list for trees, two of which are unsuitable for the design aspirations of the site. These are *Alnus glutinosa*, which has an aggressive root system that can damage hard surface areas, and *Quercus ilex*, which is a tree casting dense shade, and despite being evergreen, it sheds abundant tough leathery leaves all year round, which can be a considerable nuisance. I suggest instead that if there is an aim to encourage wildlife, then these two specimens should be replaced with suitable cultivars of *Sorbus* sp and *Malus* sp, which are absent from the list. Also notable by their absence are fastigate cultivars of the Field Maple tree, which is a very useful native species, which can be planted near parking areas and buildings without causing major conflict.

I would therefore request that the above points are duly considered, especially as they would not require any alteration in the building, car parking or road layout of the scheme. If the "Tree Protection Plan" and "Landscape Proposal" plan can be amended accordingly, then I can recommend suitable conditions to be imposed if you are minded to grant consent to this application.

Pollution Team

I have no objections to the proposals.

However, due to the scale of the development and the sensitive surrounding uses, I recommend a condition requiring the implementation of the submitted Construction Management Plan.

Ecologist

Having read through the submitted information I have no objection to the development. I welcome the proposed planting palette, retention of a number of mature trees and the inclusion of bird boxes. Overall I am satisfied that this will result in a net gain for biodiversity and hence be in line with the NPPF.

SuDS Officer

We consider planning permission could be granted to the proposed development and the final design and maintenance arrangements for the surface water system agreed at the detailed design stage, if the following recommendations and planning conditions are secured.

Notes on the Surface Water Drainage Strategy and SuDS Report:

- Detailed site investigation results (including any site specific soakage tests and ground water monitoring shown in accordance with BRE 365) will need to be provided with the detailed design, even though they are provided with the Report, this will aid our assessment.

- Permeable paving is a better method of pollution control than an oil interceptor, if the parking areas were to be permeable paving there would be no need for drainage channels on each stretch of parking. This would also provide storage reducing the size of soakaway required.
- Where the use of permeable surfacing is proposed, this should be designed in accordance with the 'CIRIA RP992 The SuDS Manual Update: Paper RP992/28: Design Assessment Checklists for Permeable/Porous Pavement'.
- The final detailed design including proposed standards of operation, construction, structural integrity and ongoing maintenance must be compliant with the 'Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems' (March 2015, Ref: PB14308), 'Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Drainage Guidance' (Adopted April 2014, Updated May 2015), and recognised best practise including the Ciria SuDS Manual (2016, C753).
- To ensure future and subsequent owners will be aware of any maintenance requirements / responsibilities for surface water drainage; further measures should be proposed by the applicant and may include, for example, information provided to the first purchaser of the property and also designation/registration of the SuDS so that it appears as a Land Charge for the property and as such is identified to subsequent purchasers of the property. Any methods involving designation or registering a Land Charge are to be agreed with the LPA.

Landscape Officer

Setting / communal green: the concept of treating the green space to the front of the main development as a community green / focal point is a real positive but the design needs to include features to encourage use such as seating / simple benches connected by soft surface paths, decorative planting, swards of wild flowers / grasses or orchard / fruit planting, or features such as public art works, or include a community function such as a petanque court.

Sense of place and design: The D&AS indicates an aspiration for high level of detail in exterior and interior design and use of materials; if the application were to be progressed I recommend the opportunity to include more imaginative use of materials and landscaping could be considered. The opportunity to include more bespoke design via street furniture including seating, railings and handrails / balustrades could be explored further, designs to the main entrance including glazing designs and handles. It may be that small artistic interventions are

included within standard features to engender surprise and delight.

Lighting design to and around the complex could also be considered especially imaginative, subtle landscape lighting to encourage use of garden space in evenings.

Residents garden: A conservatory or outdoor gazebo would encourage residents to enjoy daylight whilst being sheltered from wind or rain. Water features could be introduced to cool spaces and introduce features which are calming and increase tranquillity.

Raised planting beds and fruiting shrubs and trees could be included to encourage residents gardening. Espaliered fruit trees could be considered along boundaries - or green 'living' walls with 'growing pockets'.

Planting and garden features to encourage wildlife, especially birds, butterflies and bees, via integral nesting boxes, feeders, rich pollen and nectar planting will not only increase biodiversity opportunities but also enhance the landscape setting and opportunities for interaction by residents.

SuDS: Any development should aim to convey as much surface water drainage on the surface and avoid piped systems as per the CBC SuDS GUIDANCE. A SuDS management train to slow surface water run off at least needs to be integrated within the development landscaping proposals with features such rainwater chains, rainwater gardens, rills and swales.

I hope the above comments are of assistance; if the application were to be progressed a comprehensive landscaping plan would be required including detail on planting, hard and soft materials and detail on any changes in levels, any structures and boundary treatments, and hopefully taking on board some of the suggestions above. If the applicant requires any further advice or assistance regarding including more bespoke design features I would be happy to liaise and advise.

Green Infrastructure
Officer

The proposals for enhancing the green spaces outside the housing are generally positive.

However, proposals for drainage rely solely on piped and crated conveyance, attenuation and discharge systems. These fail to meet local requirements for sustainable drainage, set out in CBC's Sustainable Drainage SPD, and are particularly disappointing, given the opportunity to integrate sustainable surface water management with the proposals to enhance the green spaces.

SuDS colleagues have requested a condition requiring a detailed surface water drainage strategy. The applicant should be made aware that this will need to demonstrate compliance with CBC's Sustainable Drainage SPD, including enhancing biodiversity, and design for easy access and maintenance.

I would recommend that, if the development is progressed, the SuDS conditions refer specifically to CBC's Sustainable Drainage SPD, and that the applicant is made aware of the need for the detailed surface water drainage strategy to enhance biodiversity, and deliver at surface solutions that are easy to access and maintain, and enhance the amenity value of the open space. This should be developed in tandem with the comprehensive landscape plan required by my landscape colleagues, to ensure that SuDS design is integrated with the open space design to deliver multiple benefits. Any landscape condition should also specifically refer to the surface water drainage strategy, to ensure that the proposals are complementary.

Anglian Water

ASSETS

Section 1 – Assets Affected

There are assets owned by Anglian Water or those subject to an adoption agreement within or close to the development boundary that may affect the layout of the site. Anglian Water would ask that the following text be included within your Notice should permission be granted.

“Anglian Water has assets close to or crossing this site or there are assets subject to an adoption agreement. Therefore the site layout should take this into account and accommodate those assets within either prospectively adoptable highways or public open space. If this is not practicable then the sewers will need to be diverted at the developers cost under Section 185 of the Water Industry Act 1991. or, in the case of apparatus under an adoption agreement, liaise with the owners of the apparatus. It should be noted that the diversion works should normally be completed before development can commence.”

WASTEWATER SERVICES

Section 2 – Wastewater Treatment

The foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Dunstable Water Recycling Centre that will have available capacity for these flows.

Section 3 – Foul Sewerage Network

The sewerage system at present has available capacity for these flows. If the developer wishes to connect to our

sewerage network they should serve notice under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991. We will then advise them of the most suitable point of connection.

Section 4 – Surface Water Disposal

From the details submitted to support the planning application the proposed method of surface water management does not relate to Anglian Water operated assets. As such, we are unable to provide comments on the suitability of the surface water management. The Local Planning Authority should seek the advice of the Lead Local Flood Authority or the Internal Drainage Board. The Environment Agency should be consulted if the drainage system directly or indirectly involves the discharge of water into a watercourse.

Should the proposed method of surface water management change to include interaction with Anglian Water operated assets, we would wish to be re-consulted to ensure that an effective surface water drainage strategy is prepared and implemented.

Waste Services

Communal waste provision is allocated on the basis of 90l per week per waste stream per property; therefore we would provide 4 x 1100l bins for recycling and 4 x 1100 bins for residual waste to be collected fortnightly. These will be charged at £350 + VAT per 1100l bin. Our waste collection crew will move communal bins a maximum of 10m from the bin store to the waste collection vehicle, providing there are suitable dropped kerbs. Bin stores should be easily accessible from the main highway and it is crucial that the store is secure with a lock to prevent potential fly tipping issues. A lock code will need to be provided to the Central Bedfordshire Waste Services Team if used. The door used by the collection crews will need to be wide enough to allow for easy removal of bins from the storage area. A dropped kerb will need to be provided to enable easy manoeuvrability of the bins. Lighting within the bin store should be provided so that the bins can be used safely by residents when it is dark.

Managing the Needs of Older People

Demand

The proposed development falls within the Chiltern Vale locality and the Dunstable Northfields ward. Chiltern Vale has a total population of 77,900 and 6,070 of these residents are aged over 75 years. This is forecast to rise to 9,934 by 2030. Delivering accommodation suitable for older people is therefore a priority for Central Bedfordshire Council.

In 2013 the Dunstable Northfields ward had 9,500 residents and 14% of its population was over 65 years old. For the same area 11.1% of households consist of

one person of 65 years of age and over and a further 5.9% of households have more than one occupant, all of who are aged 65 and over. In 2011 11.1% of the population in this ward were retired, which is lower than the average for Central Bedfordshire (13.5%) and England (13.7%).

The number of older residents in this ward and the predicted rise in the people over 65 in the Chiltern Vale area demonstrates that there is likely to be demand for mainstream housing that is specifically designed for older people and for specialist accommodation for older people, such as residential care homes and housing with care and support available such as extra care developments.

If older people live in accommodation that does not meet their needs it can have an adverse impact on their health and well-being. In 2011 in the ward of Dunstable Northfields 7.6% of residents stated that their day to day activities were limited a lot due to a long term health condition or disability and a further 9.1% of residents said they were limited a little. This highlights the need to have more accommodation available for older people that enables them to live independently within the community.

This proposal is therefore meeting an identified need.

Design and layout

Good design can not only provide a better quality of life for occupants but can reduce running costs. For specialist schemes the following features are considered important:

- ☐ Self-contained homes that are built with older people in mind, which can be easily adapted to accommodate increasing frailty.
- ☐ Hardwired and Wi-Fi enabled Telecare and Telehealth equipment.
- ☐ Modern building standards and energy efficient design to help to keep energy costs as low as possible.
- ☐ Maximise levels of natural light throughout the scheme and include windows with low window sills to allow people who are seated or in bed to easily see out of the windows.
- ☐ Equipment, signage, internal décor and landscaping that enable people who have physical, sensory or cognitive impairments to be as independent as possible.
- ☐ Fully accessible, landscaped outside space that is stimulating contains seating and opportunities to be active.
- ☐ Communal facilities that are sufficient for the size of the scheme (ideally no less than 25% communal space), providing facilities and activities that are complimentary to

those available in the local community and that facilitate a healthy and active lifestyle.

□ Located close to local amenities in order to enhance the opportunities for residents to take part in the life of the local community. Residents should have easy access to shops, doctors, pharmacists and leisure activities.

Having reviewed the proposal we can see that the applicant has made every effort within the site constraints to design a scheme that meets the needs and aspirations of older people.

Summary

We consider this to be a well-designed scheme in a residential location which will meet a recognised need. On that basis we therefore support it.

Sustainability Officer

The proposed development is located within south Central Bedfordshire area and development management policies are set by the saved policies from the South Bedfordshire Local Plan. Policy BE8: Design and Environmental Standards states that proposals should maximise energy efficiency and conservation through orientation, layout and design of buildings, use of natural lighting and solar gain, and take full advantage of opportunities to use renewable or alternative energy sources. It also requires proposals to demonstrate how trees and vegetation have been used to achieve visual, acoustic, energy saving, wildlife and other environmental benefits.

The development should be designed with climate change in mind taking account of increase in rainfall and temperature. The development should therefore minimise hard standing surfaces and increase green, natural areas to allow rainwater infiltration and minimise heat island effect through evaporation and tree shading. Light colour building and landscaping materials should be prioritised over dark coloured which absorb more sun light and retain heat increasing urban heat island effect.

The policy does not stipulate amount of energy to be delivered from the renewable sources. The Council has undertaken review of renewable and low carbon technologies to establish a reasonable expectation for renewable energy generation. The study concluded that 10% energy demand can be met from renewable or low carbon sources on site and is both technically feasible and economically viable to achieve. The study used the 2013 Part L to determine energy demand baseline. It is acceptable to achieve 10% energy demand reduction through increased fabric efficiency and/or renewable and low carbon technologies.

The policy also requires efficient use of scarce resources. The Local Climate Change Risk Assessment study highlighted that Central Bedfordshire is located within water stressed area. All developments are therefore required to achieve a higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day to mitigate against potential water shortages. This standard can be easily achieved through installation of water efficient fittings.

The approach to sustainability standards, particularly energy and water efficiency outlined in the Energy Statement, and Access and Design Statement is welcomed. The proposal meets the policy requirements to minimise energy demand through application of energy hierarchy strategy, delivery of minimum 105 of energy demand from renewable or low carbon sources such ASHP or PV panels, and achieving the higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day through installation of water efficient fittings and appliances.

To ensure that the above proposal is implemented I request that conditions be attached.

Other Representations:

Neighbours (21 Beech Green)

Objects to the scheme on the following points:

- Concerned about the layout and density;
- The three storey element will be overbearing and out of scale with the properties in Croft Green and Beech Green;
- The building will be closer to the boundary with the dwellings in Beech Green than the existing building and coupled with the increase in height this will invade the privacy of the occupiers in Beech Green;
- Concerned about rear external lighting.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle of development
2. Impact on the character and appearance of the area
3. Impact on residential amenity
4. Highways and Parking
5. Landscaping, Ecology and SuDS
6. Energy Efficiency and Sustainability
7. Other Issues

Considerations

1. Principle of Development

- 1.1 The application site is located within a built-up residential area of Dunstable

where development and redevelopment is considered to be acceptable in principle.

- 1.2 The proposal would result in the demolition of sub-standard accommodation and the provision of an increased number of specially designed elderly persons accommodation to meet identified local needs. As such, the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable.

2. Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 2.1 South Bedfordshire Local Plan policy BE8 states that development should be appropriate in scale and design to its setting; contribute positively to creating a sense of place and respect local distinctiveness and be complimentary to the landscape setting both in the immediate proximity as well as longer views.
- 2.2 Croft Green is a square arrangement of bungalows around a central green space. The bungalows are well maintained and have a distinct character reminiscent of an almshouse development. The bungalows have white rendered walls with red brick detailing and steeply pitched, tiled roofs. To the rear of the bungalows are open shared gardens, mainly laid to grass.
- 2.3 The social arrangement and aesthetic of Croft Green is in the style of Arts and Crafts architecture. The character of the area is very strong and any new development needs to respond to the prevailing character of the existing dwellings.
- 2.4 It is proposed that the footprint of the new building would predominantly follow that to be replaced, with minimal additional footprint. The distinctive palette of materials and the architectural quality of the existing environment would be embraced in the new buildings, which would form a distinctive focal point for the area. The new building would have the appearance of three blocks, with the central one being three storey providing 3 floors of accommodation and the blocks to either side being two storey with rooms in the roof to provide 3 floors of accommodation. In addition to the main block there is a projection to the rear and an area of building which is orientated side on to the southern side of the site. The roofs are proposed to be steep in pitch to match those of the existing dwellings and chimneys have also been included in the new building to reflect this detail of the bungalows.
- 2.5 The building is proposed to be finished in white render, with red brick detailing and artificial slate roof with patterned red brick details and aluminium timber composite windows dark grey in colour.
- 2.6 Beyond the immediate setting of Croft Green, the existing neighbouring residential properties are predominately 2 storey semi-detached dwellings. They are modern dwellings built in traditional form using brick with pitched, tiled roofs. Whilst the proposal would be higher than is typical in the area, it is considered that it would not appear unduly dominant and would provide a modern, attractive landmark.
- 2.7 Overall it is considered that the design of the existing setting has been carefully considered and adequately reflected in the design of the proposed new buildings. The details reflected in the new building such as chimneys, roof

slopes and red brick detail along with the materials which would match those of the existing buildings would successfully integrate the proposed modern building within its setting. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with section 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework, policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

3. Impact on Residential Amenity

- 3.1 South Bedfordshire Local Plan policy BE8 sets out that the amenities of surrounding properties and their occupiers must be respected.
- 3.2 An objection has been received from the occupiers of No. 21 Beech Green raising concerns that the proposal would be overbearing to and would result in a loss of privacy to the occupiers of properties in Beech Green, which back onto the site.
- 3.3 The rear projection of the building would be three storey and would be located within 5m of the boundary of the site which also forms the rear boundary of the rear gardens of properties on Beech Green. There are no windows in the rear elevation of this part of the building in order to protect the privacy of existing residents in Beech Green. The gardens of the dwellings in Beech Green behind the rear projection are 21m long, resulting in a separation distance of 26m. This is considered to be sufficient to prevent the proposal from being unacceptably overbearing.
- 3.4 On the rear elevation of the main part of the building would be the covered walkways providing access to the front doors of the flats. The flats would only have a kitchen window on the rear elevation of the building. It is considered that whilst some views over the rear gardens towards the properties on Beech Green would be possible, however they would be limited views due to the arrangement of the proposed flats. Views from the walkways or rear facing windows of the flats would be long-range with the distance from the rear elevation to the boundary being 15m and the rear gardens of the properties being a further minimum of 15m in depth. This would represent a distance of circa 30m, which is beyond the general 21m back to back recommended within the Council's Design Guide. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the privacy of the occupiers of Beech Green.
- 3.5 The objector has also raised concerns about the impact of external lighting. It is considered appropriate to impose a condition requiring the submission of the details of external lighting to ensure that it is appropriate without resulting in unacceptable levels of light pollution to neighbouring occupiers.
- 3.6 Regard should also be given to the occupiers of properties in Beecroft Way, to the south of the site. The block to the south of the site would have no second floor accommodation, but would have two first floor flats with south facing balconies.
- 3.7 However, there would be a distance of at least 15m between the balconies and the edge of the application site. The rear gardens of properties on Beecroft Way which could be affected are between 18m and 23m in length. The balconies would be to the rear of the flats with their front doors located on the northern elevation. The back to back distance in this instance is between 33m and 38m,

which is well beyond the generally accepted distance of 21m set out in the Design Guide. It is thus considered that the proposal would also not have an unacceptable impact on the privacy of the occupiers of dwellings in Beecroft Way.

- 3.8 The demolition of the existing building, for which consent is also sought, may cause a level of disturbance to residents. A Construction Environmental Method Statement has been submitted and reviewed by the Public Protection Officer, who has found it acceptable. It is considered appropriate to impose a condition requiring the development to take place in accordance with this statement.
- 3.9 Subject to the imposition of the above mentioned conditions, it is considered that the proposal complies with sections 7 and 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

4. Highways and Parking

- 4.1 Whilst the scheme does not meet the Council's parking standards for traditional residential accommodation, the application was accompanied by a detailed transport statement which has analysed existing and proposed demand. Having regard to this statement, the Highways Officer has concluded that the proposed 21 parking spaces are sufficient in this context. A parking space is also provided for a minibus / ambulance.
- 4.2 In respect of the proposed highways conditions, the plans identify an area for cycle parking, but do not provide details as to the nature of the cycle parking or the number of cycles that could be accommodated and it is considered appropriate to impose a condition requiring the submission of more details in regards to cycle parking.
- 4.3 The other suggested conditions relate to construction worker parking and road cleanliness. These aspects have already been addressed in the Construction Environmental Method Statement and accompanying Traffic Management Plan and therefore a condition requiring the implementation of the measures within these documents is considered to be more appropriate.

5. Landscaping, Ecology and SuDS

5.1 Landscaping and Trees

Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan sets out that trees should be retained and protected and that hard and soft landscaping appropriate in scale and design to the development should be provided.

- 5.2 In terms of landscaping and the public realm the application proposes to:
- reinforce boundaries with native hedge and tree planting to mitigate views between properties and enhance the green character of the locality;
 - introduce flush pedestrian footways to enable access for all and surface materials to assist orientation and highlight entrances;
 - establish a formal central space which links the two ends of Croft Green and frames a vista to the new building; and
 - retain a number of the best existing trees and introduce new tree avenues to frame the space and low level planting which contributes to local biodiversity

and minimises ongoing maintenance and management.

- 5.3 A number of existing trees are proposed to be retained with some being removed and a number of new trees planted to compensate for the loss of the trees and to form part of the substantial redesigned landscaping scheme.
- 5.4 The Tree & Landscape Officer has raised concerns about the removal of four category B Lawson Cypress trees from the Central Green area and also the choices of selected planting. This has been fed back to the applicant and a revised scheme showing the retention of two of the four trees and a revised planting list are expected. An update will be provided on the Late Sheet along with recommended conditions from the Tree & Landscape Officer.
- 5.5 In accordance with the recommendations of the Tree & Landscape Officer and the Landscape Officer, a condition is recommended for the submission and implementation of a detailed hard and soft landscaping plan.
- 5.6 Subject to the above mentioned amendment and condition, overall it is considered that the proposed landscaping would improve the quality of the green space within the Croft Green development and would provide opportunities for residents with appropriate landscaped areas for different formal and informal uses. The proposal would therefore comply with policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review in relation to the provision and protection of landscaping and trees.
- 5.7 Ecology
The application is accompanied by an ecological report which concludes that the site is considered to be of limited ecological value. Floral species found are common to such a man-managed habitat and offer limited scope for any notable species. The site's urban context also limits its use by fauna with some scope for nesting birds within the shrub borders and scrub areas. Owing to the site's limited ecological value the only mitigation recommendation for this site is with respect to nesting birds.
- 5.8 The Council's Ecologist is content that the proposal, which includes new planting and the inclusion of bird boxes on existing trees on the northern boundary of the site, would deliver net gain in biodiversity on the site in accordance with Section 11 of the NPPF.
- 5.9 SuDS
The application is accompanied by a Surface Water Drainage Strategy which identifies opportunities for a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS). In response, the Council's SuDS team have recommended the imposition of conditions requiring the submission and implementation of a detailed system, including details of ongoing maintenance arrangements. It is considered that the concerns of the Green Infrastructure Officer can be considered as part of any submission to discharge the recommended conditions.

6. Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

- 6.1 The scheme has been designed to deliver high sustainability standards including 10% of the energy consumed being produced by low or zero carbon technologies.

- 6.2 Energy efficiency measures are key to reducing energy consumption and emissions. Passive solar design has been incorporated where possible including large windows favouring daylight levels and shade based on the orientation of the building; high thermal performance of materials, best-practice in heating controls; energy efficient light fittings and cross ventilation across the majority of dwellings.
- 6.3 Water efficient fixtures are also proposed to ensure that the designed water consumption per person is less than 110 litres per day.

7. Other Considerations

7.1 Human Rights issues:

The proposal raises no Human Rights issues.

7.2 Equality Act 2010:

As the building would be accessible to the public the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 need to be met. The building has been designed as sheltered accommodation for older people who may have a range of different medical needs. The design and access statement sets out the measures which have been incorporated to enable inclusive access which are:

- level access at all external entrance and exits;
- level access gardens with suitable external finishes;
- internal corridors of sufficient width to allow two wheelchairs to pass at regular intervals;
- flats designed to be wheelchair adaptable with level access showers etc.;
- main circulation routes fitted with continuous handrails;
- lift access to upper floors; and
- public areas of the building designed in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be APPROVED subject to the following:

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 All construction activities shall take place in accordance with the Construction Environmental Method Statement Rev B dated November 2016, the Traffic Management Plan dated 7th November 2016 and the Method Statement dated 7th November 2016, all by Glenman Corporation.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential premises.
(Sections 7 and 11, NPPF and Policy BE8 SBLPR).

- 3 No hard or soft landscaping works shall take place until a landscaping scheme to include all hard and soft landscaping, level changes, boundary treatments and a scheme for landscape maintenance for a period of five years following the implementation of the landscaping scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented by the end of the full planting season immediately following the completion and/or first use of any separate part of the development (a full planting season means the period from October to March). The trees, shrubs and grass shall subsequently be maintained in accordance with the approved landscape maintenance scheme and any which die or are destroyed during this period shall be replaced during the next planting season.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable standard of landscaping and to enhance the amenities of the area.

(Sections 7 & 11, NPPF and Policy BE8, SBLPR)

- 4 **No development shall commence until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the agreed Surface Water Drainage Strategy and SuDS Report (October 2016) and an assessment of the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall also include details of how the system will be constructed, including any phasing, and how it will be managed and maintained after completion. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved final details before the development is completed, and shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan.**

Reason: The condition must be discharged pre-commencement to ensure that the approved system will function to a satisfactory minimum standard of operation and maintenance and prevent the increased risk of flooding both on and off site, in accordance with para 103 of the NPPF.

(Section 10, NPPF and Policy BE8, SBLPR)

- 5 No dwelling shall be occupied until the developer has formally submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority a finalised 'Maintenance and Management Plan' for the entire surface water drainage system, inclusive of any adoption arrangements and/or private ownership or responsibilities, and that the approved surface water drainage scheme has been correctly and fully installed as per the final approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the implementation and long term operation of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) is in line with what has been approved.

(Written Statement HCWS161)

- 6 The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or brought into use until the details of any external lighting to be installed on the site, including the design of the lighting unit, any supporting structure and the extent of the area to be illuminated, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external lighting and any means of light shielding required shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the visual amenity of the site and its surrounding area.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR & Section 11, NPPF)

- 7 All external works hereby permitted shall be carried out in materials to match as closely as possible in colour, type and texture, those of the existing buildings.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development by ensuring that the development hereby permitted is finished externally with materials to match the existing building in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.
(Policy BE8 SBLPR & Section 7, NPPF)

- 8 The dwellings hereby approved shall not be occupied until details of the bin storage/collection areas have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the bin storage/collection areas have been implemented in accordance with the approved details. The bin storage/collection areas shall be retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of amenity.
(Section 7, NPPF and Policy BE8, SBLPR)

- 9 No part of the development hereby approved shall be first occupied until at least four bird boxes have been installed to the trees in the northern part of the site.

Reason: To provide new habitats for bats and birds and to enhance the biodiversity of the site.
(Section 11, NPPF).

- 10 The development shall not be occupied or brought into use until the parking scheme for cars and scooters shown on Drawing No AA5060-2009 has been completed. The scheme shall thereafter be retained for this purpose.

Reason: To ensure provision for car parking clear of the highway and the provision of adequate cycle and scooter parking/storage.
(Policy BE8, SBLPR and Section 4, NPPF)

- 11 No part of the development hereby permitted shall be first occupied until details of secure cycle storage for residents and cycle parking for visitors have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the said storage and parking have been constructed in accordance with the approved details. The storage and parking shall thereafter be retained for this purpose.

Reason: To ensure the provision of cycle parking to meet the needs of occupiers of the proposed development in the interests of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.
(Section 4, NPPF)

- 12 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers AA5060-

2001, AA5060-2002, AA5060-2003, AA5060-2009, AA5060-2010 A, AA5060-2011 A, AA5060-2012 A and AA5060-2013 A.

Reason: To identify the approved plans and to avoid doubt.

INFORMATIVE NOTES TO APPLICANT

1. In accordance with Article 35 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the reason for any condition above relates to the Policies as referred to in the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (SBLPR) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.
3. The applicants attention is drawn to their responsibility under The Equality Act 2010 and with particular regard to access arrangements for the disabled.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that service providers must think ahead and make reasonable adjustments to address barriers that impede disabled people.

These requirements are as follows:

- Where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage;
- Where a physical feature puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage to avoid that disadvantage or adopt a reasonable alternative method of providing the service or exercising the function;
- Where not providing an auxiliary aid puts disabled people at a substantial disadvantage to provide that auxiliary aid.

In doing this, it is a good idea to consider the range of disabilities that your actual or potential service users might have. You should not wait until a disabled person experiences difficulties using a service, as this may make it too late to make the necessary adjustment.

For further information on disability access contact:

The Centre for Accessible Environments (www.cae.org.uk)
Central Bedfordshire Access Group (www.centralbedsaccessgroup.co.uk)

4. Anglian Water has assets close to or crossing this site or there are assets subject to an adoption agreement. Therefore the site layout should take this into account and accommodate those assets within either prospectively adoptable highways or public open space. If this is not practicable then the sewers will need to be diverted at the developers cost under Section 185 of the Water Industry Act 1991. or, in the case of apparatus under an adoption agreement, liaise with the owners of the apparatus. It should be noted that the

diversion works should normally be completed before development can commence.

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 6, Article 35

The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage and during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

DECISION

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