

Item No. 14**SCHEDULE B**

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/09/00691/FULL
LOCATION	Flats 14 To 19, Gloucester Court, Ampthill
PROPOSAL	Full: New Single storey front porch and single storey Bike hut and formation of vehicular access onto Dunstable Street.
PARISH	Ampthill
WARD	Ampthill
WARD COUNCILLORS	Councillors G Summerfield & P Duckett
CASE OFFICER	Sarah Fortune
DATE REGISTERED	21 May 2009
EXPIRY DATE	16 July 2009
APPLICANT	Grand Union Housing Association
AGENT	Kyle Smart Associates
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Councillor Summerfield - highways issues relating to new entrance/exit
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Full Conditional Approval

Site Location:

The site is located on the west side of Dunstable Street in the built up area of Ampthill in the Conservation Area. It supports an unlisted, large former house now used as flats as well as three newer blocks of flats. There are houses to the north, south and west and a large Listed building (formerly a residential home and now converted into flats known as 'The Cedars') and the Town Library on the other side of Dunstable Street

The Application:

This application is for the erection of a single storey porch onto the north elevation of the block of flats numbered 14 to 19 - which is a large detached Victorian property. There is to be a bin store built on the south boundary of the site where it adjoins the boundary of the terrace of three houses to the immediate south. It is also proposed to construct a new vehicular access onto Dunstable Street - towards the south end of the site frontage. The existing parking area is to be regularized - with disabled spaces provided.

RELEVANT POLICIES:**National Policies (PPG & PPS)**

PPS3 Housing
PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment

Regional Spatial Strategy

East of England Plan (May 2008)

Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (March 2005)

Bedfordshire Structure Plan 2011

Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan First Review 2005 Policies

LPS1 Selected Settlements
CHE11 New development in Conservation Areas.
DPS16 Trees and hedgerows
DPS5 Protection of amenity
DPS6 Criteria for Extensions

Supplementary Planning Guidance

2005 Ampthill Conservation Area document

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Planning History - relevant

81/251/C Full: Conversion of existing house to 6 flats.
Granted: 15/09/1963

Representations: (Parish & Neighbours)

Ampthill Town Council Recommend refusal. Concerns over access onto Flitwick Road and additional traffic close to Station Road roundabout, intensification of a busy roundabout, safety issues as this is a 'Safer Route to School' and the loss of trees will be detrimental to the street scene.

Neighbours 3 Gloucester Court: No objection to present scheme.

App Adv

Consultations/Publicity responses

Highways Officer No objections subject to conditions and comments.

Tree Officer No objections subject to comments.

Disability Officer No comments.

Ampthill and District Preservation Society No objection to principle but wish to see any removed trees replaced and express concern that new access is close to others.

Determining Issues

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Background and Policy
2. Siting and Design in relation to visual amenities of area
3. Impact on amenities of neighbours
4. Access and Parking
5. Impact on trees and other considerations

Considerations

1. Background and Policy

The application site comprises of Gloucester Court which is a retirement home complex in the centre of Ampthill. It consists of 18 self contained flats in four separate buildings. 12 of these flats are contained in three buildings which were purpose built for the elderly in the 1970/1980's. These flats still provide satisfactory accommodation for their elderly tenants. The fourth building the subject of this planning application - is a Victorian, former large single house which been converted to 6 flats under planning permission ref; 81/251/C. No restrictive conditions were attached to the planning permission for the flats in respect of their occupancy.

The flats in the Victorian property are becoming increasingly difficult to let. Aragon Housing Association have therefore decided to refurbish them and change their internal layout and will subsequently offer them to people with learning disabilities. The ground floor flats are wheelchair accessible and one of the flats on the first floor is to be designated for staff.

As part of this refurbishment it is proposed to build a small single storey extension onto the north elevation for a new lobby. It is also proposed to build a bin store - on the south boundary of the site - as well as a cycle store for the residents of the flats. The parking area is to be laid out for 11 spaces and 8 of these are to be for the residents of the refurbished flats. A new access is to be created in the site frontage and this involves the removal of two trees on the frontage.

In view of the fact that there is no change of use involved in the proposal since the flats are to be retained as flats and there are no objections to the principle of extensions and alterations to existing buildings in the built up area of the town the main considerations are whether the size and design of the alterations is in keeping with the buildings and the area generally and whether the proposed access and parking area is acceptable in highway terms including consideration regarding the loss of trees along the road frontage.

2. Siting and Design in relation to visual amenities of area

The lobby extension is to be 2.5 metres in length, 2 metres in depth with a lean-to roof having a ridge height of 4 metres. It is to be built in materials to match the existing building. A revised plan has been submitted which shows a lowered roof porch that will avoid any clashes with first floor windows. The bin

store is to be 4 metres in length and 2.5 metres in depth and this is to be sited so that it is about 3 metres from the end of terrace house to the south. It is to be built in brick. There is also to be a small brick built cycle store on the west boundary of the site.

It is felt that these structures and the extension are in keeping with the character of the building and the visual amenities of the area generally and will not harm the Conservation Area. It is essential that the finishes of the developments are in keeping with the existing buildings and the character of the Conservation Area and conditions are to be attached requiring details of materials finishes. They accord with policies CHE11 and DPS6 of the Mid Beds Local Plan First Review 2005 and PPG15

3. Impact on amenities of neighbours

The bin store is to be about 3 metres from the end -of - terrace house to the south. Whilst there will be some loss of outlook to these neighbours it is felt that there are insufficient amenity grounds to refuse the planning application. The cycle store is to be on the shared boundary with 3 Station Road but it is at sufficient distance so as not to result in undue loss of amenity to the occupiers of this house. The extension for the lobby is well away from any neighbours.

With regard to the new access this will reduce the impact on the amenities of the terraced houses to the south - who at present share their access with this 'flatted' site.

4. Access and parking

A new access is to be created in the site frontage involving the removal of two trees. There are to be 11 parking spaces in the parking area to the front of the site covered with grey and red pavers and also a cycle stand on the west boundary. The highways officer has advised that Visibility at the new access falls within highway land and can be provided as required to meet highway standards. The area of the access that is within the public highway needs to be surfaced in bituminous macadam and not block paved. This can be conditioned on any planning permission.

With regard to parking spaces the site already has a hardsurfaced area for parking. The application proposes to regularize this area and whereas there are now 9 parking spaces there are to be 9 ordinary spaces and two larger disabled bays. The highways officer is of the view that this number is acceptable as long as the occupation of the flats is restricted to the elderly or for those with disabilities. The applicants have advised that Aragon Housing Association are to enter into a nominations agreement with Central Beds for the allocation of the properties in Block 14 - 19. The other flats are to continue to provide homes for elderly people.

In view of the fact that there are to be two more spaces for this overall site of the four blocks of flats as part of this planning application there are no grounds to object to the numbers of parking spaces being made available to this proposed rearranged parking area since the number of flats is to be unchanged - and occupancy for flats 14 to 19 is to change from the elderly to those with disabilities.

The applicant has submitted revised plans which show that the length of the car parking spaces meets highways standards. There are no objections to the cycle provision. The revised plans also rectify some minor errors made on the original submissions and now they indicate a 4 cycle store.

The highways officer is aware that this is on a 'Safer Routes to School' route but has no objections to raise.

5. Trees and other Considerations

With regard to the removal of the two trees on the frontage to the site to create the new vehicular access the tree officer had advised that he has no objections to the proposal but notes that the plans are not accurate in that all of the trees on the frontage of the site are not shown and the plans fail to show that the hedgerow continues under the line of four marked trees at the proposed entrance and would also be removed. Revised plans have been submitted by the applicant which clarify these matters and any comments from the tree officer on these will be reported to the Planning Committee. The applicant advises that they are of the view that the plans showing the trees and hedges are accurate as they have only shown those which are within their site boundary. Conditions are to be attached to any consent to protect the trees and hedges that are to be retained.

There is to be further planting within and around the site in the form of trees to the north and west boundaries and further shrub planting and grassed areas within the site will help to soften the appearance of the blocks of flats and improve the visual appearance of the site generally within the Conservation Area. This meets Local Plan policies and PPG15. (The revised plan shows that the tree on Station Road is to be retained.)

There are no drainage objections and the access officer is not raising any comments.

Conclusions

In view of the fact that the building is already in use for flats and this is to continue, the size and design of the extension and bin store and cycle parking areas are acceptable and will not detract from the character of the building itself or the Conservation Area generally, there are no objections from the highways officer to the new access and the parking provision, the tree officer is not raising any objections to the removal of some trees and hedge to create the access and no other objections have been received the application is recommended for approval as being in compliance with policies DPS5, DPS6, DPS16 and CHE11 of the Mid Beds Local Plan First Review 2005 as well as PPS3 and PPG15

- 1 The development hereby approved shall be commenced within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which is designed to ensure that a planning permission does not continue in existence indefinitely if the development to which it relates is not carried out.

- 2 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 building.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development by ensuring that the development hereby permitted is finished externally with materials to match/complement the existing building(s) and the visual amenities of the locality.

- 3 The permission shall extend only to the application as amended by plans dated 24/06/2009

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is implemented in accordance with the plans formally approved by the Local Planning Authority.

- 4 Before the premises are occupied all on site vehicular areas shall be surfaced in a manner to the Local Planning Authority's approval so as to ensure satisfactory parking of vehicles outside highway limits. The area of the access which is within the public highways needs to be surfaced in bituminous macadam and not block paved. Arrangements shall be made for surface water from the site to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge into the highway.

Reason: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and of the premises.

- 5 The entrance and parking area shall be constructed using a "no-dig" method of construction as outlined in Arboricultural Practice Note no.1 (Driveways close to trees).

Reason: To ensure the protection of trees and hedgerows to be retained, and in particular to avoid unnecessary damage to their root systems.

- 6 Apart from the provision of the new vehicular access no trees, shrubs or hedges existing on the site shall be removed or cut down without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the existing trees, shrubs and hedges on the site in the interest of visual amenity.

- 7 A scheme for replacement tree planting including number, location, size, species and a planting and maintenance schedule shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any felling takes place. Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the site and the area generally.

- 8 Replacement planting in accordance with approved details shall take place as soon as practicable and in any event within six months of the felling being carried out. The replacement planting shall be maintained for a period of three years beginning with the date of the felling operation and during this period any trees that die or become diseased shall be replaced with trees of the same size and species.

Reason: In order to ensure that the planting is carried out within a reasonable period in the interest of the visual amenities of the area.

Decision

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