

Item No. 14

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/14/04056/FULL
LOCATION	22 - 38 Croft Green, Dunstable, LU6 1EG
PROPOSAL	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
PARISH	Dunstable
WARD	Dunstable Northfields
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Murray & Mrs Coleman
CASE OFFICER	Vicki Davies
DATE REGISTERED	16 October 2014
EXPIRY DATE	15 January 2015
APPLICANT	Central Bedfordshire Council
AGENT	PRP Architects
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE RECOMMENDED DECISION	The applicant is Central Bedfordshire Council and objections have been made to the application.
	Full Application – Recommended for Approval

Reasons for 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 Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review 2004, Policies 4, 43, 47, 48, 57 & 59 of the emerging Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire, the Local Transport Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework. It is further in conformity with the technical guidance Design in Central Bedfordshire, A Guide for Development (2014).

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 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 (road).

The Application:

The application seeks consent for the demolition of the existing sheltered housing (bedsit) Nos 22-38 Croft Green and re-provision 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 23 new flats, representing an increase in provision of 14 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 14 x 1 bedroom apartments with a floorspace of 54m² and 9 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 re-provide 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, managers office, refuse store (accessed externally only) 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	5	2	7
First floor level	6	4	10
Second floor level	3	3	6
<i>Total</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>= 23 flats</i>

All flats would have their own front door which would be recessed providing an area which could be personalised. This arrangement would be achieved by using open colonnades at ground floor level and open gallery walkways on the upper floors.

An energy centre has also been proposed within the scheme to provide centralised heating and hot water for the new building.

The energy centre and overspill scooter/cycle store is proposed to be located in the southern corner of the site and would be enclosed with screen fencing and a roof.

Refuse would be stored in an externally accessed bin store located on the front of the new building with two other bin store areas located on the opposite side of Croft Green (road) to serve the existing bungalows.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 1 - Building a strong, competitive economy
Section 6 - Delivering a wide choice of quality homes
Section 7 - Requiring good design

South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review

The NPPF advises of the weight to be attached to existing local plans for plans adopted prior to the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, as in the case of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review. Due weight can be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. It is considered that the following policies are broadly consistent with the Framework with the exception of policy T10, and significant weight should be attached to them.

SD1 Keynote Policy
BE8 Design Considerations
T10 Controlling Parking in New Developments
R12 Protecting Recreational Open Space

Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire - Revised Pre-Submission May 2014

Policy 1 : Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy 4 : Settlement Hierarchy
Policy 19 : Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy
Policy 22: Leisure and Open Space Provision
Policy 25 : Functioning of the Network
Policy 27 : Parking
Policy 28: Transport Assessments
Policy 29: Housing Provision
Policy 30: Housing Mix
Policy 31: Supporting an Ageing Population
Policy 32: Lifetime Homes
Policy 34: Affordable Housing
Policy 43: High Quality Development

Policy 48: Adaptation
Policy 49: Mitigating Flood Risk
Policy 57: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy 58: Landscape
Policy 59: Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows

Having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, weight is given to the policies contained within the emerging Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire, which is consistent with the NPPF. The draft Development Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State on 24th October 2014.

Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Strategic Sites and Policies - adopted January 2014

Waste Strategic Policy WSP 5 - Including waste management in new built developments

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Development

The Central Bedfordshire Council Transport Strategy - Local Transport Plan (April 2011)

Planning History

None relevant to this application.

Representations:

(Parish & Neighbours)

Dunstable Town Council No objection but have concerns regarding the size of the accommodation and the number of units on the site.

Neighbours One letter of objection has been received from the residents of 60 Beecroft Way to the south of the site.

The objections are as follows:
Building two storey accommodation with balconies at the back of my home will take away my privacy as residents on the first floor will be able to see straight into my home. You have made no mention of residents in Beecroft Way as you have in Beech Green yet we are overlooked too. It would be easy to reduce that block to single storey whilst still achieving an economical business case for the overall build. We also object to a communal refuse area being placed at the bottom of our garden as the smell in the summer will be unbearable and will affect our ability to sit in our garden.

An anonymous objection has also been submitted and raises concerns regarding impact on privacy and the future development of the site.

Consultations/Publicity responses

Highways Development
Control

Response dated 7 November 2014.
(Case Officer comments in italics)

The proposal is to demolish an existing residential elderly person home and replace it with 23 apartments for the elderly (sheltered housing). This is within what the applicant classes as an existing complex where 24 bungalows are to remain hence bringing the site up to 45 units. The proposed parking provision is for 30 parking spaces. This parking provision is below the authority's parking standard and it will need to be proven that this will be adequate which I doubt. This can be done by determining the use from the existing residents in the bungalows.

[The level of car parking provision would be 39 spaces for the development as a whole plus a minibus or ambulance space, this level of provision is in line with the LTP.]

The roads serving these bungalows are private however it is not clear if a HGV can continue round and re-enter the public highway without having to turn as the bend will be a little tighter.

There is neither provision for cycle parking or storage and this will need to be reconsidered.

[Cycle parking and storage is shown on the plans and would include internal and external cycle parking provision.]

Further, considering that the complex is for the elderly and that there is insufficient parking numbers; there is no provision for electric buggies

The proposal is also to propose some crossing points at Croft Green which is an aspiration by the architect to link both sides of the site. This will have to be subject to condition and to Highway Authority standard.

The refuse storage point is too far from the collection point and this will need to be reconsidered.

In conclusion; while I am not opposed to the proposal I consider that the following issues will need to be addressed before planning permission is to be considered:-

- Parking provision for the existing and proposed residential units;

- Evidence that there is adequate space for a HGV to enter; manoeuvre and re-enter the highway in forward gear
- Provision for cycle parking and storage should also be proven

If these matters are not adequately dealt with then I would be willing to offer a reason for refusal.

[Additional details have been submitted to address the officer's concerns however comments on the further information have not yet been provided but will be reported on the late sheet.]

Landscape Officer

Site boundaries: The repairs to fencing and additional tree planting along the north-east site boundary with properties on Beech Green is a positive measure to increase privacy for all residents. It may be beneficial to consider the condition of the boundaries of the site which are not included in this application but may benefit from enhancement. Similarly rear gardens of residents may benefit from 'make overs'.

Surface water drainage: I couldn't find any information regarding how surface water runoff is to be managed - attenuated and filtrated. SuDS must be considered and included in relation to run off from roofs and other impermeable surfaces. Given the site includes extensive areas of soft landscaping I suggest there is ample opportunity to include SuDS features including rills, swales, filter strips, rainwater gardens, bog gardens.

Irrigation of planting: Given the areas shown for shrub, herbaceous and seasonal planting I suggest there is need to consider capturing rain water runoff and store for irrigation purposes.

Planting areas: The mix of different planting character areas add interest to the scheme but some appear quite compartmentalised and not easily accessible to all residents, e.g the wildflower meadow is within a small, specific location. It may be of greater benefit to increase areas of wild flower meadows in to the main lawn area, include native bulbs and native spring flowers within the lawns and operate a different mowing regime in parts of the main garden area.

Such planting characters can enhance biodiversity interest.

Many people enjoy feeding birds - bird feeding centres across the communal garden areas could be a feature

and focus for the residents.

It may be opportune to include planting areas for residents to cultivate their own flowers, fruit and vegetables. Raised planters can assist people to garden who otherwise find it difficult to bend and kneel or are more dependent on wheelchair or other mobility support. Planting at different levels is also interesting and engaging.

Design features: The main lawn area is shown as including a sculptural feature; whilst realising the desire to open up the lawn area to reconnect the two ends of the site it may be that more features could be included, perhaps bespoke seating or seats, a shelter, pergola, etc.

Similarly lighting can be a design feature within the landscaping, as soft background colours as well as providing lit routes and pathways.

Tree and Landscape
Officer

Response dated 30 October 2014.
(Case Officer comments in italics)

I refer to my Pre-Application (CB/14/02919/PAPC) consultation response on the 22nd August 2014, when it was recommended that PRP "identify the best specimens that can make a positive contribution to amenity, and yet be still successfully integrated into the design aspirations of the scheme, thereby assisting in any final design proposal".

It is now welcomed that this application is being supported by a tree survey report prepared by CBA Trees (Arboricultural Consultancy). Unfortunately, what is also noted is that the proposed new pathway and car park layout do not appear to recognise the constraints highlighted by the tree survey report, ie the Root Protection Areas, as identified on the CBA Trees plan reference CBA10277.01 TSP "Tree Survey Plan (with Root Protection Areas)".

There is clear encroachment into the Root Protection Area of these trees by the construction of new pathways and car park areas, as shown on the Block plan produced by PRP (drawing no. AA5060-2002). The Local Planning Authority would need to be satisfied that these retained trees can be successfully integrated into the design. The successful retention of these trees is not impossible in the given positions, but will require the use of extensive "no-dig" cellular confinement systems needed for both car parking areas and pathways, which will mitigate root damage when positioning these within the RPA of the

retained trees. However, this will result in changes in surface levels and methods of working that need to be carefully assessed to be compatible with the design.

In this respect, the designer needs to have duly recognised the technical difficulties that are needed to be overcome, which are too significant to be just made the subject of a planning approval condition. This requires that CBA provide further technical support to demonstrate that these issues have been duly considered through an appropriate Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, and that the architect can then demonstrate that they have been successfully incorporated into the design, and is fully aware of the construction implications and cost.

I also refer to the previous request to carefully choose tree species to help reduce future nuisance, especially recognising the end-user. Therefore, I am concerned that the choice of tree species, as shown on page 44 "Indicative plant list" (Trees) of the Design and Access Statement, includes many species completely inappropriate for the proposed position for new tree planting, as shown on the "Landscape Proposal" drawing prepared by PRP (Dwg No. AA5060/2009).

The indicative plant list includes *Quercus ilex*, which is a large, evergreen tree with a dense, dark and overbearing canopy, continually shedding its leaves all year round, and often the cause of complaints. Also, the Common Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) forms a large tree with an aggressive root system that can damage pathway surfacing, and is a species of tree unsuitable for the urban environment.

I would reiterate that poor choice of tree species will lead to greatly increased conflict with the nuisance aspect of trees and would lead to continual calls for premature pruning. *Quercus robur* (English Oak), *Prunus avium* 'Plena' (a double flowered form of the Wild Cherry) and *Liriodendron tulipifera* all eventually form large, spreading trees, which is contrary to the design requirements as stipulated in the section "Planting and biodiversity" on page 44 of the Design and Access Statement.

To overcome this, and still meet the aspirations of the original planting concept, it is suggested that fastigiate cultivars of native trees are used instead, using cultivars such as *Acer campestre* 'Queen Elizabeth', *Carpinus betulus* 'Frans Fontaine', *Fagus sylvatica* 'Dawyck', *Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata' and *Betula pendula* 'Fastigiata'. Fastigiate cultivars are forms with a relatively narrow,

upswept habit of growth that greatly reduces the potential canopy conflict and the need for remedial pruning work.

[An Arboricultural Report including measures demonstrating how the retained trees would be protected and how development would take place within the root protection areas has been submitted, however at the time of writing the Tree and Landscape Officers comments have not been received, they will be reported on the late sheet.]

Ecology

Having read through the submitted documents I have no objection to the proposals but would support the comments made by my landscape colleague regarding SuDS and planting. I also note the recommendation made in the Ecological Assessment for the inclusion of bird boxes. As the NPPF calls for development to deliver a net gain for biodiversity the use of integral bird bricks would contribute to the overall ecological enhancement opportunities.

Housing Development Officer

I support this application as the proposed scheme is 100% affordable. The proposed development will provide a new high quality sheltered housing scheme for older people which is a key objective for the Council.

Leisure

Children's Play: As this development is for older people there is no requirement for play facilities / contributions.

Outdoor Sport: The proposed on-site garden and green facilities illustratively indicate that there is some opportunity for the residents to undertake some informal physical activity. For this reason and because the proposed residents are unlikely to use outdoor pitch sports, no facilities or contributions are sought.

Informal/Amenity space: The proposed layout indicates the inclusion of a variety of green spaces for the use/benefit of residents. For this reason no contributions are sought.

Indoor Sport & Leisure Centres: Facilities/activities provided at the leisure centre are available for/applicable to the intended residents. The provision of a replacement for Dunstable Leisure Centre is a key priority for the area, therefore a contribution is sought towards Ind Sp & LC facilities in accordance with the Planning Obligations Calculator.

Public Protection Officer

I have no objections to this planning application gaining approval. However, due to the size of the development and the potential impact that the construction phase may

have on the existing residents it may be prudent to place a condition securing the submission of a Code of Construction Practice which would detail measures to be used to control and suppress dust; measures to be used to reduce the impact of noise and vibration arising from noise and vibration generating activities on site in accordance with best practice set out in BS5228:2009 'Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites' and the siting and appearance of works compounds.

Sustainable
Growth/Climate Change
Officer

Energy efficiency, low and zero carbon energy

The applicants' commitment to high energy efficiency and delivery of 10% of energy demand from renewable sources such as Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) and solar PV panels is welcomed.

The Energy Statement concludes that the development's Fabric Energy Efficiency (FEE) will be significantly better than the regulatory minimum: Target Fabric Energy Efficiency (TFEE) set in the Part L1A and L1B (2013). However figures in Table 5 show that FEE (41 kWh/m²/yr) is higher than TFEE (32 kWh/m²/yr) which if correct would indicate that the minimum regulatory fabric efficiency is not met. I would like confirmation of fabric efficiency figures and that they meet the regulatory requirements.

In regards to the ASHP, I would suggest installation of a reversible ASHP model which in addition to heating is able to provide cooling if needed in the summer months. I would also suggest a modular configuration of a plant room to ensure that the ASHPs are working with optimal efficiency. It is mentioned that two ASHP options are considered; first with communal thermal store and second with individual thermal stores; and dwellings will be heated either through low temperatures radiators or underfloor heating. Efficiency of a complete heating system (ASHP, thermal store and heat distribution) should be calculated and the best possible option taken forward.

The Energy Statement suggests that ASHP will also be used for domestic hot water within the residential part of the development. I am not sure whether this is an appropriate solution given that heat pumps operate at temperatures below 60 degrees Celsius and there is a need for secondary heating to bring the temperatures to above 60 degrees to prevent Legionella. Is ASHP the most suitable and efficient way of providing domestic hot water? I would like more information on how Legionella will be prevented and on efficiency of providing hot water

from ASHP.

Overheating

It is welcomed that most of the flats have been designed to have double aspect windows to allow cross ventilation and passive cooling. It is not clear from the submitted plans whether the loft flats have double aspect: the floorplans indicate velux windows on the north-east facing roof, but the elevation drawings do not show them. I will strongly recommend their inclusion to provide cross ventilation and reduce risk of overheating in these flats.

Most of the flats have patio / balcony doors positioned in the recess providing shading and reducing risk of overheating in the summers. Loft flats are the exception where balconies and their doors have no external shading and this combined with potentially no windows on opposite site of the flats, makes them more vulnerable to overheating. I would encourage inclusion of external shading for balconies and installation of velux windows in hallways.

The risk of summer overheating could also be reduced by installing ASHP with reverse cycle which would allow for cooling.

SuDS

There is no information provided within application documents on proposed management of surface water runoff. I fully support Landscape Officer comments on sustainable drainage. It provides opportunity to attenuate water on site and use for creation of SuDS features and irrigation of planting. Inclusion of water in gardens will have a positive impact on microclimate, reducing Urban Heat Island effect and providing habitat for biodiversity. I strongly recommend inclusion of SuDS within the scheme.

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, Parking and Sustainable Transport
5. Landscaping, Ecology and SuDS
6. Energy Efficiency and Sustainability
7. Other Issues

Considerations

1. Principle of development

The site is within the built up area of Dunstable, identified in policy 4 of the Development Strategy as a major service centre where development should be focussed. Subject to other considerations below the development is considered appropriate in this location.

As part of the Council's review of its sheltered housing provision, Croft Green has been identified as one of the five scheme to receive substantial investment and is one of the Council's top redevelopment priorities.

The Council's aspirations for the site are to develop a high quality, exemplary model of its approach to sheltered/retirement housing, as well as the regeneration of existing housing and as such this proposal is the first step in that direction.

2. Impact on the character and appearance of the area

South Bedfordshire Local Plan policy BE8 and Development Strategy policy 43 set out 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.

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.

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.

It is proposed that the footprint of the new building would follow that to be replaced with minimal additional footprints. 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 ones 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 small protrusion to the rear and an area of building which is orientated side on 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.

The building is proposed to be finished in white render, with red brick detailing and artificial slate roof with patterned red brick details, aluminium timber composite windows dark grey in colour and vertical metal railings also dark grey in colour.

A bin store and energy centre is proposed in the southern corner of the site, it is indicated that the store would be timber clad with a low pitched roof.

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.

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 policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan and policy 43 of the Development Strategy and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

3. Impact on residential amenity

South Bedfordshire Local Plan policy BE8 and Development Strategy policy 43 set out that the amenities of surrounding properties and their occupiers must be respected.

One objection has been received to the proposal which raises concerns about the impact the proposal would have on the privacy of the occupants of 60 Beecroft Way to the south of the site. The specific concern relates to the overlooking which could occur from the first floor balconies on the block of the building facing south.

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 Design Guide sets out in section 5 that *"the achievement of absolute visual privacy is not usually possible and is not necessarily desirable, as it would reduce social contact and could lead to a feeling of insecurity. In order to ensure visual privacy back to back distances will be enforced. In conventional suburban environments, a "rule of thumb" of approximately 21 metres distance between the rear of one 2 storey property and the rear of another facing it (at first floor level in both instances), is an acceptable norm, but there may be circumstances where lower distances are acceptable."* 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.

The rear projection of the building would be 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. 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 again is beyond the general 21m back to back distance set out in the Design Guide.

Concern was also raised by a resident on Beecroft that the communal bin store would be located at the bottom of their garden and that smells in the summer would be unacceptable. Amendments to the scheme have led to the bin store being relocated and this concern has therefore been addressed.

Overall it is considered that there may be some adverse impact on the privacy of the residents of occupants on Beech Green and Beecroft Way however the impact has been minimised as far as possible and the scheme is considered to be acceptable.

The demolition of the existing building, for which consent is also sought, may cause a level of disturbance to residents. The Public Protection Officer has requested a condition requiring the submission of a construction code of conduct and it is considered that this should also include details of how the demolition would be undertaken to minimise impacts on local residents. It is considered that the demolition could be undertaken in a manner which would minimise adverse affects on the occupants of nearby dwellings and that the proposed condition can adequately deal with this matter.

It is considered that the proposal complies with policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan and policy 43 of the Development Strategy and the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide.

4. Highways, Parking and Sustainable Transport

The level of car parking on the site is currently low and existing residents often park on the green area or mount the pavement causing a blockage to the footpath and road.

The existing sheltered housing provision with the bungalows is divided by Croft Green (road) and one of the aims of the scheme is to seek to integrate the two sides. It is therefore proposed that a raised platform with a striped footpath be installed on the road to form an identified crossing point and link. Although this would not constitute a zebra crossing, it is considered that given the low traffic speed in the area, limited to 20mph, and the low traffic levels that this would be sufficient.

The Local Transport Plan appendix sets out that for sheltered housing 1 parking space per 2 units plus 1 space per 4 units, presumably for visitors, should be provided. The application therefore proposes a total of 39 spaces for the development as a whole plus a space for a minibus or ambulance. There are 24 existing units plus 23 proposed units which would give rise to a need for 36 parking spaces in line with the LTP levels, the scheme has however provided 39 spaces.

The application site utilised a small part of an existing Council owned garage court accessed from Beech Green. The development would result in the loss of 8 of the existing garages, however 6 are already empty and the other tenants of

the other 2 would be relocated to vacant garages in the remaining part of the garage court. The loss of the garages would therefore not lead to any additional on-street parking.

The Highway Development Control Officer had concerns about the level of parking provision as set out in his comments above. The officer had miscounted the number of spaces to be provided and has subsequently agreed that the level of parking complies with the LTP.

In addition to car parking provision has been made for 16 cycle parking spaces, some located externally to the front of the new building and some accommodated within the cycle/scooter store within the building. A scooter store including charging provision is proposed within the building, originally it was anticipated that this would accommodate 6 scooters, however following the Highway Development Control Officer's comments further provision has been made in the detached building proposed to be used partly as the energy centre. It is considered that this concern has been overcome.

The Highways Development Control Officer also requested evidence that a 11m rigid vehicle would be able to manoeuvre through the development. A plan showing the swept path of such a vehicle has been provided and is considered acceptable.

Whilst the Highways Development Control Officer had initial concerns regarding the proposal it is considered that the additional information supplied is sufficient to overcome those concerns.

5. Landscaping, Ecology and SuDS

Landscaping and Trees

Policy BE8 of the South Bedfordshire Local Plan and policies 43 and 59 of the Development Strategy set 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.

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;
- adjust external levels to remove the existing ramped access to the bungalows and improve the relationship of existing building frontages to the open space;
- 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.

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.

The Tree and Landscape Officer does however raise concerns regarding the long term survival of the retained trees due to changes in ground level and development works taking place within the root protection areas. In response to this concern an arboricultural report has been prepared and submitted which includes details of how the retained trees would be protected and how works within their root protection areas would be carried out, using no dig methods etc. It is considered that the report and revised landscaping scheme adequately address the concerns of the officer subject to appropriate conditions being added to any planning permission granted.

The Tree and Landscape Officer also raised concerns about some of the tree and plant species proposed. The species included in the planning application documentation are suggested species and therefore can be amended as appropriate. It is considered that the officers concerns can be dealt with by adding a condition requiring the submission of a detailed landscaping scheme to any planning permission granted.

The Landscape Officer suggested that it may be of benefit to increase areas of wild flower meadows in to the main lawn area, the landscaping scheme has been revised to incorporate this aspect. In addition the officer commented about the importance of lighting in landscape design. The agent has confirmed that lighting can be and will be incorporated into the landscaping design and will be a requirement of meeting "secured by design" standards.

Overall it is considered that the proposed landscaping would significantly 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 the South Bedfordshire Local Plan and Development Strategy policies in relation to provision and protection of landscaping and trees.

Ecology

In terms of Ecology policy 57 of the Development Strategy sets out that the Council will seek a net gain in biodiversity and geodiversity. 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 which may utilise the shrub borders and scrub areas.

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the application and has no objection to the proposals but would support biodiversity enhancements such as integral bird bricks.

SuDS

Development Strategy policy 48 sets out that appropriate strategies including Sustainable Drainage Schemes to prevent surface water flooding to ensure development is resilient and adaptable to the impacts arising from climate change.

The planning application does not contain any details of sustainable drainage schemes and as such the Landscape Officer and Ecologist are of the opinion that SuDS must be considered and included in relation to run off from roofs and other impermeable surfaces. Given the site includes extensive areas of soft landscaping the officers consider that there is ample opportunity to include SuDS features including rills, swales, filter strips, rainwater gardens, bog gardens.

The opportunities are available for sustainable drainage systems to be incorporated into the development however they have not been designed in at this point in time. It is considered that SuDS can be incorporated into the detailed landscape design and can be secured by condition, resulting in compliance with policy 48 of the Development Strategy.

6. Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

Development Strategy policy 47 sets out that the Council will work to mitigate the impacts of climate change and deliver sustainable and resource efficient development and that new residential development should meet higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres of water per person per day and provide 10% of their energy consumption from renewable and low carbon sources.

The scheme has been designed to deliver high sustainability standards including 10% of the energy consumed being produced by low or zero carbon technologies and achieving Code Level 4.

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.

Space and water heating would be provided by air source heat pumps, in addition a small area of photovoltaic panels could be installed on the roof to contribute to energy generation.

Building regulations currently require compliance with Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. This development is proposed to comply with Code Level 4 this involves a range of measures including:

- provision of suitable drying space and smart meters
- all external lighting designed for energy efficiency and adequately controlled
- provision of cycle parking
- water efficient fittings
- use of appropriate materials, achieving a Green Guide rating of A+ to D
- drainage strategy ensuring that post development run-off rates do not exceed pre-development levels
- appropriate waste storage space including recycling and composting provision
- site waste management plan
- dwellings designed to achieve good daylight levels in living rooms and bedrooms

- dwellings designed to Lifetime Homes Standards
- home user guide prepared and distributed to all residents
- contractors expected to register and certify site activities against the Considerate Constructors Scheme

The Climate Change Officer welcomes the measures to meet the 10% renewable energy target but does raise some practical concerns regarding the thermal performance of materials and the use of an air source heat pump for water heating. These concerns are no doubt well-founded but are not material planning considerations which should influence the determination of this application.

The proposal therefore appears to meet policy 47 of the Development Strategy in terms of resource efficiency.

Waste Management

The scheme includes an external refuse and recycling area of all residents waste. It is planned that residents (or carers) take their refuse to holding stores located within the building, the manager or other staff member would then transfer the waste to the main refuse store for collection.

The Highways Development Control Officer initially raised concerns that the bin store, located in a separate building in the southern corner of the site was too far from the road to enable waste collection. The bin store for the new building has therefore been moved and is not incorporated into the building itself, but accessed externally and would be adjacent to the highway to enable easy collection.

7. Other Issues

Consultation

During the preparation of the planning application resident and public consultation was undertaken along with pre-application discussions.

A resident consultation event took place in the residents lounge at Croft Green in July 2014. The proposed scheme designs were presented to the existing tenants to gain their feedback and to enable the architects to better understand residents aspirations for the enhancement of the external space. Existing residents wished accessibility, parking and bin storage to be improved.

A public consultation took place in the residents lounge at Croft Green in September 2014. The exhibition was a drop-in event attended by 28 local residents and local Ward Councillors. Residents were encouraged to provide written feedback so that areas of concern could be addressed in the final proposals. 6 survey forms were completed and raised concerns regarding disruption to existing residents; increased traffic; pollution; noise and that the wider site should also be redeveloped. It was in response to the final comment that the Council agreed to the landscape improvements covering the wider area of Croft Green.

Human Rights

It is not considered that the scheme raises Human Rights issues.

Equality Act

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.

Section 106

It is not considered that the proposal would place such additional strain on Council services to justify securing funding from this development, particularly given that it is a Council funded proposal and a redevelopment of an existing sheltered scheme.

Recommendation

That the planning application 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 **No development, including demolition, shall commence until a Code of Construction Practice has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and this shall detail methods that all developers, contractors and sub-contractors will employ at all times during demolition, construction and other engineering operations on the site.**

The Code of Practice shall include:

- **Measures to be used to control and suppress dust;**
- **Measures to be used to reduce the impact of noise and vibration arising from noise and vibration generating activities on site in accordance with best practice set out in BS5228:2009 'Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites'.**
- **The siting and appearance of works compounds.**

The implementation of the development shall only be undertaken in accordance with the approved Code of Practice.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential premises.

(Policy BE8 SBLPR & Policies 43 &44 DSCB).

- 3 No equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought on to the site for the purposes of development until details of substantial protective fencing for the protection of any retained trees, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the fencing has been erected in the positions shown on Drawing No. CBA/0277.03A TPP. The approved fencing shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made.**

Reason: To protect the trees so enclosed in accordance with Section 8 of BS 5837 of 2012 or as may be subsequently amended.

(Policies 43 and 59, DSCB)

- 4 No development shall take place until a landscaping scheme to include all hard and soft landscaping 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.

(Policy BE8 SBLPR & Policies 43 and 58, DSCB)

- 5 No development shall take place until a strategy of surface water drainage for the site using sustainable drainage methods has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved strategy prior to the use of the building commencing.**

Reason: To ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage are incorporated into this proposal and to enhance the amenities of the area.

(Policies 48 & 49 DSCB)

- 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 & Policies 43 & 44, DSCB)

- 7 A scheme shall be submitted for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected. The boundary treatment shall be completed in accordance with the approved scheme before the building is occupied and be thereafter retained.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenities of the locality.
(Policy BE8 & Policy 43, DSCB)

- 8 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 & Policy 43, DSCB)

- 9 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.
(Policy 43 DSCB)

- 10 The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the Tree Protection Measures set out on plan CBA/0277.03A TPP in relation to no-dig areas and areas of hand tool use.

Reason: To ensure the protection of trees and hedgerows to be retained, and to avoid unnecessary damage to their root systems.
(Policies 43 and 59, DSCB)

- 11 At least 4 bird bricks shall be incorporated into the external fabric of the building hereby permitted during construction and retained thereafter.

Reason: To provide new habitats for bats and birds and enhance the biodiversity of the site. (Policy 57 DSCB).

- 12 The development shall not be occupied or brought into use until the parking scheme for cars, cycles and scooters shown on Drawing No AA5060-2009 rev A 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.
(Policies 24 & 27, DSCB)

- 13 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 rev A, AA5060-2010 rev A, AA5060-2011, AA5060-2012, AA5060-2013 & AA5060-2015

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

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, the reason for any condition above relates to the Policies as referred to in the South Bedfordshire Local Plan Review (SBLPR) and the emerging Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire (DSCB).
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)

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012 - Article 31

Planning permission has been recommended for approval for this proposal. The Council acted pro-actively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage 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) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2012.

DECISION

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