

TWC/2021/1201

Site of former Stirchley Recreation Centre, Grange Avenue, Stirchley, Telford, Shropshire

Erection of a 67no. bed extra care home with associated open space, landscaping, car/cycle parking, service infrastructure (drainage, highway, lighting) and engineering operations \*\*\* Amended application form and ownership certificate \*\*\*

**APPLICANT**

Preferred Homes Limited

**RECEIVED**

07/01/2022

**PARISH**

Stirchley and Brookside

**WARD**

The Nedge

**AS THIS IS A MAJOR APPLICATION AND THE COUNCIL IS THE CURRENT LANDOWNER, THIS APPLICATION IS TO BE DETERMINED BY MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE.**

Online planning file:

<https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationssummary.aspx?ApplicationNumber=TWC/2021/1201>

**1.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1 It is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to conditions and informatives set out in the recommendation below.

**2.0 APPLICATION SITE**

2.1 The site is located off Grange Avenue, to the east of Stirchley Local Centre. The site is currently vacant following demolition of the former Stirchley Recreation Centre and covers an area of approximately 0.4 hectares excluding the parking facilities which form part of the existing car park. It presently comprises of hardstanding and overgrown grassland surrounded by security fencing.

2.2 The site is located within the built up area of Telford on previously developed land. There are no nearby statutorily Listed Buildings, and the site does not fall within any Conservation Areas or other formal designations.

**3.0 APPLICATION DETAILS**

3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 67no bed extra care home with associated open space, landscaping, car/cycle parking,

service infrastructure (drainage, highway, lighting) and engineering operations.

- 3.2 The application has been submitted by Preferred Homes Limited (PHL), supported by Ashbourne Capital Partners, who are a registered provider of social housing approved by the Regulator of Social Housing to develop, own and manage new Extra Care social housing for affordable rent. PHL's objective is to deliver, own and manage sustainable affordable Extra Care apartment schemes to provide more social housing suitable for the elderly to meet local needs.

#### **4.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 In 2013 (ref: TWC/2013/0661) planning permission was given to the surrounding area for the erection of a 600 place secondary school, 420 place primary school, 100 place post 16 centre, with associated leisure, PCT, Library and parish council facilities with a 32 FTE place nursery, with associated car parking and landscaping. Following completion of these works, the former Recreation Centre became redundant having been replaced by the newly constructed Leisure Centre within the school site.
- 4.2 TWC/2019/0722 - Application for prior notification of proposed demolition of the former Leisure Centre – Prior Approval Granted 01/10/2019.
- 4.3 The former leisure building was demolished in 2020 and the site has been vacant and marketed for sale, since this time.

#### **5.0 RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS**

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):  
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- 5.2 Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (TWLP) (2011-2031)  
SP1 Telford  
SP4 Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
HO1 Housing requirement  
HO4 Housing Mix  
HO7 Specialist Housing Need  
NE1 Biodiversity and geodiversity  
NE2 Trees hedgerows and woodlands  
C3 Implications of development on highways  
C5 Design of Parking  
BE1 Design Criteria  
ER8 Waste planning for residential development  
ER11 Sewerage systems and water quality

## ER12 Flood Risk Management

Homes for All: Providing Accessible, Supported and Specialise Housing in Telford and Wrekin Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – adopted January 2022.

Stirchley and Brookside Neighbourhood Plan (Application for designation approved Jan 2014)

### **6.0 NEIGHBOUR REPRESENTATIONS**

6.1 The application has been publicised through a site notice, press notice and direct neighbour notification.

6.2 The Local Planning Authority only received 1 public representation, from the neighbouring Communities Academy Trust. These comments are summarised as follows:

- No objection to the principle of this development;
- Concerns over provision of car parking and use of school car park;
- Concerns over impact on local highways network, particularly for construction traffic;
- Traffic survey considered not to be an accurate reflection of existing traffic movements with the original survey being undertaken when the school was not at full capacity due to Covid-related illnesses, and;
- On the basis of above concerns, the proposal is considered to be overdevelopment.

### **7.0 STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS**

#### **7.1 Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council (SBPC) – Object:**

Overdevelopment – building too large for the plot; impact on the environment and not utilising environmentally friendly materials; loss of green verge to frontage; would expect low-level construction heights – proposed building out of scale with surroundings; impact on local services – dentists/doctors etc; impact on highway network particularly with goods deliveries and safety of school children; insufficient parking; existing bus stop very close to exit of existing car park and causes conflict of users – proposal will exacerbate this issue; impact of noise from school/Local Centre for future residents; similar development in Randlay not proceeded following permission – concern the site will become

#### **7.2 Cllr Greg Sinclair (Ward Member) – Comment:**

Queries were raised on the discharge of foul and surface water and the potential impact on the Mad Brook; queries were also raised with respect to ownership, clarification on whether the site was brownfield or greenfield in light of the existing green verge; queried whether any public consultation had been undertaken.

7.3 **Cllr Nathan England (Ward Member) – No Comment.**

7.4 **Highways, Healthy Spaces, Ecology, Drainage, Housing, Planning Policy**  
– Support subject to conditions.

7.5 **Shropshire Fire Service – Comment:**

As part of the planning process, consideration should be given to the information contained within Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's "Fire Safety Guidance for Commercial and Domestic Planning Applications" document.

7.6 **West Mercia Police – Comment:**

General design guidance provided as an informative.

## **8.0 APPRAISAL**

8.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:

- Principle of development / Policy Background
- Design
- Impact on the amenity of adjacent properties / uses
- Highways impacts
- Other matters – Healthy Spaces, Ecology, Drainage, Community Use, Local Lettings Plan/Nominations Agreement.

### **8.2 Principle of development / Policy Background**

8.2.1 The site is located within Stirchley, adjacent the Local Centre, on previously developed land, falling within the Telford Built-up area and is therefore in principle an acceptable location for development under Policy SP1.

8.2.2 The site area is approximately 0.4ha (excluding existing car parking facility) and the proposal constitutes a 67-unit extra care home. The proposed scheme is consistent with the Council's strategic approach and its priority of increasing the supply of extra care housing. This will help to meet the projected significant increase in the need for this form of accommodation in the Borough and therefore complies with Policy HO7 and the recently adopted Homes for All SPD. Albeit as this application was submitted prior to adoption of the Homes for All SPD, it does not need to comply with this guidance.

- 8.2.3 The Council's Housing Strategy & Commissioning Manager supports the application and highlights that no such facility is currently present within the Stirchley area and this would therefore assist existing elderly residents whom wish to remain in the local area.
- 8.2.4 The proposal also supports Policy HO4 of the TWLP which promotes a mixed delivery of housing types, sizes, and tenures. The policy states that "*The Council will require major development to deliver housing that will meet the changing needs of households over time including the needs of an ageing population*".
- 8.2.5 In principle the residential development of this site is considered acceptable and in general accordance with policies set out within the TWLP.

### **8.3 Design**

- 8.3.1 As an extra care housing scheme the proposed development will provide 67 self-contained apartments in a supportive living setting with some communal facilities at ground floor. The apartments will be for affordable rent and every resident will have their own tenancy.
- 8.3.2 The apartments are designed to encourage independent living, whilst also providing care and support facilities for aging residents.
- 8.3.3 The proposal includes 61no 1-bed apartments (2persons) and 6no 3-bed apartments (3 persons), which all exceed the National Design Space Standards (NDSS), ranging from 54 to 68sqm respectively.
- 8.3.4 Each apartment will have its own living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, allowing tenants to live independently and have their own privacy. Additionally, the facility will include communal facilities internally such as a lounge and dining space, bistro, kitchen, multi-purpose flexible rooms, guest overnight accommodation, cycle and scooter parking, and staff amenity and ancillary support space. This arrangement of spaces will enable people to socialise, engage with others and participate in domestic activities such as cooking, dining together and other pursuits.
- 8.3.5 The building is proposed to be part three storey and part four storey, with the taller element focused on the northern part of the site fronting the existing car park. This allows for the creation of an internal courtyard which is well-contained by the building's form. In addition, it allows for a tapering of the building away from Grange Avenue.
- 8.3.6 The proposed buildings three-storey wing which fronts Grange Avenue (and houses the roof garden) is 12.5m and the four-storey wing (which houses the solar panels) is 13.7m.

- 8.3.7 The site was the location of the former Stirchley Leisure Centre which accommodated a substantial commercial building, and the more recently constructed Telford Park School and Leisure Centre which lies to the east, an exceeds 7.3m to ridge. Whilst the proposed building is taller than the immediately adjacent buildings, the proposed development is considered commensurate with the massing of the adjacent school/leisure facilities and provides a focal gateway building to the Stirchley Local Centre.
- 8.3.8 Whilst the site immediately adjoins a smaller scale structure, predominantly housed by a children's nursery, this existing property will be predominantly overlooking the proposed car park and garden area. There is a distance of 9.5m from the side elevation of the proposed care home to the side elevation of the nursery; with no habitable rooms directly overlooking the nursery – with these proposed windows only providing daylight to bedrooms or stairwells.
- 8.3.9 Externally, whilst there are no set amenity space standards for care homes specifically, as a general rule, the LPA would encourage communal development to offer a minimum of 30sqm per unit. Based on a 67-bed development therefore, this would equate to around 2010sqm (0.20hectares). The development provides an enclosed ornamental sensory garden of 650sqm, as well as a green roof garden equating to 660sqm, thus a total of 1310sqm. Additionally, all first, second and third floor apartments (as well as some at ground level) are provided with a small private balcony of 4.16sqm. The site also lies adjacent the Local Nature Reserve where an extensive range of public amenity space is available. As such, Officers consider that the application provides an appropriate level and quality of amenity space for the proposed end users.
- 8.3.10 The applicants have designed the outside space utilising Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) guidance to create a tranquil and safe environment, recognising key principles in their landscaping masterplan i.e:
- The garden will provide edible and medicinal herbs and flowers for sensory benefits (smell, taste and touch), a source of food for pollinators, and flowering fruit trees for seasonal interest.
  - Two pergolas will create structure and height to the garden, as well as habitat boxes. These will be complemented by bird feeder tables under the trees which will provide activities for the residents.
  - A rainwater recycling water feature will also serve as a focal point to the garden.
- 8.3.11 In addition, a green-roof garden will be provided which overlooks the adjoining Local Nature Reserve. This space will comprise raised planters with edible and ornamental shrubs, areas for wildflower grass mixes, and a seating area for residents to participate in garden activities, bird watching and possible informal exercise.
- 8.3.12 Architecturally, the development proposed is a contemporary design which endeavours to reflect upon the varied character of the locality. The building is designed in such a way to avoid a monotonous repeated elevation, but

instead the variety of colours, materials and features break up its mass to create smaller individual areas that define corners and gateways as can be seen on the submitted visuals. The palette of materials have been chosen to compliment the surrounding buildings, with particular reference to the focus school building but with careful consideration so as to ensure a residential character is achieved.

8.3.13 Elements of the façade are highlighted with an off-white brickwork to emphasise changes in height or end elevations, with a large overhanging entrance within the courtyard, to focus attention on the main building entrance.

8.3.14 Despite its large footprint, the development is considered to be an appropriate scale and appearance to complement its surroundings. The building mass is broken up with projections of contrasting materials, and balconies to provide visual relief in the building line.

8.3.15 The building has a flat roof, reflecting the nearby school building, and allows for the creation of a resident's roof garden on one part and the installation of solar panels on the other, both of which increase the scheme's sustainability credentials. Additionally, windows are generously proportioned to allow maximum daylight into resident's living quarters.

### **Sustainability**

8.3.16 The Design & Access Statement outlines the variety of sustainable credentials which the development would provide. These are summarised below:

- Maximising solar gain through site layout and building design to assist with daylight and thermal efficiency;
- The provision of solar panels on the roof of the northern four-storey building;
- Promoting the use of natural ventilation and systems that minimise potential impact on air quality;
- Promoting water conservation using rainwater harvesting/ grey-water systems and low water use appliances;
- Promoting the use of floor resilient materials, recycled materials, and the reuse of existing materials;
- Use of BREEAM and SAP assessment methods where appropriate;
- Promoting the implementation of a sustainable travel plan (e.g. safe pedestrian access and movement, provision of onsite cycle facilities and accessibility to public transport), and;
- Incorporating features which enable the building to be flexible in its use and layout with scope for future enhancement to extend the useful life of a building;
- 5no EV charging points within the central car parking area.

8.3.17 With a robust and complimentary material palette, high-quality landscaping, and sustainable design techniques, the proposed development is considered

to be enhancement to the streetscene and the character of the local area as a whole.

#### **8.4 Impact on neighbouring properties/uses**

8.4.1 Whilst notably a marked change to the outlook currently enjoyed by the surrounding buildings/occupiers, the Council consider that there is no issue of overlooking or overbearance to existing residents. Furthermore, no objections have been received by residents in this respect.

#### **8.5 Highways Impacts**

8.5.1 The application is supported by a Transport Statement (TS) and updated Traffic Survey and Transport Note received on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

8.5.2 Following a review of the submission and the comments made the Community Academies Trust whom share rights to the use of the car park, the applicants were requested to provide an updated traffic survey taken at a time/date which was agreeable with the school. Additionally, a comparative existing/proposed parking plan has been provided to demonstrate the minor re-configuration of the existing car parking layout required to facilitate the development and allow manoeuvrability of larger goods and refuse vehicles. This re-configuration does not result in the loss of any spaces within the existing car park.

8.5.3 Following receipt of this additional information, the Local Highways Authority have reviewed the application further.

8.5.4 The Local Plan parking requirement for a development of this nature is 1 space per 2 units, and 1 space per 1 staff. The proposed 67 no extra care home would therefore require a total of 38 spaces (33 for the units, and 5 staff spaces).

8.5.5 The site provides 21 spaces within the development curtilage (3 of which are disabled) as well as 4 no cycle spaces to encourage non-vehicular trips. This remaining 17 spaces are to be provided within the existing car park within the adjoining Telford Park School which the applicant has a right to access and utilise.

8.5.6 The Transport Statement provided to support the proposals includes a trip generation exercise which anticipates that peak parking demand from the development is likely to occur from 10:00–11:00am, at which time 23 cars are likely to be parked in association with the development. This suggests a maximum of 2 additional vehicles parking within the adjacent school car park.

8.5.7 In order to provide further context and to further support the proposals, the applicant had provided an independent car parking demand survey for the adjacent car park in July 2021, to quantify any residual parking capacity and to demonstrate that the proposals will be of no detriment to its operation. As was identified in the JTS consultation response letter on behalf of the



Community Academies Trust (CAT), this survey was undertaken at a time when the school advised that only 75% of pupils were in attendance and CAT did not see this as representative of a typical day. Subsequently, on the recommendation of the Local Highway Authority, the applicant has liaised with CAT in order to agree a more representative day, and a further car parking survey was undertaken in March 2022.

- 8.5.8 The March 2022 survey identified that peak car parking accumulation takes place around 14:30 (the end of the school day) at which time 163 cars were parked, leaving 29 spaces vacant.
- 8.5.9 Considering a worst case scenario whereby the development requires the full 38 spaces identified within the LP standards, and the peak demand for this (albeit not identified as such within their submitted Transport Statement) were to coincide with the school, the information submitted demonstrates that there would still be sufficient residual capacity to accommodate an overspill of 17 parked cars from within the extra care curtilage, as would be required.
- 8.5.10 However, in reality, the peak parking demand associated with the proposals has been forecast at 23 vehicles, the timing of which does not coincide with the peak parking demand for Telford Park School (10:00 - 11:00 & 14:30, respectively). Further to this, between 10:00 and 11:00 when peak parking demand for the extra care development is anticipated (the middle of the school day), the car parking survey identified a total of 57 vacant car parking spaces, which suggests that the car park retains sufficient reserve capacity to accommodate some parking from the proposed development, without detriment to its operation in association with the school and nursery.
- 8.5.11 The proposals seek to utilise the existing car park access and egress, with some minor relocation/alterations to existing parking bays to facilitate the manoeuvres of service and emergency vehicles. The LHA has no particular concerns with regards to the anticipated traffic generation of the proposals in this instance, especially when offset against the previous use of the site.
- 8.5.12 The applicants have committed to the provision of 4no electric charging points as shown on the submitted plans.
- 8.5.13 Furthermore, the timings of any construction traffic is restricted to times outside of the peak schools drop-off times.
- 8.5.14 Accordingly the Local Highway Authority raise no objection to the development, subject to the conditions and informatives outlined in the recommendation.

**8.6 Other matters - Healthy Spaces, Ecology, Drainage, Community Use, Local Lettings Plan/Nominations Agreement:  
Healthy Spaces**

- 8.6.1 Healthy Spaces have confirmed that they are happy with the landscaping proposals proposed and raise no objection to the application subject to a condition requiring the submission of a Landscape Management Plan (LMP).

8.6.2 The development does not meet the triggers requiring the provision of any on or off-site recreation contributions.

### **Ecology**

8.6.3 The existing scrub land has negligible ecological value and the proposed development is also considered to have relatively low impact on the nearby Local Nature Reserve (LNR). A lighting plan condition has been included to reduce any impacts of the development on any commuting/foraging bats and other wildlife in the area.

8.6.4 Swift boxes are provided as part of the building fabric, notably on the elevations facing the Mad Brook; bug hotels, bird feeders and a water feature fed by captured rain-water provide further ecological and biodiversity interest to complement and provide linkage to the Mad Brook area.

8.6.5 The Ecology Team have raised no objection to the application, subject to conditions requiring a lighting plan.

### **Drainage**

8.6.6 The site is located wholly within Flood Zone 1. Surface water will be discharged to an existing public surface water sewer that eventually discharges into Mad Brook. Foul water (sewage) discharges into a foul/combined public sewer; this sewer conveys foul water to a wastewater treatment work. The submitted Flood Risk & Drainage Assessment demonstrates how the site will achieve green field run-off rates.

8.6.7 This was an issue raised by Cllr Sinclair, with the applicants providing a note on drainage matters in response to the concerns raised. In addition they provided confirmation from Severn Trent that there is capacity within the local foul sewerage network to accommodate this development. This drainage note was also sent directly to Cllr Sinclair whom confirmed receipt and acknowledged the applicants response to the concerns raised.

8.6.8 The Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) have raised no objection to the application, subject to pre-commencement conditions for further detailed designs.

### **Community Use**

8.6.9 The proposal includes a range of communal facilities that would be managed and operated as an integral part of the care concept to encourage social interaction between residents themselves and with the wider external community. Communal facilities within the building include a bistro; a large lounge/day room for activities that may include, for example, bingo, parties, yoga/dance classes; a laundry; quiet rooms that can be used, for example, for mobile hairdressers/therapy; a buggy/scooter/cycle store; ground floor toilets; a main reception space and lifts to all floors/corridors accessing the private

apartments. A Community Use plan is included within the application which defines the areas available for communal use.

- 8.6.10 Additionally, a condition is proposed which stipulates the opening hours of the bistro for public use as between 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday, and 11:00-15:00 on Saturdays, and it will not be open for public use on Sundays or Bank Holidays. A further condition is imposed which requires the submission and approval of a community use plan which outlines availability of use, charging schedules, public safety, review mechanisms etc.

### **Local Lettings Plan/Nomination Agreement**

- 8.6.11 Any planning consent would be conditional on the agreement of a formal Local Lettings Plan and Nominations Agreement as is set out in the recommendation below, to ensure that residents across the Borough most in need, are prioritised accordingly.

### **8.7 S106 Agreement/ Financial Contributions:**

- 8.7.1 The proposed development does not meet the triggers to provide any financial contributions as directed through the Local Plan.
- 8.7.2 In determining the required planning obligations on this specific application the following three tests as set out in the CIL Regulations (2010), in particular Regulation 122, have been applied to ensure that the application is treated on its own merits:
- a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
  - b) directly related to the development;
  - c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

## **9.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The TWLP identifies a need to diversify housing provision to address the needs of the areas ageing population and this development seeks to comply with Policy HO7 of the TWLP in providing this housing requirement, for specialist care.
- 9.2 The proposal is considered to be a sustainable form of development on previously developed land, which is deemed to be compliant with the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031 and the guidance contained within the NPPF.

## **10.0 DETAILED RECOMMENDATION**

- 10.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that Delegated Authority be granted to the Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** (with the authority to finalise any matter including conditions, legal agreement terms, or any later variations) subject to:

A) The following conditions (with authority to finalise conditions and reasons

for approval to be delegated to Development Management Service Delivery Manager):-

A04 – Time Limit Full  
B010 - Details of Materials  
B011 – Samples of Materials  
B061 – Brownfield Foul & Surface Drainage  
B076 – SUDS Management Plan  
B079 – SUDS Completion (inc CCTV)  
B086 – Details of Extraction Equipment  
B126 – Landscape Management Plan  
B145 – Lighting Plan  
B150 – SEMP  
BCustom – Local Lettings Plan/Nominations Agreement  
C002 – Materials as submitted  
C013 – Parking, Loading and Unloading  
C020 – Existing Parking Re-configuration  
C076 – Implementation of Landscaping  
C38 – Approved Plans  
Custom – Ecological Enhancements  
C119 – Community/Public Use Agreement  
Custom – Restricted Construction Traffic during School Times.  
D01 – Removal of all permitted development  
D06 – Restriction on Use Class  
D11 0 House of opening – Community Use.