

TWC/2023/0028

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

Erection of a 72no. bed extra care home with associated open space, landscaping, car/cycle parking, service infrastructure (drainage, highway, lighting) and engineering operations

**APPLICANT**

C/o Agent

**RECEIVED**

18/01/2023

**PARISH**

Stirchley and Brookside

**WARD**

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**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/2023/0028>

**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 72no 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). 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.
- 3.3 This application is a varied form of the previous approval (TWC/2021/1201) which has resulted in a number of changes to the scheme to ensure it remains viable in times of increasing build costs. In addition to increasing the number of units, the following is a summary of the items which have varied from the previous permission, to reduce build costs (see pg50-56 of the DAS for details):
- Alternative brick manufacture for black brick;
  - Remove projected window surrounds;
  - Omit balconies and replace with Juliet balconies throughout;
  - Omit low level balcony walls;
  - Reduce height of parapet wall (300mm) to reduce size of access corridor;
  - Omit all glass from balustrades on roof;
  - Remove all balustrade on roof apart from amenity space;
  - Omit pergola to amenity space;
  - Omit solar panels;
  - Reduced projection of entrance canopy;
  - Revised building footprint.
- 3.4 The application now seeks to secure 72 units (66 one-bed and 6 two-bed which total 78 bedrooms in total), instead of the previously approved 67 units (61 one-bed and 6 three-bed which total 79 bedrooms in total).

#### **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.
- 4.4 TWC/2021/1201 – Erection of a 67no bed extra care home with associated open space, landscaping, car/cycle parking, service infrastructure (drainage, highway, lighting) and engineering operations – Full Granted 06/05/2022

## **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 has received no formal public representations on the application.

## **7.0 STATUTORY REPRESENTATIONS**

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

Further to the comments made when the original planning application for this site was made (TWC.2021.1201) which still stands, Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council now make the following comments:

- That there still seems to be limited parking for the site and that this will only be made more problematic by increasing the number of units therein;
- That access issues off Grange Avenue (at an already busy section) will be further impacted;
- That there is potential for light nuisance from the site and its parking areas for its neighbours;
- That there will be a significant issue with contractor access and parking during the build which will need to be managed very carefully.

7.2 **Cllr Greg Sinclair (Ward Member) – No comment.**

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

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

7.5 **Public Protection – comment.**

Not a statutory consultee and no objection raised, but asked the Planning Officer to consider the following points: Inclusion of shared green space; integration of walkways/seating; off-road parking for visitors; Landscape Management Plan; Impact on local services; Noise Assessment and Air Quality Assessment due to proximity of main road.

7.6 **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.

7.7 **West Mercia Police – Comment:**

General design guidance provided as an informative.

7.8 **Cadent Gas** – No objection subject to informative.

7.9 **Coal Authority** – No objection subject to 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 72-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. This scheme is fully supported by the Councils Specialist and Support Accommodation Strategy.
- 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 A previous consent (TWC/2021/1201) was approved by Planning Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022 for a marginally smaller scheme (67 units) and therefore the principle of a care home on this site has been established.
- 8.2.6 Following the grant of planning permission, a feasibility assessment has been undertaken and it was determined that some minor amendments were required to the design, in addition to a further 5 units, in order for the scheme to remain viable.

### **8.3 Design**

- 8.3.1 As an extra care housing scheme the proposed development will provide 72 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 66no 1-bed apartments (2persons) and 6no 2-bed apartments (3 persons), which all exceed the National Design Space Standards (NDSS), ranging from 51.6sqm to 63.7sqm respectively – as well as all units being M4(2) compliant.
- 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 at its tallest point, 11.5m plus balustrade and the four-storey wing is 12.85m. In both cases, a reduction to the heights of the previous application.
- 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 10.5m 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. This distance has been increased (the previous scheme was 9.5m between facades) following reduction of the building footprint; and is therefore an improvement in this respect.
- 8.3.9 Externally, whilst there are no set amenity space standards for care homes specifically, as a general rule, the LPA encourage communal development to offer 30sqm per unit. Based on a 72-bed development therefore, this would equate to around 2160sqm (0.21hectares). The development provides an enclosed courtyard sensory garden as well as a roof garden equating a total of 1250sqm. The site also lies adjacent the Local Nature Reserve where an extensive range of public amenity space is available. As such, Officers consider that on balance 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.
  - Tree planting 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 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 inclusive seating areas for residents to participate in garden activities, bird watching and possible informal exercise. A small pentaque space is also suggested. The full details of landscaping will be conditioned for later approval.

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, 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 increasing 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;
- 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;
- 4no 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.

8.4.2 A Noise Impact Assessment has been conducted which confirms that the proposal will have no impact on surrounding receptors and can be constructed without the need for noise mitigation.

#### **8.5 Highways Impacts**

8.5.1 The application is supported by a Transport Statement (TS) and Travel Plan (TP). Additionally, a comparative existing/proposed parking plan was 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.

8.5.2 During the course of the previous application, the applicants were requested to provide traffic surveys to assess the capacity of the car park during peak school times (the times were agreed with the Academies Trust), this information is included within the submitted TS.

8.5.3 The Local Plan parking requirement for a development of this nature is 1 space per 2units, and 1 space per 1 staff. The proposed 72no extra care home would therefore require a total of 41 spaces (3 more than the previous scheme).

8.5.4 The site provides 21 spaces within the development curtilage (3 of which are disabled) as well as 4no cycle spaces to encourage non-vehicular trips. The remaining and to be located within the existing car park within the adjoining Telford Park School which the applicant has a right to access and utilise, and has proven that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate.



- 8.5.5 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.
- 8.5.6 The applicants have committed to the provision of 4no electric charging points as shown on the submitted plans. However, Building Regulations Part S was approved in June 2022 which requires greater requirements from developments in this respect and the development will need to comply with these requirements, at that stage.
- 8.5.7 Furthermore, the timings of any construction traffic is restricted to times outside of the peak schools drop-off times.
- 8.5.8 The applicants have been in liaison with the Planning and Highways Officers and agreed the form of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and this will be approved as part of this decision notice. For clarification, all parking will take place at the adjoining church car park and construction traffic will come directly off Grange Avenue. The adjoining car park (to which future access to the completed scheme will utilise) is strictly not to be utilised for access or parking, during the construction phase.
- 8.5.9 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 no objection to the application subject to a condition requiring the submission of a Landscape Management Plan (LMP) and full soft/hard landscaping details.
- 8.6.2 The development does not meet the trigger 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 The Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA) have raised no objection to the application, and are happy that the detailed drainage information satisfies the conditions requested for the previous application. As such, the only drainage condition imposed is for post-completion CCTV surveys.

### **Community Use**

8.6.8 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.

8.6.9 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**

8.6.10 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

B079 – SUDS Completion (CCTV survey)

B086 – Details of Extraction Equipment

B121 – Landscaping Design

B126 – Landscape Management Plan

BCustom – Local Lettings Plan/Nominations Agreement

C002 – Materials as submitted

C013 – Parking, Loading and Unloading

C020 – Existing Parking Re-configuration

C38 – Approved Plans

Custom – Approved Lighting Scheme

C119 – Community/Public Use Agreement

Custom – Restricted Construction Traffic during School Times.

Custom – CEMP approval

D01 – Removal of all permitted development

D06 – Restriction on Use Class

D11 - Hours of opening – Community Use.

Informatives:

Coal Authority – Low Risk

Shropshire Fire  
West Mercia Police  
Cadent Gas  
Highways – Stopping Up Order